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The Contest of Representation: Photographic Images of Ethiopian
Women in National Print Media, Development Aid Organisations
and Galleries

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May 2014



Potable Water Supply © Micheal Tsegaye



Hot Spring Water © Antonio Fiorente

The Contest of Representation: Photographic Images of Ethiopian Women in National Print Media, Development Aid Organisations and Galleries

Abstract

The repetition of particular photographic narratives may homogenise women from the non-European world, particularly those from sub-Saharan Africa, who are often portrayed as victims of drought, famine, war and conflict. The research critically analyses the historical and contemporary construction of female bodies in Ethiopia through photographic images. It provides a novel overview of the least explored representational practices, by comparing photographic works commissioned by aid and development organisations with those produced by Ethiopian photographers. It specifically considers how far stereotypical representations are being challenged and deconstructed in contemporary practices of photography in Ethiopia.

This project assesses over seventy photographic images, ranging from picture postcards to photojournalism and photo-essays, and seeks to critically interpret them from their site of production to their final presentation in different modes of circulation (Rose, 2003). It triangulates the meanings of images through developing an understanding of the specificity of documentary photographs, the photographers' intent and the demands of institutions, including the national print media, development aid organisations and galleries.

The research argues that some Ethiopian photographers use the photographic image as a medium to confront stereotypes in picturing poverty, drought, famine, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS, there by contesting narratives about Ethiopia and Ethiopians in the process.

List of Acronyms

| | |
|-------|--|
| EAJA | East African Journalists' Association |
| AAU | Addis Ababa University |
| AIDS | Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| ENA | Ethiopian News Agency |
| EPA | Ethiopian Press Agency |
| ERTA | Ethiopian Radio and Television Broadcasting Agency |
| EPRDF | Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia |
| ETC | Ethiopian Tourism Commission |
| ETV | Ethiopian Television |
| EU | European Union |
| GIZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| HAPCO | HIV/AIDS Preventions and Care Organisation |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| IES | Institute of Ethiopian Studies |
| IFRC | International Federation of the Red Cross and Crescent Societies |
| MIE | Ministry of Information |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| NTO | National Tourism Organisation |
| PLWA | People Living with HIV/AIDS |
| VSO | Volunteer Service Overseas |
| STD | Sexually Transmitted Disease |
| STC | Save The Children |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| WWI | The First World War |

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Chapter One

1. Speaking Through the Photographic Image: An Introduction

This project takes as its starting point the repetitive and stereotypical use of images of women and girls of Ethiopia by the western media to narrate human and environmental catastrophes. The topic emerged from a longstanding critique of the problematic uses of historical and development aid images of female bodies. The gendered aspects of contemporary photo images of Ethiopia produced at an individual, national and international level remains unexplored. Individual style in making images of the same thing matters when one looks carefully at the visual language used in the content of a photograph. The focus of this research, thus, emanates from the problem of documentary photography itself, since it is subjective in methods and techniques (Wells, 1997: 63).

This research seeks to explore the relationship of historical images and contemporary photographic images of female bodies specifically about everyday people. It seeks to investigate the process of imaging through an exploration of stereotypes to unsettle the ‘power knowledge’ of representing others. It looks back to the inter-ocular of classic western art and the photographic image in producing difference. It focuses on exploring locally based photographers’ works that are used by charity organisations, local news or exhibition displays in relation to historical images of Ethiopians. This is significant because the work of local photographers is also neglected in critical analysis. For comparative purpose it also analyses works of other non-Ethiopian photographers selected from different periods.

The research focuses on historical picture postcards produced by the Fascist Italians in the 1930s, postcards of the Ethiopian Tourism Commission (ETC) since the 1960s and development photojournalism since 1990s. Development journalism is defined as ‘the reporting of ideas, programmes, activities and events, which are related to an improvement of the living standard, mainly in the rural regions’ (Skjerdal, 2009: 31; cited in Wimmer and Wolf 2005: 2). Postcards of the ETC and publications of the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) are important visual data to explore the relations of ‘self’ and ‘other’ representations. Historical picture postcards and development/development aid images are inherently linked to each other because their premises are based on the ideology of modernity and progress (Kratz, 2003; Manzo, 2008).

Kratz makes the persuasive point that ‘colonial and postcolonial ideologies converge on notions of development as ideology’. The former insists on ‘modernity’ while the latter on ‘progress’ (2003: 107). The discourse of modernity and globality deny the presence of the ideology of the colonial past (Escobar, 2004). Young (2003) makes a point that the introduction of western technology such as the railway line or an ideology of democracy as a sign of modernity does not comprehend womens’ participation in decision making, equality and emancipation specifically in Africa and Asia. Young (2003: 98) further argues that feminism and modernity are not universal. They have developed independently in different places. Colonialism as an instrument of modernising others including the eradication of patriarchy neglects the discourse of colonialism as a social and economic exploitation, and as an ideology of inequality. Photography as a unique visual medium demands a critical eye to disturb normalized discourses. Modernity and progress further converge in the ideology of dominance behind visual productions. Development critiques that are built up on the idea of progress argue that feminism and postcolonial thought intersect in revealing ideals of patriarchy and dependency on the capital of the Global North. Postcolonial feminism further articulates intellectual works as centre through which intersections of locationality and globality are contested in the formation of gendered-spaces, as well as the formation of gender-based imagined geographies (McEwan, 2009).

Analysis of imagined geographies demands the contextualisation of historical images as well as contemporary development and development aid images in the production of spaces. A move from only contextualizing stereotypical imagery, to including an exploration of gender constructs in different spaces, offers contesting narratives about representations of female bodies within development and development aid imagery. Globalised spaces of representation may visualize certain aspects of localities through such transnational development issues such as the eradication of poverty. Contributing to the limited literature on the practice of photography in Ethiopia, the research outcome may be useful for designing better photo guidelines for tourism, photojournalism and the social documentary works of humanitarian organisations.

The dominant means of representation viewed by the largest audience is photojournalism that is disseminated by mainstream media. The ultimate goal of photojournalists in producing images of the marginalised is to bring about social change (Ohrn, 1980, cited in Wells, 1997; Rose: 2003). Images of humanitarian catastrophe have long played a major role in shaping cultural perceptions both in the West and in non-Western societies, including those societies subject to catastrophes. Given the development of visual

technology, photographs as visual objects have become one of the key ‘everyday’ sources through which knowledge about people and places are produced (Cartwright et.al, 2001: 1, 17; Crang, 1999). In the western mainstream media this notion has created a visual language of women and children as metaphors for catastrophe. Such images are repeatedly circulated to convey the horrors of natural disasters in Africa in general, and in Ethiopia in particular (Campbell, 2003).

Vulnerability, poverty and climate change have been pictured through the knowledge of ‘infantilisation’ and ‘feminisation’ (Dogra, 2012; Manzo, 2010). These images are fraught with ambiguous issues of representation since they ultimately homogenize otherwise capable individuals as helpless and needy. According to Hall, a ‘system of representation’ refers to the intricate relations of image with an object or subject. It includes a system of thought, the relations of various concepts and interpretations of a system of knowledge (Hall, 1997: 17). The symbolism behind images of female bodies goes beyond the representation of an individual. The repetitive imagery of vulnerability needs a re-examination of narratives about everyday citizens¹ to possibly deconstruct stereotypes as well as to explore other visual narratives outside images of disaster relief works.

In order to appeal to pity, journalists in television and other media use images ‘to render the spectacle of suffering not only comprehensible, but also ethically acceptable for the spectator’ (Chouliaraki, 2006: 2; see also Wells, 1997). Such media images can potentially produce and convey specific forms of knowledge. In an effort to sensationalise the stories of their ‘subjects’ and appeal to the pity of targeted audiences, they objectify the persona of the ‘subjects’ they represent. The element of ‘documentary realism’ assumed in still photography and video footage is, thus, still playing a pivotal role in the politics of representing people and places both at the local and international level (Croteau et.al, 1992). This research proposes a comparative analysis of representations by considering images themed around everyday lives, including images of food aid and health hazards.

To explore this, I have investigated the production and interpretation of images through the complex relations of Ethiopian freelance photographers with international aid organisations. The project acknowledges that in order to explain contemporary photographic representations, there is a need to analyse historical archival materials. These various sources of visual data not only bring gender to light, but also enable a careful reader to speak about

¹ In recent development discourse, ‘everyday citizen’ is a less derogatory term that replaced peripheral people or ordinary people that are used to refer to marginalized communities in a society (Rigg, 2007; Pankhurst & Freeman, 2003).

silences of history that could have been neglected due to photographic conventions and icons. This project, thus, seeks to trace the influence of historical image compositions within contemporary productions. The visual data considered in this project integrate other works of non-Ethiopian contemporary photographers in order to draw a comparative analysis in imaging social and health problems such as famine, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS². There are only a few independent Ethiopian photographers who are using exhibition spaces to showcase their works in different national and international galleries and museums. The project thus explores contested narratives from the visual data uncovered by the photographer, ranging from independent photo-essays to collaborative works.

The dominant narratives of poverty and horror that accompany images of western mass media and humanitarian activities play a significant role in producing homogenized knowledge about the non-West. The postmodernist notion of deconstruction employed here offers a critical interrogation of how and why images are produced in the form of stereotypes³ (Ashcroft et.al, 1995: 117-118). Meta-narratives that project Africa as a land of poverty and suffering using these subjects is re-examined from existing literatures.

The Ethiopian context offers an example of power relations without the presence of direct political domination of the West through colonial rule. I specifically explore institutional productions of images taking published commissioned works. A postcolonial approach is even more significant as it combines the notion of deconstruction with an exploration of how narratives of Africa's contemporary dependency continue to perpetuate the historical power relations established through imperial expansions and colonialism (Blunt et.al, 2002; Chouliararki, 2006). Earlier photographic encounters propagate modernisation processes as one-directional: from Europe to Africa and Asia. Produced since the end of nineteenth century, such imagery was widely circulated as part of imperial and colonial ideologies.

In the Ethiopian context, there is a lack of scholarly work on the relationships between historical photographs and contemporary images of female bodies. This thesis addresses this issue by tracing the links between contemporary photography, historical images and images used in aid and development. In order to explore these links the research analyses some of the oldest picture postcards produced under the command of the fascist

² This project analyses Antonio Fiorente's photo story book titled as "The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies, Courage and Life in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS" (STC, 2007). The project also includes a visual aid prepared for peer education among sex workers titled as *Addis Mela Le-Hiwot* (STC, 2011).

³ In this context the term stereotype refers to "the general set of beliefs and behaviours that are attributed to others" (Mitchell, 2006: 20).

Italians. To investigate what happened after the practices of colonial photographs, the research analyses the institutional roles of the Ethiopian Tourism Commission and the Ethiopian Press Agency.

This research, therefore, adopts an approach that disrupts binary formulations of universal/particular, centre/periphery to explicate representations through transnational and translocal relations. Photography has always been a result of an encounter of two cultures, by which the local has been viewed through ideologies in relation to the transnational photographic practices. Visual transformations of certain localized elements occur through translocal visual encounters. The global image economy affects the entry of images into ‘international, national and local ‘mediascapes’’ (‘Editorial’, *Photographies*, 2009:2). A ‘postcolonial’ approach, with its emphasis on contesting dominant discourses and hegemonic modes of representation in exploring the legacies of colonialism, illuminates the process and strategies that link the historical power relations of the West with the non-West in addressing contemporary urgent social needs in Africa (Mitchell, 2006: 47).

Ethiopia’s global image mainly portrays social problems that are regarded as major development challenges. These include relief works of famine, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS. These visual productions are painted with development discourses that propose hegemonies of western conceptions of modernity. As McEwan explains ‘when we act in accordance with personal, professional, institutional or organisational interests, representations say more about those doing the representing than those represented’ (McEwan, 2009: 129). This project thus seeks to explore feminist notions of visual images as the joint performing acts of a photographer and the photographed, without neglecting the agency of institutions. It also examines photography as semiotics and material object. The theoretical framework adopts concepts of performativity that denaturalize realism assumed in photographic representations to understand how trans-localities are performed (Nicholson, 1996; Ebron, 2002).

Photographic practices result from cultural encounters that involve adoptions of other cultures. For this reason, this thesis is concerned with how such translocal visual encounters influence the representation of female bodies. As a material object, photography brings the subject-object into more diffused and mediated relationships and serves as a ‘bridge that links the physical with the mind’ (Edwards, 2004: 6). It seeks to examine processes and strategies that could possibly challenge the ‘Eurocentric’ as well as the ‘Nationalist’ way of looking by engaging in ‘transnational’ practices of photography in representing Ethiopian women and girls. The Nationalist perspective argues about alternative narratives in contrast to stereotypes

(Appiaho, 1995: 119). Scholars have contextualized the Eurocentric othering in picturing Asia and Africa as tribal people (Hayes, 1998; Rollwagon, 1988; Maxwell, 1998).

In the same fashion, this project looks back to historical picture postcards to investigate traces of representational practices on contemporary works. It addresses the influence of freelance photographers in representing Ethiopian women and girls when they do commissioned works for international organisations. It specifically deals with how far dominant representations are being de-constructed in contemporary photography in Ethiopia and re-contextualized in contemporary exhibitions. The term re-contextualisation refers to giving context within social relations at the local level, either in the documentary work itself, or in exhibition spaces (Adenaike, 1996). Semiotics as a study of signs is also a useful interpretive approach that adopts images as signs and texts. This concept helps to explain the 'signifier' and the 'signified' within the larger symbol system (Duve, 2010).

My own multi-disciplinary academic background in history, social anthropology, museum and geography is one reason why I have adopted an interdisciplinary approach. As a student of history and social anthropology in Addis Ababa University, I have long pondered the problematic images of the people of Ethiopia, both ethnographic and mainstream images. I began to realize that those images are disturbing forms of representation. Some years of collaboration with artists and studying visual culture have inspired a broader interest in contested visual representations, specifically of Ethiopian women and girls, both historically and in the present. To explore what happens after colonial photographs, this project expanded to include photographic representations propagated through the print media specifically by the National Press Agency and The Ethiopian Tourism Commission. In Ethiopia 1991 marked the beginning of a shift in freedom of expressions with the downfall of a socialist regime often referred to as the *Derge*. The democratic regime in 1991 marked a freer political environment in which international aid organisations and news agencies flourished and there was more freedom in arts production (Mekonnen, 2007), including the establishment of private photography schools. In due course the project expanded from only interpreting and reading contemporary documentary works to historical postcards, and The Ethiopian Herald newspaper archive.

Looking back to historical ways of picturing people and places through the ideologies of colonialism and development can expose traces of visual histories and representations in contemporary practices. The research also adopts the idea that for a better understanding of contemporary practices of photographic representations of female bodies, one needs to explore the social and cultural contexts of contemporary image productions. This research

thus provides an analysis of the Fascist Italian picture postcards of the 1930s about Ethiopia in relation to postcards of the ETC.

As integral parts of ‘interpretive epistemological methods,’ I conducted 50 in-depth interviews among 38 informants such as photographers, other artists, curators, academics, social workers and communication officers in Addis Ababa. With the exception of interviews with a few popular individuals, these interviews are coded, for example as VN850038. I have not used any pseudonyms. Almost all of the interviews were conducted in Addis Ababa, except one that took place in the town of Nazret which is about 82.23kms away from Addis Ababa. The readings of over seventy images are supported by on-site data analysis that took place with the help of informants. All except ten interviews were recorded in Amharic and then transcribed directly into English. Three of the in-depth interviews were conducted in English and then transcribed. For the seven unrecorded interviews, I took notes and wrote up the detailed accounts after each interview session is completed. The use of interviews is subsequently discussed in chapter three, Section 3.2.3. The analysis includes images at the site of production, that is, from the producers’ perspectives and at the site of the image that includes composition and content analysis. I further enhanced my critical engagement by placing these methods within appropriate social and historical contexts.

The outcome of this research will broaden understanding of the politics and contestations of representations in transnational photographic practices in public spaces. From this we can identify Ethiopian freelance photographers’ agency in confronting dominant ways of seeing and picturing urban as well as ‘rural’ women and girls. There is growing interest in photo documentary works in Ethiopia, but little is known about the rereading of such contemporary practices of picturing in Ethiopia. As far as I know there are also limited scholarly works about photography and representations in Ethiopia, and this thesis seeks to contribute in filling this gap in relation to translocal practices of social documentary images of female bodies. The original findings of this thesis may, therefore, contribute to our understanding of current changing visual practices in the way Ethiopian photographers contest and collaborate with other institutions without neglecting their agency and the agency of the photographic image. The study of intersections between spatial representations and gendered representations will thus contribute to studies of intersections of visual culture and feminist geographical studies.

1.1. Situating the Study

Studies of the photographic images of female bodies have been subject to numerous discursive analyses. These studies span from recasting early photographic encounters by western travellers and photographers to contemporary practices of imaging (Campbell & Power, 2010; Wills & Williams, 2002; Childs, 2006; Siliwinski, 2006; Manzo, 2008). Some art historians have regarded African photographic encounters with other Africans as counter narratives to stereotypical photographic narratives of African subjects in pre-colonial and colonial photographs (Noire, 1999; Enwezor, 2006; Bajorek & Honey, 2010). However, it is unclear how contemporary photographers interact, collaborate or contest as they engage with commissioned works. The above literatures see the photographic image as an appropriate medium for studying power relations which contest meanings and representational practices. These relations include authoritative, interactive and collaborative relations. The focus is on the agency of individual photographers as well as institutions in producing images of women and girls. Visual data analysis, however, demands a shift from a focus only on interactions or social relations to the agency of documentary photographs as texts (Banks, 2007: 11).

In the Ethiopian context there have been broader literatures that deconstruct the famine images that depict the vulnerability of women, children and older people (Clark, 2009; VSO, 2005; Campbell, 2003). These images are known for projecting and perpetuating stereotypical images of Ethiopia and its people. However, there is limited literature on photographic images of female bodies across time, particularly those produced by Ethiopians. Considering other forms of circulation such as exhibitions and postcards, this research is concerned with the photographic image in relation to notions of development, and development aid, specifically in the ideologies of modernity and progress.

The research findings investigate contested representations within the discussions of modernity, progress, and the human condition. Exhibitions, commissioned photo-essays of NGOs, Ethiopian Tourism Commission (ETC) postcards and the photojournalism works of the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) are used as spaces of representation. With the exception of a few images, all of the visual materials can be grouped as documentary photographs, including earlier postcards published by Italians during the Fascist occupation, documentary photographs owned by EPA including its newspaper publication- *The Ethiopian Herald*, and Thirteen Months of Sunshine postcards issued by the ETC. All of them are organised and

interpreted in relation to the objectives of this research and are further developed into chapters.

1.2. Research Aim and Objectives

The main focus of this project is a critique of the representation of female bodies in Ethiopia. It explores the relationship of historical images of female bodies in picturing contemporary photographic images of aid and development. It scrutinises images of female bodies in various forms of widely distributed images, such as postcards, photojournalism, exhibitions and photo-essays. Through an exploration of historical picture postcards, it traces the historical representations of female bodies in Ethiopia before and after the rise of mainstream media. In order to explore the relations of colonial photographs on images produced at the national level after the 1960s, the research also analyses EPA's picture postcards. Analysing the photographic works of Ethiopian and other non-Ethiopian photographers, it also seeks to compare and contrast commissioned and independent works of contemporary photographers. Most photographic social documentary works are undertaken collaboratively by freelance photographers and non-governmental humanitarian organisations. To alleviate critiques of the historically charged 'western gaze' especially in picturing social issues, I have observed in Addis Ababa that there is growing interest in the work of local freelance photographers. The research specifically focuses on images produced by Ethiopian photographers, which are least explored in academic writings. Taking aid and development as major themes, the research is aimed at exploring critically the ways in which photographic images produced by Ethiopians contest the dominant westernised images of Ethiopian women and girls.

1.3. Research Questions

The following questions form the core of the research inquiry:

How are the contestations of representation of female bodies in the photographic image, and how do these vary in various modes of distribution?

What are the relationships between the historical and contemporary representations of female bodies? What alternative visual narratives do unpublished archival materials portray? What aspects of everyday life are omitted or included in different photographic media? How is

meaning and representation in the use of images of women and girls negotiated between freelance photographers and aid organisations? Are there processes or strategies of ‘looking’ for alternative representations?

How are dominant representations in the mainstream media contested in the documentary works of independent Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian photographers or exhibition displays?

What are the similarities and differences between the commissioned work and independent work of photographers in representing their subjects? How do notions of ‘materiality’ and ‘performativity’ assist in analysing representations of female bodies dealing with aid and development in the spaces of contestation?

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organised into eight chapters. The first three chapters provide an introduction, literature review and methodology. The next five chapters discuss research findings followed by the conclusions. Chapter two outlines the conceptual framing of the research by providing a reader with a critical analysis of literature on geography, gender and visual culture in relation to photographic images of female bodies. Two major groups of literatures about female bodies are reviewed in order to meticulously articulate the gendering of bodies that have exoticised Ethiopians and by extension African female bodies. It outlines how scholars interpret pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial photography and it situates the Ethiopian case within the broader literature on colonial and post-colonial photographic representations. The main focus of this section is to explore the relations between the visual material, the photographed and the photographer. Adopting interdisciplinary approaches, it further discusses major writings within the discipline of geography, visual history and art critiques. A review of such writing outlines the gap in conceptual as well as literary practices about documentary photography and representation. Finally it narrows its focus on the scholarly writings about female bodies in Ethiopia.

Chapter three, the methods chapter, provides an account of data collection and data analysis. Over seventy photographic images are analysed, ranging from picture postcards of Fascist Italian and postcards of the Ethiopian Tourism Commission to photo-essays made by independent photographers. By tracing historical forms of representation, the methods chapter further explains why exploring the cultural and historical contexts through

interviewing photographers and other scholars are relevant for an objective interpretation of the photographic image. In order to provide interpretive approaches about photography reading and representation, this chapter also includes an overview of semiotics relevant to the genre of documentary photography. The main focus of this section is the examination of a methodological approach that could possibly interpret the relationships between the visual material, the photographed, the photographer and institutes. In order to explore the agency of photojournalism, chapter three further outlines an account of archival materials, how these archival materials are accessed and interpreted, and how interviews are conducted.

Chapter four to eight are organized to reflect on the main research questions of the thesis. Chapter four provides a missing link between the colonial and post-colonial practices of picturing Ethiopian women. By tracing historical representations, it lays a foundation for the body-space politics of representations. Using print media, this chapter unravels the metaphor of womanhood and the gendering of bodies. Tracing histories of gender portrayals and representations is important to explain the relations of worldwide historical photographic practices with contemporary practices of picturing in Ethiopia. This chapter compares different subject positions of female bodies within the practice of picturing in EPA and ETC as state narratives. It begins by exploring picture postcards produced under the brief Italian Occupation from 1936-1941. It juxtaposes these historical images with more recent postcards issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Findings from such comparative analysis indicate that there is no clear distinction in the dichotomy of ‘self’ and ‘other’ representations. Geographical understandings of people and places are usually shaped by images produced by the mainstream media. The third theme of chapter four is thus aimed at comparing published and unpublished images from the EPA.

Chapter five critically explores contested images of women and girls within the context of aid and development. Commissioned works by Ethiopian photographers’ such as Yemane Gebre-Medhin, Antonio Fiorente and Micheal Tsegaye are examined to reflect on how they contest and collaborate with humanitarian organisations in picturing people subject to development aid interventions. These interventions mainly deal with images of drought and famine relief works, and AIDS relief initiatives. Photographic images of female bodies are still used as means of persuasion to generate funding.

The concept of visual economy especially insists on institutional demands and power in producing, distributing and interpreting images irrespective of the photographer’s original

intent (Croteau et.al, 1992; Poole, 1997). The visual economy still plays a pivotal role in shaping the most dominant images of Ethiopian women and girls. It analyses the visual forms of relief works by looking at recent photo-essays of drought situations in the Horn of Africa in 2011 to explore how local photographers are dealing with the visual economy. By examining photographic images used by aid agencies, and specifically focusing on emergency relief, the chapter examines how western reactions to emergency situations are captured in relation to these subjects. It specifically focuses on contextualizing images of emergency in relation to an iconic drought image of a helpless mother and lone child. The chapter further argues that the photographic images of social problems can be a site upon which different agencies come together to produce contested narratives over which new visual codes might be proposed. They involve processes from the original visual encounters of the artist to the way the works are selected, cropped, altered and manipulated by the editorial boards of the institutions that commission them.

The other social problem that this chapter addresses is imaging women's health issues specifically in relation to reproductive health and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, focusing on Save the Children's images of sex workers who are perceived as one of the major risk groups by this charity⁴. The focus on these groups is because the charity's publications are organized around the notion of vulnerability and targets these communities to fight the impacts of HIV/AIDS. This chapter, hence, compares peer to peer teaching materials designed for 'risk groups', in the form of a photo story book on *High Risk Corridor Initiatives*, by Save the Children with Micheal Tsegaye's independent project on the livelihood of commercial sex workers (see Appendix 2). The research further compares the above commissioned works with an independent project by an American photographer, Eric Gottesman. Gottesman's case study gives insights into alternative means of visualizing HIV/AIDS by exploring the long term consequences of HIV/AIDS on an orphan.

Chapter six explores representations of female subjects and everyday lives, specifically the ways in which they are displayed and contested in gallery and museum spaces. It outlines why these spaces are used to juxtapose works that contest on who speaks on behalf of whom. It explores images produced by small pool of Ethiopian photographers who use local knowledge to contest global photographic discourses. It also examines

⁴ Save The Children (STC) has commissioned two recent visual materials prepared for peer education among sex workers and daily labourers respectively. Titled as *Addis Mela Le Hiwot*, both of education materials use visual aids intensively. However, since the visual aids prepared for daily labourers are snapshots of paintings, this research has not included how daily labourers are represented within STC.

photography as aesthetic material and as a tool to confront different subject positions of female bodies. Through case studies, this chapter investigates the perspectives of three photographers: Antonio Fiorente, Aida Muluneh and Micheal Tsegaye. In so doing this chapter analyses the least explored visual narratives of the everyday. These include portraits of people at work, leisure and other social and cultural activities of everyday adults and children. Chapter eight introduces a prologue to the study of images of children.

The final chapter provides a summary of the research to reflect on research questions as conclusions. The project concludes that contemporary practices of picturing or representations are far more complex than Afro-centric or Euro-centric perspectives. The perceptions of images and the photographic discourse interlock postfeminist understanding of the representation of bodies in relation to regionality or locationality in spaces of representations. The complexities of image and its inter-ocularly, that is to say the eye seeing things from different medium and then transforming it into other medium such as paintings, need a thorough understanding of the changing ways of seeing of female bodies traced through time.

Chapter Two

2. From Pre-colonial and Colonial Photography to Development and Development Aid Photography: A Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter maps out the scholarship about pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial representation. These materials provide better understanding and knowledge of the practices of picturing. The literature offers critical perspectives on representational practices that posit power as a major aspect of visual knowledge productions. Explorers, travellers, militant geographers (Hampson, 1995; Driver, 2001), and ethnographers were pioneers in picturing people and places. Scholarly writings about such imagery explain why looking back to pre-colonial photographic encounters is relevant in understanding contemporary representational practices about Africa. Colonial and post-colonial representations are inherently linked to each other. Postcolonial theory and colonial discourse theory have led to critical analyses of both historical and contemporary modes of representation, and the links between them. In the historical representation, the focus has been on historicising photographs by taking archives as unique repositories of documents through which to uncover unspoken issues. Postcolonial theory has examined the ways in which power works through representation by drawing on post-structuralism and feminism. Feminist ideas including gender discourses, and the approaches of post-modernist and postcolonial feminists provide critical lenses for examining contesting narratives about notions of civilisation and modernity in development imagery. These concepts argue that ‘women are made not born’ (Hekman, 1990; Freyberg, 2003).

Drawing on postcolonial and feminist discourses, the theoretical framing of this research outlines two major groups of scholarly works dealing with representation. The first set of literature deconstructs historical documentary photographs, while the latter is conceptual. Spanning from historical to contemporary practices of picturing, it reviews how people of Africa and Ethiopia in particular, have historically been pictured and represented, narrated and interpreted through the medium of documentary photography. It outlines how scholars interpret pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial photography and it situates the Ethiopian case within the broader literature on colonial and postcolonial photographic representations. Adopting interdisciplinary approaches, it further discusses major writings within the discipline of geography, visual history and art criticism. A review of such writings outlines the gap in conceptual as well as literary practices about documentary photography

and representations. I discuss the materiality of a photograph and the discourse of photography from different disciplines in order to articulate the idea of Judis Butler's performativity (Butler and Salih, 2004). Finally it narrows its focus on the scholarship of female bodies in Ethiopia. It identifies the relations between earliest practices of picturing with contemporary productions as metaphors for progress.

The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to provide the theoretical framework as well as attempt to outline a gap in the existing literature principally about contesting narratives in visual representations of female bodies in development aid. It outlines the dominant knowledge productions that have influenced gendered representational practices around the globe. Historicising the female subject in both the conceptual discussion and findings of academic research, it provides a link between geopolitical studies and postcolonial feminism. It starts with how Africa has been pictured and imagined with the coming of the camera to the continent.

2.2. The Making of Africa in Pre-colonial and Colonial Imagery

Africa's historical representation is central to understanding image production. The discovery of the camera as a mechanical device allowed European travellers to picture the unknown (Hayes, 1998). The image of Africa in pre-colonial times presented new people and places for exploitation. In the discourse of African visual imagery, scholars have explored the relationship between the colonizing camera and modernity. Landau (1998), Hayes (1998), and Hartman et al. (1998) have pointed out that the camera was a critical tool for conquest and colonial expansion. Prior to its advent, explorers and travellers identified and perpetuated master narratives about Africa as dark, barbaric, simple, savage and backward. Authors like Henry Stanley (*In Darkest Africa and Through the Dark Continent*) and Joseph Conrad (*Heart of Darkness*) identified the continent as a hostile place that needed to be saved and enlightened (Hampson, 1995; Jarosz, 1992).

Explorers also produced maps and fascinating images of nature that depicted the continent as a destination for adventure and eventual settlement. This type of exploration, termed as 'militant geography' (Hampson, 1995; Driver, 2001) then made use of weapons and military means to encroach further into the continent. This practice gave birth to the science of geography that assisted conquest under the pretext of 'objective' scientific enquiries. Such narratives were further solidified with 'surveillance' photographs that were used for colonial expansion (Hampson, 1995). Hartman et.al (1998) argue that cameras were

used for colonial expansion under the pretext of research and the documentation of Africa's natural and human condition. The 19th century technological development of paper and the distribution of printed photographs further conveyed to European viewers the idea that Africa's landscape, which was initially constructed as a 'hostile' and 'barren' continent, could become accessible as a land of adventures. Ethnographic photographs of colonies were specifically used to create sympathy and validate the inevitable call of conquest and colonial expansion among the European public (Edwards, 1992).

Ethnographers, explorers and travellers accompanied by administrators photographed Africans and the landscape for scientific and political reasons. Landau, (1998) and Hayes (1998) demonstrate how Hahn's hunting photographs narrate the superiority of white masters by equating native Africans with animals. The development of game parks, guns and the camera created numerous images that equated African locals with the hunted animal whereas European hunters were depicted as powerful and capable of dominating 'nature'. The homology of nature and native in the practice of ethnographic photographs dispossessed and dislocated Africans from cultural ownership. European compositions of imagined Africa were narrated not only to present the glory of Europe but also to trace and understand Europe's primitive roots (Spencer, 1992; Kaspin, 2002).

Ethnography, which flourished as a discipline during colonial times, also made ample use of 'anthropometric' images of women that perpetuated linear knowledge of the racial science of eugenics in natural science museums in countries like Apartheid South Africa, England and Germany (Spencer, 1992; Landau, 1998). Western armchair academics further added to their prejudices about the Global South, relying on the accounts and images of travellers, explorers, and missionaries. In most colonies, especially in southern Africa, a similar analogy was drawn upon between nature and native Africans. Europeans presented sub-Saharan Africans in particular as ancestors of 'modern man', and considered Africa's 'exotic' material culture as similar to the quintessentially pre-civilized version of Europe's primitive culture. Such analogies were manifestations of the prevailing colonial ideology that adopted modernizing a backward Africa as its motto to justify economic exploitation and domination. The colonial expansion of Europe in the 20th century paved the way to further solidify the creation of a master narrative about Africa (Kaspin, 2002).

In relation to development and colonialism as ideologies Mudimbe (1988) presents a critique of the display of African artefacts signifying barbarism and primitivism since contemporary art including painting and sculpture were attributed to western forms of

cultural expressions. He noted that this is a by-product of ‘the power-knowledge’ by which western ideologies were manifested in ethno-centrism, imperialism, anthropology, history and ethnography. Such knowledge productions construct Europeans as architects of modernity where the notion of the ‘savage’ became the component of the ideology of the modernized world.

In his seminal work, *Orientalism*, Edward Said urged scholars to critically analyse discourses on constructs of knowledge about the non-European world (especially what he called the ‘Orient’) which is based on the hegemony of Western culture (Said, 1978). Analysing stereotypes about the Middle East, Said categorizes knowledge productions into two major groups as the ‘Oriental’ and ‘Orientalist’. The construction of the orient as unchanging, static, and as an object of exploration by the orientalist typified the Middle East as an object of knowledge (Said, 1978: 308). This idea could be used beyond the Middle East as a conceptual space since Said’s category can be further extended to the global South. The South has become a territory to be gazed upon which ‘the power knowledge’ is manifested.

An ‘Orientalist’ depiction of people of the global South, a term that many borrow from Said, thus, magnifies the arbitrariness of historical image archive. Instead of focusing on visual forms as factual evidence, scholars have revealed the sense of ‘otherness’ created through discourse and driven by the desire for western superiority. The creation of a master narrative about the non-European other is achieved through the dissemination of such publications as the National Geographic and through such fields as the natural sciences, anthropology, and institutions such as natural science and ethnographic museums (Mitchell, 2006: 84; Collins et.al, 1993).

The turn from ‘primitive to modern’ was simultaneously supported first by eugenics theory, which argued that the improvement and ‘progress’ of human species is possible only through by in-breeding within its own race, and then by Darwin’s theory of evolution, which mapped a linear evolutionary path in the development of human beings (Kosek, 2006: 152-158). This latter idea was given visual form in presentations, especially in ethnographic and natural science museums (Mirzoeff, 2009: 130). The visual representation of non-western societies is, therefore, redefined, delineated and selected through the scientificity of the West. Supported by spectatorship and material commodification, the narrative of Africa as exotic, barbaric and simple still persists in various forms of visual culture (Jarosz, 1992).

Dominant displays of non-western communities in natural science and ethnographic museums can be thematically different from current media presentations. While they

reproduce the accepted narrative of the non-European world's exoticism and authenticity, they may exclude narration of starvation, poverty and under development from their permanent collections. Images of western mass media, newspapers and international development agencies perpetuate images of poverty since the issue is often prioritised in development (Yaeger, 2001; Jarosz, 1992). Development agendas use gender equality and empowerment as tools without necessarily making changes to the lives of the poor (Tembo, 2003; see also Kalu, 1996).

Even development policies that have attempted to speak with everyday people (such as participatory approach) are critiqued because they may not guarantee that the voices of everyday women would be heard (Parpart et.al, 2003: 46). Some scholars, like Arturo Escobar (2004) argue for a strong counter discourse to such notions of development. Escobar emphasises that development knowledge and ideologies neglect the hegemony of the Global North in shaping development activities and its discourses. These contesting narratives about development and its counter criticisms converge in the way that the 'Third World', including Africa is portrayed as dependent on the wealth and knowledge of the global North. The potential of women and other subaltern groups in and from the global South is underestimated. Such arguments are often referred to as postcolonial discourses that include other subaltern studies.

2.3. Representations in Post-colonial Traditions

Critical understanding of representations of Africa converges around notions of postmodernism and postcolonialism. The postmodernist tradition centres on identifying master narratives about the continent in order to give context and to deconstruct dominant representations. In so doing 'it refuses to turn the other into same' (During, 1995: 125). Postcolonial approaches focus on the relational aspects of Europeans with their colonies in order to give a broader picture of strategies and processes embedded in representing the local in trans-local relations (Tiffin, 1995: 95). It also traces the relations of such representational practices on contemporary development and aid images.

Visual geography scholars, art historians and visual culture critiques have combined anthropological and historical approaches to recast colonial images as an integral part of colonial ideologies (Clark et.al, 2005, Edwards, 1992). Art historians are engaged in contextualising these images within the personal and community relations of the colonized. They posit that during the colonial period, the camera had served as a significant tool that

produced images of difference. Geographical studies deconstruct the colonial practice of image making through the discourse of power relations in spatial representations. Scholars have revealed careful readings of such images, exposing ideas that were and are silenced in this process (Schwartz, 2003; Pinney, 2003; Hartman, 1998).

The exercise of recasting colonial images further shows that by objectifying the female body and naked children, visual representations of African women and children in particular exhibit manifestations of western power dominance. Marginalised women were viewed as objects for sexual and political consumption in Europe (Hayes, 2007a; Harman, 1998; Gerard & Pankhurst, 1996). When European expeditions came to the 'Dark Continent' with Camera Obscura, little respect was given to the dwellers (Minkley et.al, 1999: 96; Kratz, 2002: 107). The 'western gaze' dispossessed and de-contextualised the social and environmental context of Africans. Visualising a more accessible Africa in the 20th century produced a genre of landscape photography to deceptively authenticate the continent's wilderness. Africans (including Asian Africans) were posed next to western technological objects such as the telephone to reinforce the narrative that Europeans were the architects of modernisation in Africa through colonialism.

In the 1950s, the development of studio photography in southern and western Africa challenged representations of Europeans as wealthy and civilised while Africans were equated with nature. In Senegal, Nigeria and southern Africa local photography, especially contemporary studio portraiture, narrated stories of desire, modernity and civilisation, which stood in stark contrast to previous narratives of barbarism and savagery in travellers' accounts and anthropological studies (Hayes, 2007; Sprague, 2003; Mustafa, 2001). Pinney (2003) argues that the focus on political imaginations (Anderson, 1995) neglects other social narratives that operated outside of the political arena. Through such discourses the 'authentic' culture of Africa is performed (Ebron, 2002).

One of the space of deconstruction and contextualisation of such exotic representations is gallery or museum space. Hence, picturing Africans by Africans is juxtaposed in relation to how they were viewed by their western counterparts (Kaspin & Landau, 2002). Criticizing South Africa's exhibitionary methods of deconstructing 'native' identity issues that started in the 1990s, Jenny Robinson (2002: 118) points out the link between 'cultural othering' and self-visualization. She explains that both sides participate in detaching the disliked part of the self into the other and reflect 'the recognition of common humanity, and valued part of the self in the other too'. Europeans and Africans both considered modernity positive endeavour as opposed to primitivism.

Such relational elements are essential in this research since the current practice of photography cannot be disentangled from the history of the genre in the global context of the politics of representation. Representational practices are relevant since they make use of certain elements of the local reality to inform or narrate about the South in trans-local relations (Ebron, 2002). While African scholars were preoccupied with the search for alternative narratives, Western-centred knowledge production has a tendency of maintaining historical superiority over the global South.

Since the 1960s, and further exacerbated by the Cold War, global image production has shifted its theme from just exoticising the global South to that of dominance over it (Collins, 1993: 113). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006) posits that the global phenomenon transforms certain localized visual forms into ‘trans-local’ perspectives as representing a nation’s identity. In so doing, the global transformation affects the way a nation composes its identity visually as it has to appeal to a larger audience. On the politics of representation, Kratz (2002) has highlighted the complex interplay of representation in an exhibitionary space. She stresses that in photographic exhibition, the meaning that one attaches may vary from the other depending on the dialogue that it creates. Images are open to be interpreted by the artists, by curators, by discourse analysts and other professionals (Mitchell, 2006: 47). These critiques are used to re-situate documentary works within the larger literature that takes photography as an uneasy medium for materiality, discourse, subject-object relations, ‘self’ and ‘other’ representations.

The postcolonial approach illuminates the process and strategies that link historical power relations of the west with the non-west in addressing contemporary urgent social issues in Africa (Mitchell, 2006: 47). Studies in the iconography of women and children demonstrate this concept. Scholars stress the inseparable media composition of women and children by linking the narration of barbarism with dependency and dominance over it (Manzo, 2008; Moeller, 2002). Others have studied pictorial production of knowledge by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the mass media employing the psychoanalytic, fetish theory and development models such as gender and human rights issues. The western portrayal of Africa that makes ample use of the metaphor of childhood as a ‘period of dependency’ and African women as helpless victims of disaster, seem inclined to confirm the West’s own insecurities (Burman, 1994; Childs, 2006). Humanist images that show the sufferings of Africa are produced and distributed on the assumption that they will instil sympathy that will eventually lead to economic and social change. Such productions have contributed immeasurably to the politics of representation by perpetuating the notion that

Africa is unable to survive without aid agencies. These discourses of aid and development further sustain the political and economic dominance of the West over Africa. Combined with the pluralist approach of image-making, scholars reveal how these institutions employ new techniques to legitimize their existence irrespective of the paradox that they entail (Bleiker & Kay, 2007; Manzo, 2008). The changing tactics of various NGOs sometimes include the views of the represented as active participants in creating credibility (Vieira & Runciman, 2008).

In mainstream media, among governmental or non-governmental institutions, and in academic inquiries of the arts, images of the body are the site upon which contestation over meaning take place. The narrative of African nations as frozen in time still persists sustained by the knowledge-production of western mainstream media. The interpretation of images of women and girls of Ethiopia in particular may, therefore, provide insights on the link between colonial and the postcolonial visual representations. Apart from 5 years of Italian occupation, there was no direct political domination, but Ethiopia was exposed to the European ways of seeing Africans as a homogenous group. This will be discussed further through an analysis of 1930s postcards in chapter four.

2.4. Postcolonial Discourses

Many of the concepts of representation come from post-structural and postcolonial theory, including feminist studies. A conceptual understanding of the visual representation of women and children oscillates between a theory of construction and its critiques. The works of post-structural thinkers such as Foucault and Derrida, and their notion of power and subject relations as determinant in representing people, influenced the discursive analysis of postcolonial literature. Their critique of 'binary oppositions' such as North/South into more fluid geographic entities was adopted in the discourse of geographical representation.

Postcolonial literature in particular has articulated the dynamics of knowledge and power in representing space. The major concern is contextualizing contemporary narration about spaces by tracing histories of representation in pre-colonial and colonial times in the form of metaphors (Jarosz, 1992). Based on western sources of information, some scholars took television news and newspapers as their sight of analysis to deconstruct media portrayals of the political landscapes of the Global South as different from the Global North (Struver, 2006; Campbell, 2007). Others hold that the global aid imagery perpetuates and solidifies differences even though its objective is to minimize such inequalities (Bleiker & Kay, 2007). Such global narration of aid agencies not only reproduces global disparities, but also gender disparities, since feminisation of such inequalities seem to dominate the imagery (Struver, 2007; Campbell, 2003; Campbell, 2007). The visual performances in drought affected areas construct the notion of difference through their gendered representations (Campbell, 2007).

Deconstruction disrupts the perceived stable differences between geographical boundaries. The iconographies of women and children studies are still important aspects in forming identities of people through agential representations such as media and international charity institutions. Even though there is a problematic use of images of Ethiopian and other African women and girls to inform human and environmental phenomena, the study of spatial representation limits itself to symbolic interpretations. Our understandings of spatial representations have been shaped by geopolitical studies and postcolonial literatures on the historiography of representations that posit power as a major factor in the practices of picturing. Spatial studies have focused on visualizations of Africa that reflect histories of picturing that depict non-European countries through a lens of 'othering' (Schwartz, 2003; McEwan, 2009).

This notion is often criticized for taking women and children as muted subjects (Blunt et.al, 2003; Blunt and McEwan, 2002). Few scholars have also started questioning whether

spatial representations can be distinctively viewed from its people. Interrogating feminist geographers' emphasis on bodies, Valentine (2007) articulates, 'the significance of space in processes of subject formation'. In order to understand such relations, David Campbell (2007) emphasizes the relevance of the visual field that naturalises women in Darfur. Many would agree that representation involves how images are used to provide meaning. It interrogates inter-textualities of representational practices in different spaces. How is this meaning contested? Could interpretations of symbolism be extended to the subjects that it uses as figures? With the coming of gender as major development issue, feminist studies have become useful analytical tools for interrogating representations of bodies in visual narratives.

2.5. Gender and Visual Culture

The visual is a medium that attracts different disciplines and ideologies. Dominant discussions include media studies and motion picture studies, including cinema and documentaries. This literature resonates with concepts from feminisms, post-structuralism, post-modernism and postcolonial feminist approaches (see chapter one for definitions). While setting the major debates, this section identifies themes and differences within the scholarship. There are two major arguments in academic debates about gender and visual representations. The first argument is that gender studies should reveal various suppressed and disadvantaged positions to foster change in the material and human rights of women and girls (Ross & Byerly, 2004). The second debate argues that such visual productions unintentionally maintain differences and inequalities that eventually shape our knowledge of women and girls of the Global South (Marris & Thornham, 1999).

Feminists, including postcolonial feminist writers agree that the practical problems that women face partly come from the disadvantaged position that they occupy around the globe. Feminist writers engaging in the practical aspects of changing the lives of girls and women often find the issues of representations not only political but irrelevant to the lives of the disadvantaged. Feminist studies blur the distinct lives of the photographic image from that of the lives of subjects in a photograph. These major debates also have similar viewpoint on the existence of different feminisms, rather than a homogeneous feminist approach that could be applicable around the globe. Since feminism as a political movement started earlier in Euro-American academic writings, it is better to follow western versus non-western feminisms as critical approaches to analysing development imagery and representations.

2.5.1. Western versus Non-western Feminisms

Western versus non-western feminisms as separate concepts partly came from the history of feminists who examined the problem of applying feminist concepts as homogenous theory. Initially western feminists during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s articulated the various forms of social hierarchies that disadvantaged women. Studies of gender and visual culture, therefore, revolve around the continuous clash between these scholars who articulate the power of the visual for socio-economic change and/or knowledge production (Kuhn, 1996). In this debate, feminist media studies argue that the media plays an important role in informing women's issues that have been subsumed within the racial, class, and gender inequality discourse. One major critique is that a focus on discourse neglects the real problems of poverty. Its counter discourse claims that feminists' collaboration with the mainstream media to expose woman's suppression makes it lose its poignancy. Such coverage and portrayals may lead to stereotypical representation. Some feminists oppose the reproduction of difference that has the potential to maintain pre-established power relations, particularly in mainstream media (Wilson, 2007: 22).

In media studies some feminist theorists argue that women are used as objects of beauty that depict unequal representation, while later feminist works negate the notion of the gaze as viewers confront the blurring of binaries such as object/subject, private/public, male/female, and spectacle/ spectator (Wright, 1996: 404). Illustrating the case of the Taliban government, and the support for Afghan women that the media tries to solicit, some argue that the media is continuously critiqued for promoting sexist attitudes, especially in studies that assess portrayals of women. In this respect, Karen Ross (2004: 66) stresses the point that the empowerment of women by taking responsibilities in media productions alter the gendered and sexist representation that lower women in power structures. Cynthia Carter & Linda Steiner (2004: 16) perceive this as obsolete. They shift their focus to the way in which the media becomes a challenging space, where the visual economy, institutional power and media ownership come into play in representational practices.

Ever since Mulvey's (1989) psychoanalytical male gaze theory, gender scholars in Europe and America have engaged with gaze theory in their quest for the representation of the female subject in the context of sexual visual desires and fantasy through patriarchy. According to Mulvey, the male gaze is the pleasure obtained from looking at an eroticized object. Adopting Freudian psychoanalytic theory, Mulvey noted that the 'scopophilia' of sexual

pleasure obtained from watching an erotic woman shows a pre-existing male gaze. She assumes that the spectators of an erotic object in the screen and the audience in the cinema are male. She identifies two kinds of looking: 'voyeuristic' looking and 'fetishistic' looking. The former is the controlling gaze that makes use of sadism to obtain satisfaction by looking at the beauty or sexual act, while the latter is a substitute for an idealized 'fetish' which arouses sexual desire. In both cases a woman is a powerless, passive participant and object to be looked at. According to Mulvey, a woman does not gain pleasure from such screen scenes (Mulvey, 1989).

Adopting the male gaze concept, masculinity and patriarchy as major sources of suppression were magnified in the discussion of motion pictures, especially in the USA and Britain since the 1980s and early 1990s. The relations between audience and spectatorship were not yet in the discussion. Such studies have contributed to the anti-essentialist debate of gender. For instance, Fuery and Mansfield (1997) critiqued the male gaze as based on patriarchy that mollifies the act of looking. They argue that Mulvey concentrated on the observer's gaze and the ways in which visual narratives control the gaze. It is too subjective and individualistic. It assumes that the visual text is more powerful than the observer. Fuery and Mansfield argue that the pleasure obtained from looking depends on how one reads and perceives, rather than on just a male gaze. This idea bi-passes the interaction between the observer and the scene, which in turn makes the observer part of the scene and text. They claim that Mulvey neglects the idea that interaction between the observer and the text is negotiated 'in the absence of the sight of the gaze' (Fuery & Mansfield, 1997: 83).

Feminist and post-feminist studies draw their ideologies from studies that primarily lay the foundations of the construction of gender inequalities through institutions and organisations. Their philosophical ideologies come from Butler's theory of 'performativity' that insists on the social construction of gender and sex. On issues of subjectivity, Butler's major contribution is her analysis of the in-acted performance through discourses that naturalize binary sex existence. Her conceptualization of performativity as a 'resignification' of agency, with a need for a specific historical context, is of particular importance. The gendered body from Butler's perspective explains idealizing identity is an effect of corporeal significations. Explaining the performativity of such identification of gender, Salih and Butler (2004: 32) stress that signals, gestures, acts and even words are shown upon 'the surface of the body' through enacted performance of institutions. While acknowledging this contribution, Nicholson (1996) supports Benhabib's claims that Butler fails to explain how

individuals can be disentangled from other social processes. She calls for further theoretical understanding as to how agencies become possible through discourses.

Hey (2006) disagrees with Benhabib (Nicholson, 1996) and noted an important contribution of Judith Butler as the distinction between the self and the other as seen in the acts and desires of the body. What is essential is the psychological status of the self when it interacts with the politics of identity that tends to represent the body in the pursuit of institutions. The act of gendering the body is reproduced through mimesis. Through repetition, gender is performed which is already established through means of social orders. Actors and presenters may use different methods or techniques to deceive and convince the audience. Hey claims that entirety of gender is only inscribed in disembodied form. In this argument, Butler refuses to accept the contention of post-feminist theorists of the west who shift their focus to people rather than gender. Rather than focusing on the sex of gender, it is better to look at it as a site for political contest where sexuality, sex roles and gender are interwoven in subject formation (Jones, 2003: 33). Such constructs of gender are related to the materiality of photographs that may exist in their own world than to claims of reality.

Barad (2003: 807) discusses the materiality of matter by criticizing the construct of ideas. Such knowledge has silenced the 'object' or the represented itself. This is particularly true when applied to photographic images of women and children as subjects of symbolic analysis in spatial representations. In her 'agential realist ontology', the constructivist idea of representation is critiqued for making a clear distinction between the presenter and the represented at the site of representation, in this context the photograph. Her notion of object-subject intra-active relations creates the phenomenon that makes the two inseparable. In such a way discursive practice is the 'in-acting performance' of the knowledge of representation.

The above concept is related to claims of psychoanalysis theory. Despite critiques, gender and sexuality studies often use psychoanalysis as a useful instrument to expose not just the social and economic differences between men and women, but also the human psyche in picturing or filming the female subject. Fictions are reflections of social realities. In the case of African Americans and Latina woman, the deconstruction of the female subject in the U.S cinema up to the mid-20th century shows that these subjects were portrayed negatively (Jones, 2001; Freydborg, 2003). African Americans were in particular portrayed as close to nature, and fertile enough to maintain the population of slaves in the plantations. These scholars agree that there is no one category of feminist theory that encompasses the

representation of women across space and time. Feminisms instead of feminism acknowledge the presence of plural issues of women rather than homogenizing women's issues across the globe (Narian, 2010). The divergence among African American artists in the USA starts with an argument that Black women were not given characters other than pre-existing stereotypes. Hollywood is especially critiqued for producing films to maintain the pre-existing class and racially sexualised relations (Freiberg, 2003: 282).

Adopting such theory, Catherine Nash (1996) examines the relationship between masculinity and the construction of landscape. Citing Gillian Rose and Susan Fords's (1994) assertion on the feminisation of landscape, Nash argues that women are taking the initiative to challenge such perspectives by subverting the gaze; that is by producing the male body. She argues that such image production nullifies the centre/periphery, masculine/feminine construction of the subject. By doing so Nash agrees with Allen (2006) that naive visual pleasure is mutually constitutive to all irrespective of biological sex. The questions resonate between the relations of power of oppression that go beyond sexuality.

Barbara Smith (2001), Beryl Wright (1996) and Catherine Nash (1996) argue for the importance of works by women artists in subverting the gaze. Smith and Wright focus on the relevance of black women artists who may confront identity constructs, particularly in the U.S context. Beryl Wright (1996) explored the photographic works of Lorna Simpson and argued that it is too artificial to isolate visuals from the cultural and historical setting. While investigating knowledge formations through aesthetics in relation to spectators, Wright makes a point that such visual formations are important especially from a black feminist perspective that narrates personal and communal experiences. Wright (1996) and Jones (2001) negate historical objectifications and commodification of the photographic image of black female bodies that are confronted in the medium itself. Unlike white feminist theorists such as Nash (1996), Wright and Jones assert that understanding the representation of a black woman requires a scrutiny of other social realities such as class, gender and sex roles other than patriarchy and sexuality. Hence film and photographic productions play a major role in insider versus outsider perspectives, between white women and black women. Class, erotica and analogy to nature diverts African American film makers to produce a genre of independent African American film making.

Wright examines the representational practices of aesthetic photography. Wright claims the works of a photographer as 'reconstructing from an empiricist model of careful,

idiosyncratic observation of detail, a mode of representation which argues the photographer as montour, detective and critical journalist' (Wright, 1996: 402). In this sense Wright stresses the relevance of alternative narratives where artists confront dominant representations. Similarly, Zonole (Bajorek & Haney, 2010: 1-2) of South Africa took the self-representation of the lesbian body as a postcolonial language to challenge the colonial inscription of all black women as heterosexual and as belonging to one ethnic minority.

2.5.2. Postcolonial Feminist Approaches

Many of the studies of female subjects and their representation are influenced by post-structural thinkers such as Foucault and Derrida. Their notion of power and subject relations as determinant in representing people influenced the discursive analysis of feminist theories (Phelan, 1990: 424). Their critique of 'binary oppositions' such as North/South into more fluid geographic entities was adopted in critiques of representation (Hekman, 1990; Spivak, 2002; Grotz, 1994; Blunt & Rose, 1994). Feminists divert their aim to reveal the suppressed voices of female subjects rather than silencing them in the interpretive process. Hence, instead of 'speaking about' or 'speaking for', 'speaking with' the subjects is considered as ethically appropriate. The differences start with western feminists who see sexuality and patriarchy as major forms of inequality, whereas non-western feminists focus more on race, ethnicity and economic roles as polarities of women's suppressions (Spivak, 1998; Mohanty, 2003).

In postcolonial studies the politics of representation is often explained in the imagery of women and girls as homologous where masculine power is enacted in the process of 'othering'. The visual language of 'othering' manifests in the production of eroticized images of the black female body (Jones, 2003). Such representation of historical discourses should be analysed within the specific time and genre from which they originate (Carby, 1983).

Such feminist notions need an understanding of how the local is informed by the global, and vice versa. The national and the global use certain elements of the local to inform both the local and the global (Friedman, 1994; Kratz & Karp, 2006: 6). New geographies unsettle the fixation of identities into a certain space. This concept incorporates gender, race, and class perspectives with changing identities due to mobility. This includes the back and forth movements of the diaspora, global relations and 'circuitry of cyberspace'. Blunt and Rose (1994) put forward discourses of geographical identities of women emerging in the 1980s and 1990s. These range from difference in the types of suppression to subject positions.

Rather than the identity of self being singular, it is interwoven with other categories such as race, ethnicity, and sexuality (Bobo, 2001). Contradictions over identity formation are understood through 'relationality', 'situational subjectivity', and 'hybridity'.

Postcolonial feminist studies that deal with the deconstruction of the dominant representation of African and Asian women contest on the objectification of female bodies and about transmissions of knowledge on feminist issues around the globe (Saunders, 2002). The divergence begins with an exploration of situated knowledge in specific geographical settings and cultural contexts. Hence, irrespective of their race, some scholars argue that the gender or sex category of a woman is a by-product of western feminist discourse that has different concerns from that of third world feminist writers (Irigaray, 2003).

Even though it is problematic to generalise about western feminist work, Mohanty (1991) criticizes these for producing homogenous representations of 'Third World' women. Feminist studies that specifically advocate change, progress and development propagate or even construct knowledge of women of Africa and Asia as being economically dependent, oppressed, sexually abused and culturally burdened. Some argue that objectifying 'Third World' women may happen in feminist attempts to create awareness about women's issues in Asia and Africa. Western feminist writers, as well as non-western feminist writers, criticize the discursive practices that homogenize the material reality of third world women. Their major departure lies in understanding of power relations. Unlike western feminists, black feminists argue that objectifying a black female body goes beyond patriarchy and gender differentials. 'Othering' is specifically maximised through the eroticization of the black female body. Hence, they argue that one must look at the social relations such as race, class, and the political economy of capitalism to gain a thorough understanding of the representation of Third World women.

Postcolonial theorists from Asia have taken this argument further in revealing the relevance of non-western feminist writers on representation issues. Rajan (1993) made the point that the concept of representation in feminist postcolonial studies of Asia explicitly shows the thematic mediation of what is constructed and what is 'real'. She further argues that mapping the space of the postcolonial female subject should consider the material objectivity of the body in history. The continuity of Edward Said's (1978) accounts of *Orientalism* in the neo-oriental materiality of a female body should be included to have a thorough understanding about the emergence of disembodied knowledge. This concept of the

neo-oriental material objectification of a female body is relevant to this research. The notion of progress in rural development studies discursively contribute to the feminisation of the rural landscape. The synonymous use of images of women and children of Ethiopia in natural disaster news lead us to question the continuation of nature versus nurture, or the mother earth narratives of the past. It is these differences that make mandatory the inclusion of non-western feminist writers like Spivak and Mohanty.

Mohanty (2002) in her 'feminist solidarity model' provides a self-criticism of her previous work, *Under Western Eyes*. She acknowledges the existence of western women activists in anti-global movements. With media portraits of women of the Global South, she deconstructs the binary formations of local versus global. Mohanty pointed out that the global is made possible through the local, and hence the two must not be considered as distinct geographical locations, but coexist simultaneously. Knowledge produced about the majority in the South has been in relation to what has happened in the global North. She acknowledges the continuous stereotypical representation of the 'masculinist' discourse of spatial representation in geopolitical discourses of agency. The paradox of development is that its agenda has become the subject of geographical imaginations through which power is envisaged in the act of developing. Feminist contentions about women's empowerment reproduce the exercises of power over which the hegemony of the West in the form of binaries is replicated. It is the rewriting of the subaltern studies by tracing histories of the space that makes the postcolonial approach relevant (McEwan, 2001; McEwan, 2009).

Spivak (1998) argues that the subaltern subject must take part in the representation process by historicising and tracing the power of difference in subject-object formations. In both textual and visual productions, Europe has made itself the centre of the world objectifying the rest. In due course she contends that women are doubly muted, due to imperialism, capitalism, race, gender and patriarchy gestures (Spivak, 1985: 245).

Ethiopia is a unique geographical example through which to explore the relationship between the colonial and postcolonial representation of female bodies. Rajan (1993) asks if there is a non-contaminated geographical boundary that was not affected by the political domination of the West through ideologies such as colonialism & imperialism. Historical postcard images of Ethiopia can explain the creation of colonial photographs in the absence of direct political domination.

In a similar fashion post-feminist notions also argue that rather than seeing popular culture as a major source of departure from feminist perspectives, it should be viewed as a unique site where negotiations as well as struggle over the creation of meaning takes place. Such debates claim that fictions are reflections of reality. The literature about western versus eastern feminists stresses differences rather than similarities. In contrast, postcolonial thinkers and post-feminists show their solidarity by focusing on some elements of 'sisterhood,' rather than either 'universal sisterhood' or difference. In reversing the binaries between the North/South, the written/the silenced, the centre/periphery, post-modernism and postcolonialism focus on giving voices to historically marginalized groups (Genz and Brabon, 2009: 25-27).

In a similar way McEwan (2009) has pointed out the cause of discrepancy between western and non-western feminists. The divergence is that western feminists do not show the convergence of multiple identities such as race, and other socio-economic strata. Development agendas that are built upon the idea of progress argue that feminism and postcolonial thought intersect in revealing ideals of patriarchy, and dependency on capital of the global North. It further articulates intellectual works as the centre of medium through which intersections of 'locationality', 'globality' and 'translocality' is contested in the formation of gendered-spaces, as well as the formation of gender based imagined geographies.

'Postcolonialism is increasingly seeking for 'the third space' (McEwan, 2009: 102) where meanings are mediated, negotiated and intersect different stakeholders. Postcolonial writers specially focus on 'encounters' or 'contact zones' to study identity formations (Amoamo, 2011). Such encounters, which were initially based on power relations such as colonialism, imperialism, & apartheid, were maintained in both textual and visual narratives about women of the global South (Schwartz and Ryan, 2003). Some western researchers and writers argue that the diaspora is accredited for producing mediated knowledge about Africa. Such discourses are advocated by, for instance, women intellectuals who share identities with disadvantaged groups such as African Americans (Robinson, 1994: 218). In the case of West Africa, articulating the works of British women writers, McEwan (1994: 93-94) examines the power relations of native Africans with British women writers. She argues that these pioneering writers were able to use gender commonality to investigate social practices considered 'secrets' such as polygamy and female genital mutilation. It is acknowledged that such writings have revealed private lives of Africans that would not have been accessed by male travellers and anthropologists. However, while showing the positive values of Africans,

McEwan also discusses the dangers in elevating female travellers as feminist heroic figures who successfully fought patriarchy in the British Empire, without acknowledging that they also exercised relative power over African women.

After colonialism, mediated knowledge productions are inevitable as separate spaces of representations as 'same' & 'other' are hardly organised by different entities (Robinson, 1994: 218). The spaces of representations include photography, films and fictions. Scholars use fiction and films as postcolonial narratives, especially those dealing with cultural encounters that were cast in African settings. In such intercultural visual encounters of narratives, difference rather than sameness becomes an essential component through which a story is narrated (Mul, 2009). Such analysis demands a move from psychoanalytical explanation, which focuses on desire, to spatial explanations where the plot happens (Ellapen, 2007). African film makers who reflect postcolonial thoughts in their works are viewed in relation to their contemporaries in the U.S, particularly with Hollywood film makers, as well as around the world. Hence, postcolonial African films are juxtaposed whether or not they are antithesis of western forms of African memory.

African cinemas are viewed through cultural encounters of difference as well as diffusions, partly because of diaspora movements and 'locality'. In post-modernist literature, studies of African cinema show that there are differences in the way a local African may film other Africans in comparison to foreign film makers. In the case of South Africa for instance, Ellapen (2007) argues that the space of the township is fixed as static and poverty ridden, while its growth and the movement of people are neglected. Hence, historicizing such places in relation to the history of apartheid is relevant. David Murphy (2000) claims that the burden of African cinema is to meticulously debate the authentic representation of Africa in general, and to expose suppressed issues in Hollywood popular culture. Film and cinema studies thus question spatial representations in relation to the people who inhabit places.

Contextualizing colonial as well as postcolonial representation is, therefore, relevant to the deconstruction of existing power relations. In relation to visual material, postcolonial critique suggests that in urban spaces, including exhibition spaces, no work has a value [better] than the next (Fernandez, 2003). Postcolonial studies in particular show that the distinction between virtual and actual bodies as symbols ignore the real lived body used to inscribe [the bodies] of colonized and neo-colonized peoples. Fixing identities of the human subject is thus challenged and contested. Knowledge is partial and its claims are influenced

by its adopted theoretical concepts and propositions. This knowledge is both about inclusion and exclusions. Individuals may confront this partiality by producing film or photographs or by recasting existing works to create new dialogue. The following section briefly discusses the possibilities of creating this dialogue through a discussion of museums and galleries as spaces of representation.

2.6. Towards Gendering Museum and Exhibition Spaces

Museum and gallery as spaces of exhibitions have played a significant role in identity formations. In internationally known grand museums and galleries, permanent displays are often dominated by surrealist paintings of the nude body. Through time, museum and gallery spaces have developed from spaces of displays of collections of material culture to spaces where new dialogue and new narratives are formed by different actors. From the earliest to contemporary spaces of representations, museums and galleries have created narratives about identities and geographies. Scholars have largely focused on profiles of artists than the content of the art object.

In contemporary writings, museum and gallery exhibitions, contextualizing material objects has transformed these spaces into places where contestations over meanings occur. Maxwell (1999) and Bennett (1995) have traced the earliest exhibitions that took place in major cities such as in Paris, London and New York. In the late 19th century these events used the live bodies of natives from Africa in order to construct an image of a civilized western world and the myth of the purity of the white race. The earliest exhibitions that were based upon a few collections of material culture were used to construct natives (Americans, Africans and Asians) as primitives (Rollwag, 1988). Such narratives about the peoples of Africa and the landscapes in which they lived have been constructed in ethnographic museums that display ancient civilisations. In some early exhibitions a nation's artefacts, as well as photographs, were displayed to authenticate staged identities of 'self' and 'other' in a specific way. Contemporary gallery spaces often speak back to the constructions of gendered geographies. The white space of galleries offer a similar milieu to that of art museums in the ways in which these objects are displayed free from their histories of exegeses, standing independently from their history of collections (O'Doherty, 1999: 15). Few writings about these exhibition materials question the persistence of gendered bodies and their constructs of our physical and psychological worlds (O'Reilly, 2009; Duncan, 1995: 119).

Duncan stresses that the ‘de-gendered’ display of these objects implicitly indicate the art museum or gallery space as a masculine space, despite the fact that there are a growing number of women participants in the curatorial practices. Critics of nude body representations and the continuous portrayal of prostitutes are indications of ‘the male sexual appetites’ rather than of the female body representations (Duncan, 1995). In those institutions female figures appear as symbols, but not as speakers. Imaging the nude subject has been centred on the female body. Tagg (1994: 84) interpreted such representations as ‘regimes of sense and pleasure in which the feminine is excluded from the privileged institutions, locations, languages, and subject positions’. The body and its representations have centred on the power of the gaze even in the absence of direct looking.

Questioning whose voice is heard, or whether or not elites can ‘speak for’, ‘speak back’ or ‘speak with’ (Spivak, 2002) can help us examine photographers’ roles in altering subject formations. Through time the nude photographic portraits of Ethiopians have shifted from being objects of beauty to objects of misery and suffering due to historical visual events themed around famine and malnutrition. Local photographers can offer works outside of what the visual economy demands in spaces such as the mainstream media and international galleries. Museums and privately owned galleries have different functions. In the Ethiopian context, unlike museums that are state owned and often political spaces, privately owned galleries offer a better space for social issues. This is not, however, to argue that spaces of exhibition in Ethiopia are frozen in time. With the coming of women gallery owners, curators and art historians, we have seen transformations in the way gender is brought into public spaces.

2.7. Historicising Representations of Ethiopians

After the British Napier expedition⁵ of 1868 to Ethiopia, historical images of Ethiopia show that the introduction of modernisation was inevitable without conquest and colonialism. When a camera was introduced to picture Ethiopian royal dignitaries, prevailing representations of African kings as barbaric were challenged. The camera had been used extensively to document the activities of royal dignitaries. Court photography flourished as early as the 1890s, a period when Emperor Minelik II became the first known Ethiopian to learn how to operate a camera. The introduction of a camera to the royal court of Minelik was

⁵ The British Napier expedition to Ethiopia was a military expedition to free a jailed British man under the government of Emperor Tewodros. Among the group was a photographer who produced photographs of everyday people during the journey from Sudan to Ethiopia (Gerard and Pankhurst, 1996).

not a product of conquest. Alfred Ilg, a Swiss engineer who was hired as Minelik's advisor, introduced the camera to Minelik's royal court (Pankhurst, 2011; See also Gerard and Pankhurst, 1996). His photographic portrayal of Minelik and his officials is in stark contrast to photographic narratives produced in the rest of Africa. Unlike southern African chiefs, travellers and visitors were confronted with the costumes of the royal court and had to portray fully-clothed Ethiopian kings. Visualising the dress code of the royal family of Ethiopia reached at a climax during Emperor Haile Selassie's period symbolising the intricacy of his personality (Werts, 2010: 109 & 110). This reality meant it was difficult to represent royal dignitaries using similar stereotypes usually applied to Africa. The presence of a centralized state structure with a complex government system and court culture challenged European perceptions of African political cultures. During the Italian occupation Ethiopia was, however, subject to a more damning narrative produced by the Italians, such as the involvement of Ethiopia's ruling classes in the slave trade long after it was officially abolished (Pankhurst, 1996).

From ethnography to accounts of geographical societies and explorers, the earliest writings and visual productions about Abyssinia had similar narratives of dominance. A number of explorers who came to Ethiopia as early as the 1840s produced East Africa as a site for scientific study, particularly geography and ethnography. Expeditions were a product of collaborations between ethnographic associations focused on Africa working closely with the Royal Geographical Society (Krapf, 1860: 19). For instance, ethnographers such as Evans Pritchard (1940) produced visual images of the Nuer who lived along the borders of Southern Sudan and Ethiopia. Without denying the value of his detailed pioneering accounts of the Nuer's and Anuak's livelihoods, he also published images of their nude bodies of the peoples he encountered. These were undoubtedly political in purpose, since he had served as a spy to the then British colonial officers, who were seeking to further control the mobility of these pastoralist communities.

Western photographers were predominantly men who composed eroticized images of naked or semi-naked women. Among the early 20th century explorers who produced ethnographic images of Abyssinia and the Middle East was Wilfred Thesiger. He had visited the Afar region and its communities as early as 1933 during his sojourn: - Abyssinia and later Arabia (Asher, 2003). Thesiger visited the Awash River basin in the Afar region at the age of 23. As a young explorer, he portrayed an Afar woman as a nude Ethiopian princess in exactly the same pose as Henri Fehr's painting of Andromeda, a mythical subject based on Greek

mythology. At that time European surrealist painters were influenced by Greek Mythologies (see Permanent exhibition at Tate Gallery, London). Despite the fact that Theziger was born and raised in the British Embassy in Addis Ababa, his imagination was influenced by European realist paintings. As such practices became less popular in Europe, European photographers have composed images of anthropometric female bodies which did not differ from pornographic images both in their form and usage (see chapter 3, pg. 45 for detail). This was part of the tradition of representing female nudity that replaced western fantasies of symbolic beauty with a likeness to reality (O'Reilly, 2009).

Despite his long stay in Ethiopia and exposure to different parts of the Middle East, Theziger made derogatory comments about a photography book by McCullin (2005). His perspective on McCullin's nude body portraits of ethnically organized groups of women in the Southern regions of Ethiopia was as 'troubled Eden'. These groups include the Surma, Ghelaeb, Dassenech, Erbo, Bene, Bodi, and the lip-plated Mursi women. McCullin's photographic productions do not explain or contextualise the cultural values of body decorations. Printed on a hard cover of McCullin's (2005) book, Theziger further makes a derogatory comment that 'as exploration of the planet extends there are few corners of the earth untouched or unattained by contact with the civilized world'. Rather than seeing photographs of landscapes as 'contact zones' vested with a tourist gaze, Theziger interpreted them as evidence of Africa's primitiveness in relation to western civilisation. Photographing bodies as staged and organized performances continues to portray few communities as static others where their everyday culture and livelihood are omitted from visual narratives.

Representations of the Omo valley and their inhabitants, in particular, have increasingly reproduced Ethiopia as an ethnographic landscape where different components of culture are overly produced as exotic, other and static. The lip-plated Mursi women were particularly subject to photographic coverage because of the practice of piercing the lower lip to wear a wide plate. Contextualising the ceremonial values of such practice, Turton (2004) has argued that the photographic imagery of Mursi women are reappearance of the authentic despite the fact that wearing plates for girls at present has more to do with obtaining money from tourists than maintaining costumes. Images that de-contextualize the ceremonial values of the Mursi's body piercing practices begun with Vittorio Bottego, who led an expedition by some members of the Italian Geographical Society from the Omo valley to Lake Turkana in 1896. Vannutelli and Carlo Citerni described these people as close to animals and their women as 'ugly' and 'detesting'. Hence, a production of such imagery was not always as

objects of beauty (Turton, 2004: 6 Citing Vannutelli, L & Citerni, C., 1899, translation by Turton).

Coming back to McCullin's (2005) body of works, Thesiger's short book review printed on a hard cover of this book claimed that 'Africa's tribal people can present another face of the exotic to those of us in modern, developed cultures especially if the photography recognises nothing of their dignity but all of their exoticism'. This narrative is a product of the hegemony of western culture where a small number of Ethiopian communities near Omo valley are overly gazed upon to legitimize Ethiopia, and by extension Africa, as traditional, primitive, ethnographic landscape almost unknown to the rest of the world. The authentic images of people are overly transformed into photographic images because visuals are essential components for performing identities (Hall, 2006).

There are limited scholarly works dealing with images of Ethiopian women. Simmon (2004) discussed the origins of chromolithographic prints often identified as Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. Simmon's other work on lip-plated Mursi women in the southern fringes of Ethiopia explores tourists' negotiations in picturing exotic images. The perpetuations of such representations by the National Tourism Organisation (NTO) continue to burden the South Omo region as a bearer of exotic traditions (Turton, 2004). The pastoralist community of East Africa, such as the Masai of Kenya and Tanzania, are reproduced as authentic contemporary societies who are often portrayed as obstacles and as resistant to change and development activities (Galaty, 2002).

Those historical ways of seeing traditional societies fall into the same genre as photojournalism. Both are used to document a community's history through time. The print media in particular uses the photographic image as evidence to support articles. There are few academic research that discuss photojournalism at the site of reception. According to a report of the Ministry of Information in Ethiopia (2011) there are 53 newspapers produced in different local languages and international languages such as English, Arabic and French. Analysing The Reporter and Fortune newspaper contents, Fitsumbirhan (2007) identified that leaders dominate front page photography. Other than news coverage and gendered portrayals (EJA, 2008), there is limited academic work on Ethiopian photographers both in local and international institutions.

Few works provide insights into the development of photography and its practice in Ethiopia. Pankhurst has addressed how photography flourished in the royal courts of Ethiopia

from 1860 to 1936. Picturing Ethiopia reached to its peak during the Italian occupation to assist colonial expansion in the Horn of Africa (Pankhurst, 1996). There is an account of how photography was used for political persuasion in the hope that Christian kingdom could embrace Muslim communities of the time (Pankhurst, 1992). Another article explains how Armenian court photographers introduced studio portraits in the 1950s. Armenians owned studios in which tinted portraits were especially popular among local women, who found it particularly attractive, since the use of makeup was not popular (Pankhurst, 1999).

With the exception of Campbell's (2003) and Clark's (2002; 2009) scholarly works, few others consider photojournalism as an expressions of ideas, notions and motives. Analysing Sebastian Salgado's work, Campbell has explored the photographer's intent in aestheticizing images to show the beauty of people suffering from Ethiopia's famine, 1984-1985. Despite the debate on aesthetics and disaster images, Salgado's imagery has been regarded as a representation of human dignity that offers an alternative to the usual iconic images of women and children propagated by western photo-journalists (Campbell, 2003: 84). Campbell's work especially helps us understand the critical question of humanitarianism in representing people affected by disaster. DJ Clark's (2002) analysis of famine images of local and international photojournalists stresses that the global power structure and consumerism influence the media image-production of the majority world. He concludes that there is almost no possibility for neutral representations, other than making iconic images irrespective of the photographers. In his later work Clark (2009) explores the visual representation of Africa in relation to the changing visual economy. He scrutinizes the relations of the press and its UK audience in determining the narratives and contents of still photographs and video footage with the Western media. He argues that the recurrence of famine, food shortage and malnutrition as a 'single event' (Clark, 2009:138) in Ethiopia have been repeatedly used not only to represent Ethiopia, but Africa at large.

The works discussed above, explore the role of institutions in visually representing Africa through iconic images. However in this discourse the focus on spatial studies, that uses figures of women and children for critical geopolitical studies, have least explored the representation of women and children. This is evident particularly on images of emergency situations through which development interventions are narrated using the photographic medium.

2.8. A Critique of Development Aid Imagery of Female Bodies

Two opposing currents can be identified in debates on the photographic images of disaster-affected women and children. The first holds that images of women and children evoke sympathy for sufferers residing in difficult conditions. The opposing view argues that images transform the reality of suffering into fiction without necessarily creating affinity between distant sufferers and predominantly western audiences. By commodifying the subjects, development institutions as users of photographs assume that audiences have control over them. By way of photographic conventions such as posing and composing, images tend to naturalize distant others. Television and other media in particular use images of ‘pity’ ‘to render the spectacle of suffering not only comprehensible but also ethically acceptable for the spectator’ (Chouliaraki, 2006: 2; see also Wells, 1997: 57).

The persistence of stereotypical images forces us to question representations through aid and development. Despite the fact that the death toll as a result of food crises is greater in number in Asia than in Africa (Devereux, 2000), stereotypical images of the African continent are widely circulated. As Chimamanda Adiche (2009) said “The single story creates stereotypes, and the problems with stereotypes isn’t that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story”. The danger is not about a truth claim, but about the incompleteness of dominant imagined knowledge. Accounts of qualitative research acknowledge the existence of multiple narratives of people and places. Be it textual or visual, there is strong sense of a truth claim in the production of knowledge about people. As Galman (2009: 214) noted, visual artists as well as qualitative researchers produce their work in a way that appears to be true, but assumes ‘a single truth and authenticity’ that denies other narratives outside of the work itself. The ‘social life’ of images that could be interpreted by institutions, a curator, or even audiences is often ignored in the discourse of representations. Beyond the stillness of photographs, Edwards (2003) refers to representations as influenced by visual experiences accumulated through time. For societies that live both in the Global South and Global North, the dominant visual experiences determine the ways these societies compose stories about people in urgent social need.

In the case of food insecurity, portraits of women and children are inherently linked to iconic images of drought, malnutrition and disaster. The stereotypical imagery is even persistent in sensational disaster images of female bodies. This imagery was not entirely new when the famine occurred in 1984/85. Famine images of a helpless mother and a lone child

are associated with the early history of photography, such as the iconic images of the Great Depression in the USA composed by Walker Evans and equally iconic images of mother and child produced immediately after the First World War (Dyer, 2006). This has also inter-ocular character with other mediums such as lithographs and paintings produced since the renaissance times. It appears to have followed the Mother Mary and Jesus depictions in Christian paintings. These iconic images of mother and child continuously appear in food crisis images. This is the case in the Horn of Africa, such as in Somalia, Ethiopia or Sudan and also in West Africa such as Niger. These portraits often depict a partial body such as the face or a hand. They tend to reinforce a minimalist perspective on the communal impacts of food disaster (see Figure 1) by picturing isolated body parts such as a bloated belly, eye-socket, and a child's damaged hands (Campbell, 2011).



Figure 1: The *fingers of Alassa Galisou, one, touch the lips of his mother, Fatou, at an emergency feeding clinic in the town of Tahoua* [A screenshot from Manzo (2008)]

Following the 1980s famine in Ethiopia, the images of women and children in emergency situations has produced a single image, which many writers call ‘development pornography’ (Manzo, 2006). The wide-eyed, big bellied child image, as well as the milk-less breasts of a mother, is the iconic images of drought and famine of Ethiopia. The 1985 Live Aid events in London and Philadelphia, which sought to raise money in aid of the Ethiopian famine, propagated this single image, which tarnished the image of the then socialist government of Ethiopia.

In their functional aspects these negative images of emergencies were praised for fundraising purposes. There was very little analysis of these images within the broader

context of famine, such as the implications of the cold war on Ethiopia's economy, or even why responses to mitigate human suffering usually take far too long. The 2011 Horn of Africa drought situations including Ethiopian Somalis, as well as those who migrated from the mainland, should also be viewed from a critical angle. Regarding the rhetoric of photographs, Benjamin (2006) has noted that images have more persuasive power than words on target audiences. The global response to drought and famine often use negative imagery of human suffering without necessarily creating any closeness to its distant audiences. Such images are generally regarded as more powerful for persuasion in fundraising events (Dyck, 1990).

Until the 1990s there was limited concern with the long term social, political and economic consequences of these negative images accumulated through time. Analysing the Canadian case of World Vision, Dyck and Gary (1992) critiqued the images of disaster and emergency situations that are depicted to provoke emotions. This imagery is not particular to photographic representations of drought and food crisis. What makes it problematic is 'the wholesale reliance on images of de-contextualised children [as well as women and older people] to convey a variety of messages' (Manzo, 2006: 10). In most cases there is no separate treatment of children from women. From iconic images up to portraits of disasters, the visibility of suffering demands alternative ways of visualizing and contextualizing existing images to change stereotypes.

Despite long standing criticism of images of a naked starving child and a seemingly helpless mother, this imagery is still featured in international TV news coverage of the recurrence of drought and famine in the Horn of Africa. For most global audiences such dominant narratives still play an important role in the perception of vulnerable women and girls as helpless victims (VSO, 2005; Franks, 2006). This project is not about how these images are perceived or the way media and TV news portray drought affected individuals. Its premises are, however, based on the long term effects of images of women and girls of which object-subject relations are performed by international news agencies. One of the concerns of this project is about the portrayal of women and girls by aid and development organisations and Ethiopian photographers.

2.9. Interdisciplinary Concepts and Contesting Representations

Many theories of representation are driven by an impetus to understand the interplay of power manifested through political domination and economic superiority. Through an exploration of the geographical imagination, visual geography studies have interpreted such images to broaden knowledge about spatial representations. Derek Gregory's (1994: 16 & 17) 'geographical imagination' is one example in exploring geographical knowledge specifically in relation to how places and people are pictured to symbolically represent actual people and places. Geography as a discipline had made sight to be superior to other human senses. It has adopted post-structuralism concepts about constructs of spaces that have little resemblance with actual realities of places (Hughes, 2007). Feminist art historians (Solomon-Gideau, 2003) and feminist geographers (Rose, 1995) share this view, but they claim that a discourse on political and economic dominance suppresses other social and cultural narratives operating outside of political economy.

Historically writings about people and places were dominated by undeterred male explorers, travellers, and scientists (Blunt & Rose, 1994). Drawing from critical geographies, international relations and transnational feminist studies, Hyndman (2004) argues that factors such as sexuality, ethnicity and religion play a significant role in understanding gendered oppressions. In photographic narratives, one argument is that there is a limited possibility for the emergence of new narratives as the global market economy pre-determines ways of looking by the photographer and spectator. Pinney (2004: 8), on the other hand, argues the antithesis, that 'rather than visual culture as a mirror of conclusions established elsewhere by other means,' it should be considered as an 'experimental zone where new possibilities and new identities are forged'. 'Third World photographers are seen to tackle stereotypes by generally re-working the dominant visual language such as composing, framing and content. In so doing they affect the ways in which audiences perceive the meaning of images (Noire, 1998; Chris Pinney, 2004; Enwezor, 2006).

Such claims could be problematic as they do not take into consideration for whom an image is made or what images can do. Who is the audience for such image production? The relevant issue is, therefore, a practice of looking that includes how technology and composition affect the meaning of images in public spaces where audiences experience the visual (Cartwright et.al, 2001; Mitchell, 2006; Mirzoeff, 2009: 7; Rose, 2003: 29). Mirzoeff (2009: 3) specifically asserts that 'visual culture is concerned with visual events in which

information, meaning or pleasure is sought by the consumer in interface with visual technology’.

Perhaps beyond an ‘experimental zone’, this project considers an image as a challenging place of ‘complex social interaction’ that takes the apparatus as an essential component from which visual meanings are completed at reception (Cartwright et.al, 2001: 47; see also Mirzoef, 2009). In the Ethiopian setting, photography crews from abroad produce images for international development aid agencies. At the same time freelance photographers based in Addis Ababa work for international aid organisations. The agencies are potential consumers while local photographers are agents for Western institutions. A key issue concerns how practices of looking are negotiated in the midst of such uneasy transnational relations. At the same time photographers undertake independent projects, which raise questions about which elements of images showing women and girls are perpetuated in this practice.

These questions may be hard to address unless one adopts an interdisciplinary approach that addresses the relationships of freelance photographers with development agencies and global demands in picturing people with urgent social and economic needs. Already scholars have adopted interdisciplinary theoretical approaches such as psychoanalysis, semiotics, feminisms, and discourses on dominance and subject relations (Fuery & Mansfield, 1997: 85; Batchen, 2009) to explore how public spaces are generated by visuality.

Chapter Conclusion

Summarizing existing literatures, this chapter has outlined research gaps specific to the Ethiopian context. Existing literatures have contextualised stereotypes about Ethiopia and Africa in relation to exotic images and famine images. In search of alternative narratives, works by African photographers that centred on lives of urban dwellers are deemed to show the other side of Africa in relation to modernity. This has been neglected in the mainstream media. One of the key research gaps is unsettling the dichotomy of ‘self’ and ‘other’ representations both at an individual level and at the national level. The concept of universalism and particularism are questioned through images that portray translocal development discourses. This chapter further conceptualises the photographic image by raising key questions such as the medium’s specificity, who made the photographic image, and who commissioned the image.

All of the visual materials can be classified as documentary photographs that deal with development aid, relief works, and the everyday women and children. Scholarly writings about photography and its philosophical aspects are adopted in the rewritings of historical photographic representations within the African context. Our understandings of spatial representations have been shaped by geographical studies and postcolonial literatures on the historiography of representations that posit power as a major factor in the practices of picturing. Spatial studies have focused on histories of picturing that depict the non-European world including Africa through a lens of ‘othering’ (Schwartz, 2003; McEwan, 2009). Feminist literature is a particularly useful analytical lens through which the muted subject of women and girls in the discursive analysis of spatial representations are articulated (Butler & Sahel, 2004). Feminist notions of inequality, materiality and performativity and drama are major concepts that are used, along with semiotic and discourse analysis (Duve, 2010). Photography as visual material and feminist contention of gender embodiment are relevant interpretive approach to explore subject-object relations within the larger symbol system (Hayes, 2007).

This chapter also asks the potential of the documentary photographic image through an exploration of medium’s specificity. It outlines major conceptual works that insist on the works of individual photographers’ styles in relation to institutional demands. It also states that in order to understand contemporary representational practices, it is relevant to go back to discussions of historical images of female bodies. The next chapter outlines the methodological approach that underpins the research.

Chapter Three

3. Reading Photographic Images: A Methodological Approach

3.1. Introduction

My initial interest in exploring photographic images came from disturbing encounters with historical photographs. I remember an occasion when our visual history professor, Patricia Hayes, asked us to bring an image to discuss in class. I brought a photography history book featuring a picture of a nude Ethiopian woman (see Figure 2, pg. 46). The photograph was taken by a famous British explorer, Wilfred Thesiger. The photograph was about an unusually posed woman. I began by asking why she was posed in a vulgar manner. The class began questioning how such an image can be taken and published in a book. One male student commented that the image was erotic. But, there were other senior scholars there who shade new light. Jade Gibson, a Londoner with an artistic background, contextualised its interface with other popular art works.



Figure 2: Photo by Wilfred Thesiger (n.d) *Photography in the service of the invader: an Ethiopian nude, depicted on an Italian postcard, produced to popularise Mussolini's invasion of 1935-6 among the troops.*

Source: Pankhurst, R. (1996: 34) *Ethiopia Photographed: Original Photographs from 1860-1936.*

First Gibson asked how familiar we were with the artistic representations of Andromeda. That question was the point that opened up further valuable discussions about the accumulated meaning of such imagery. These questions include the role of a camera, the person behind a camera and the relationship of this particular work with art history.



Figure 3: *Photograph, taken in the 1920s by the French travellers Azais and Chambard, to illustrate an anthropological view of Amhara 'racial types'*, Source: Pankhurst, R. & Gerard, D (1996) *Ibid.*

My interest in documentary photography did not, thus, emanate from the pleasure obtained from looking at photographs. It came rather from a disturbing encounter with Thesiger's historical image of a woman from the Afar region of Ethiopia (Figure 2). As shown in the above figures, the visibility of Ethiopia began with the nude female subjects as objects of sexual desire at a time when nude photographs of women were socially unacceptable in Europe. Ethiopian women were also exposed to a study of racial types. Figure 3 illustrates the 'Amhara' racial types posing a fully dressed rich woman and was photographed by the French photographers, Azias and Champard. As Rose (2003) claims, a

visual encounter that provokes the interest of a researcher can be a good starting point to further develop an effective research design. Thus my research primarily focuses on photographic images of women and girls, and is further developed to explore the relationship of historical representational practices of picturing and contemporary photographic works in Ethiopia. Even though triangulating images through interviewing the general public, that is ‘audiencing’, is beyond the scope of this research, the methodological approach that this research adopts range from analysing the photographers’ intent to the modes of circulations of the images.

This methodology chapter gives a brief account of the importance of documentary photography as a medium for representation. It outlines data collection and analysis, and the ethical issues related to positionality. It also provides an account of field based research as well as data analysis. Using photographic images as primary data, the fieldwork is based on archival research and one-to-one interviews. The main data analysis is based on multiple qualitative data triangulations involving archival materials, and one-to-one interviews with photographers, museum professionals, journalists, lecturers, curators, social workers and communication officers from charity organisations. Triangulation refers to either combined methods of quantitative and qualitative research or data triangulation generated from different archival materials and interviews along with theories and concepts (Maggs-Rapport, 2000; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). I have used the latter technique for data analysis of word and image to articulate the juxtaposing of a text and the gesture of bodies. This is done in order to trace how the meanings of human figures change through the processes of image making that span from the photographer’s intent to the ideologies of institutions in packaging and branding images. Over 80 photographic images are analysed, ranging from postcards to photo-journals and photo-essays.

The archival materials are both historical and contemporary. During the preliminary data collection period, I explored historical postcards from the archives of Addis Ababa University’s Institute of Ethiopian Studies. These include 10 picture postcards produced by the Italians. Selections of the images are based on the contents of each image. The data is organized into three groups where women and children appear together and each separately. However, I have incorporated few photographs of men to comment on gender portrayals.

During the main stage of fieldwork I explored contemporary archival materials from the charity organisation, Save the Children such as images of the 2011 drought situation, a

visual aid titled as *Addis Mela le Hiwot* and a photo story book that illustrates HIV preventions from *The High Risk Corridors Initiatives* (STC, 2007), and also from the Ethiopian Press Agency, and postcards from the Ethiopian Tourism Commission (ETC). Out of 450 postcards that I accessed via a personal collector Ato Niguse Teshome, all except a few were produced by foreign photographers. The only Ethiopian who managed to publish his works as postcards of ETC was the founder and manager of ETC, Habte-Sellasie Taffesse. Out of 450 picture postcards only 10 are selected as samples after categorisations as landscape imagery and people's imagery. From picture postcards of the EPA, 5 are analysed in the next chapter to avoid repetitive picture contents. I have also incorporated 20 photographs from the archives of the EPA, of which 6 are presented to illustrate gender portrayal by a state owned press agency. To make a comparative content analysis of the EPA's archive and published photographs in *The Ethiopian Herald*, a daily newspaper, I conducted a content analysis of this publication dating early 1991-1993 and 2008.

Before the rise of wider circulations of print media in the form of magazines and newspapers, one of the means of circulation that was popular in early 20th century was postcards (Godzlech et.al, 1986). The earliest publications in the IES collections were the results of photographs taken secretly during the Italian occupation. The idea of 'print capitalism' that started with the renaissance contributed to freedom of the work of art so as it functions for various purposes (Benjamin, 2006: 121). Around the globe, Benjamin's analyses of the use of art beyond ritual and religious purposes are evident particularly towards the end of the 20th century, a period in which photography was manipulated for imperial expansion of European countries to Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Postcards are one type of disseminations or print media like newspapers and cyberspace. Such a shift allowed the researcher to engage more with photo-essays commissioned by NGOs that are different from photojournalistic images disseminated through mainstream media. Since the mainstream media is regarded as a major partner of development agencies, I have also included archives of the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) to explore the institutional role in imaging the female body at the national level.

The archival research was supported by fifty in-depth interviews. After interviewing key figures such as Aida Muluneh and Antonio Fiorente (photographers), Leo Lefort (curator), Zewdneh Getachew (laboratory technician and photographer), Niguse Teshome (senior photographer and collector) and Bekele Mekonnen (Director of Art School, Sculptor

and Installation artist), I identified five contemporary photographers whose works are used as case study materials in this research. These photographers have experiences in imaging commissioned works while also working on their own independent projects. I have included the biographies of these photographers in section 3.2.3.

For data triangulation purposes, I conducted 50 in-depth interviews among 38 individuals including photographers, curators, academics, museum experts, communication officers, social workers, gallery owners, and photo-journalists. The core of visual methodology entails data analysis in the field while conducting interviews with the above informants. This is a useful research practice to avoid bias and misinterpretations. All except three interviews were conducted in Amharic. I used a Dictaphone to record 43 of these interviews. I transcribed these interviews directly into English without typing the Amharic versions. Regarding seven unrecorded interviews, I noted the main points of the discussion and then wrote up the details.

The photographic data that this research analyses ranges from independent photographer’s photo-essays to institutional materials produced over a long time span. The focus of analysis is gender, and specifically with photographic images of female bodies in Ethiopia. An explanation of the specificity of documentary photographs is followed by data collection methods, including the use of interviews and a discussion of data analysis techniques, and positionality in relation to the topic. The data analysis section outlines the importance of looking back to photographic philosophies, discourses of materiality, performance and agency to analyse the meanings of documentary photographs.

| Interview type | Number of interview |
|---|---|
| Initial key informant interview | 5 (Namely Leo Lefort, Zewdneh Getachew, Aida Muluneh, Niguse Teshome and Bekele Mekonnen) |
| Number of people interviewed | 38 |
| Interview conducted in Amharic language | 47 |
| Interview conducted in English language | 3 |
| Recorded interview | 43 |
| Unrecorded interview | 7 |
| Total number of interview | 50 |

Table 1: Illustration of Interview type⁶.

⁶ I have conducted a one to one interview more than once among few of interviewees.

3.2. Why do we need to Analyse Documentary Photographs?

In most qualitative research, photography is often used as a supplement for ethnographic data analysis (Liamputtong, 2007; Holliday, 2000). In interdisciplinary studies, however, there is growing interest in analysing visual materials as a primary source of data. The visual data used in this project falls under the genre of documentary photography. Realist in category, this genre has gained a wider coverage, since it is powerful as text where viewers can easily perceive the message of its content. Unlike abstract art objects, the documentary genre provides easy access for any individual, since viewers can easily grasp the message. Scholars have addressed the essence of documentary photography because it has a deceiving power to look as if it is real (Stomberg, 2006: 38; Mirzeoff, 2009; Mitchell, 1994). It creates a high degree of resemblance between the image and the thing or human that is gazed upon during snapshot. Critiquing the realism assumed in this genre, I have used visual materials to scrutinize power relations in a society.

Documentary photography makes power relations visible. It is this visibility that demands careful analysis. These power relations could be analysed by looking at the agency of institutions, photographers and the image. The concept of agency focuses on humans, as well as social institutions, as agents of actions. Scholars who analyse visual data, however, assert that a focus on interaction or social relations may neglect the agency of photographs as material objects (Banks, 2007: 11). Analysing images of female bodies in documentary works requires attention to be paid to the medium's specificity (Solomon- Gideau, 2010). The medium allows us to rethink people and places through the act of visual transformations. The photographic encounters between various entities and actors need to include the historiography of the photographic image. That is to say the genre of documentary photography made at the present takes us back to the way people and places have been pictured historically through ideologies of imperialism, colonialism and capitalism (Campbell and Power, 2010). Originally photography is an outcome of the coming together of two cultures, one global and the other local. In a global era an account of specificity of a local without admitting its transformations through the global encounters such as fascism, colonialism, development aid and tourism limits a discussion of the fluidity of the issue of representation and identity formations (Appadurai, 1996).

Taking deconstruction (see Chapter two, pg.19 and 55) as a method, the earliest postcards about Ethiopia that were circulated under Italian Fascism are analysed in order to

reflect upon contemporary practices by freelance photographers, and national organisations (ETC, EPA) and international charity organisations (Save the Children, The Red Cross and Crescent Society and German Agro-Action). Postcards of the EPA are juxtaposed with earlier postcards circulated under the brief occupation period of Mussolini (1936-1941).

Photojournalism in *The Ethiopian Herald* newspapers, as well as the photographic archives of the Ethiopian Press Agency, is explored in order to compare state narratives with the development aid imagery of Save the Children, The Red Cross and Crescent Society and German Agro-Action.

The methodology is designed in such a way that acknowledges the power of the photographic image. It provides an approach to interpret the photo-essay as well as other images in relation to the texts that accompany them in published materials and in spaces of exhibitions. Instead of writing only about my own readings of these pictures, I have applied other techniques such as conducting interviews with photographers and communication officers from the above institutions, social workers, academics, teachers, artists, and curators. As Galman (2009) argues, multiple voices and data triangulation with photographers, artists, curators and social workers help to avoid the single authoritative voice of an author. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007, 580) articulate the usefulness of data analysis between the semantic and linguistic referent. They point out the limitations of a text due to a failure in providing the larger picture of 'lived experience'. Multiple visual data analysis that this research adopts, thus, compliments the limits of historical data analysis and to better explore the lived experience of contemporary photographers in capturing subjects about current socio- political and economic issues. The material relations of images with people and place should go beyond understanding the process of the practice of picturing. It needs to explain how such processes affect pictorial representation (Staeheli & Martin, 2000).

3.3. Data Collection

Data collection took place in two periods, preliminary collection (July- September, 2010) and the actual fieldwork period (June – November, 2011). Choosing Addis Ababa as the fieldwork site, I collected the preliminary data while at the same time refining the research design. Falzon (2009: 89) distinguishes research sites or fieldwork from spaces of simple 'geographical place' to 'conceptual space' where interpretations are negotiated between the researcher and the researched. The visual data incorporated in this research is not an account of a place. It is rather data depicting different parts of Ethiopia generated by

photographers and institutions. Even though I have not accompanied contemporary photographers as they travel to picture people and places, the data collection share some characteristics with multi-sited research since the data features the visual encounters of Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian photographers with subjects located in different parts of Ethiopia. Following Falzon's (2009:68) definition of multi-sited research that focuses on explorations of 'differences, similarities, connections, and disjunctions' between different physically isolated locations, this project takes Addis Ababa as a starting primary research site to analyse such connections and isolations captured in different parts of Ethiopia.

The aim of preliminary data collection was to narrow down research questions and identify key informants, including photographers, social workers and communication officers in their respective institutions. While reading related literature, I worked through ethical considerations on how to incorporate images of people without their consent, and other copyright issues in using images of everyday life produced by institutions. The visual materials I intended to analyse in the thesis expanded from just using the contemporary works of a few photographers to tracing the historical representations of female bodies in Ethiopia before the rise of mainstream media. The preliminary research phase was an important component of the research journey. It helped narrow down the scope of the research and took feasibility into consideration.

The original plan was to collect images based on content analysis and to select print media and exhibitions as mode of circulations that depict women and children separately or together. The research expanded from only using images made by few photographers to images produced by the EPA and ETC from different sources. These sources range from archival materials to photojournalistic works published in newspapers, books, magazine, postcards, and catalogues. To answer the question of the relations of historical and contemporary photographic productions, I systematically collected postcards that span the past 80 years produced in two major historical periods from early 1930s to the 1960s. I have included 10 picture postcards produced by the Fascist Italians extracted from IES's collections.

Due to the difficulty of accessing documents produced by Save the Children and World Vision, I began to explore works of individual photographers in Addis Ababa. As it is the capital of Ethiopia, there are a variety of studio owners and photographers. The studio's photographic productions focus mostly on rites of passage such as weddings, and birthdays. I have excluded such documentaries since they do not allow me to engage with development and aid imagery that take place outside studio spaces.

Few Ethiopian photographers are producing photographic projects about development aid while at the same time undertaking independent work in the form of photo-essays. I have selected the works of five photographers as case study materials. These are the only contemporary photographers with both national and international reputations. Of these, three of them namely Antonio Fiorente, Aida Muluneh and Micheal Tsegaye have extensively used the exhibition spaces to showcase their works of social documentary. For triangulation purposes I conducted interviews among photographers, curators, museologists, academics and social workers as part of photo elicitation process. This process includes facilitating interviews while both the interviewee and interviewer engage in conversation by looking at the photographic image. I adopted this process not only to explore the context of the production of an image, but also to carry out on-site visual data analysis. In order to avoid bias, I have compared information generated from interviews with other documents, such as letters and correspondence between photographers and institutions that commissioned their works, such as between Micheal Tsegaye and the Red Cross, Yemane Gebre Medhin and German Agro Action, and Aida Ashenafi and Save the Children. Institutional correspondence in the form of electronic mails and letters is useful to investigate processes that may allow a researcher to dig deep into materials from the 'behind the scenes' that would not have been revealed during one-to-one interviews (Davies et.al, 2002: 124).

In both data collection phases, I used primary data and secondary data, and combined techniques of synchronic and diachronic methodological approaches. In simple terms, the synchronic approach focuses on the specificity of data at a given time while the diachronic approach articulates data not only in relation to the present function, but to the past and the future. The research assumes that for a thorough understanding of contemporary image productions, one need to look at representations by comparing contemporary and historical image productions. The diachronic approach focuses on the importance of looking back to history in order to historicise and contextualise images in its specific time. The synchronic approach focuses on the contemporary or present data analysis without necessarily considering 'the social life' of images. The former may, therefore, compliment the latter. Tracing the meaning of an image and the forms of representation should include an analysis of the ways of seeing within social relations. Bearing in mind the production and consumption and processes of image making, the research traces representations of the female body that are themed around aid, development and their contested narratives.

Even though there are other visual materials about Ethiopia and its people prior to 1991, most social documentary work was produced as a result of the shift from a socialist

regime (*Derge*) to democracy in 1991. Significant sections of the thesis are concerned with the photographic images of female bodies since 1991, a year in which charity organisations began to work in Ethiopia after a long period of absence due to the *Derge's* closed door policy (with the exception of Service in Mission, an international evangelical church).

3.3.1. Archival Materials

I began the preliminary fieldwork by accessing archival materials, journals, books and photographs in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) located in Addis Ababa University main campus. The Institute has four components namely administration, research and publication, a library, and a museum. As a centre for historical and cultural studies, the library has wider collections of published and unpublished materials about Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Recently the library was relocated to a separate building named *The Richard Pankhurst Institute of Ethiopian Studies Library*. As the name implies, Richard Pankhurst is a professor of Ethiopian history who has contributed to the library's collection. During the fieldwork period in 2011 there was no online database both for image archives and other resources. Finding materials in the institute was thus laborious work since it required the researcher to look through thousands of printed and hand written catalogues in a systematic way. The photographic collections of IES are composed of 500 framed photographs, 10,000 unframed photographs and 25 albums, most of which hold court photography. The nature of the collections is driven by the narration of state history rather than of everyday lives and cultures.

There are a number of ethical issues that one needs to consider in accessing image archives. A supporting letter from the university was required as a first step to secure permission for access to collected materials. Then with the help of the documentary staff, I searched the photographic collection in the research and publication unit. Without the support of officers in the department, it would have been impossible to explore image archives of IES. The earliest photographic collections are depictions of society from the journey of the British Napier expedition to Ethiopia. There are a variety of sources on Ethiopian court photography since the period of Emperor Minelik II. Since the focus of the study is social documentary photographs of everyday lives and people, I have excluded those albums depicting the lives of the royal court.

One album that holds earliest postcards was eye-catching. As Godzlech et.al (1986) pointed out, as early as 1900, postcards had become powerful means of circulating images of women from Africa. The earliest postcards that I found in IES were the *de la Orientale*

postcards published during the Italian Occupation period. Some of the collections were gathered during the Italian Ethiopian war (1936-1941) from houses of the then Italian settlers in Ethiopia (VN850038, Interview with Head of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Museum, 25/07/2011). Many of active IES members who had contributed to its archival collections were historians. I selected 10 postcards that depict women and some young boys and girls because these are almost all of the collections as part of fascism in pictures. I have also adopted a method that compares and double checks facts with other documents such as letters, correspondence and previous research.

During preliminary research I found out that most of documented materials are photographs of food aid and relief works. Looking at the archival materials of IES on food relief works, I noticed that The Red Cross and Crescent Society was the earliest relief agency in Ethiopia. Even though aid is usually understood in terms of humanitarian relief, most development activities are the results of development aid grants that are products of western notions of development approaches (McEwan, 2009). However, much of development and aid photographic images were taken later in the second half of 20th century. Identifying the earliest charity organisations in Ethiopia, I began to explore possibilities of incorporating images produced for the biggest charity organisations such as World Vision, Save the Children and Action Aid. The aim was to focus on their role in the practice of imaging Ethiopian people in need of aid. During preliminary fieldwork, however, I found it very difficult to gain access to the complete image archives of these institutions. In addition, international charity organisations are less open to critical research agendas. Even though I finally managed to interview communication workers in World Vision, Action Aid and Save the Children through using the snowball technique, obtaining images remained a challenge, mostly because they have closed-door policy.

For the main phase of data collection, I explored images by interviewing independent photographers as a starting point. I then proceeded to explore the perspectives of social workers and communication officers in different institutions. Here my intention was to use work by independent photographers as case study materials for each research question. By the time the research was conducted, none of the photographers were working for mainstream media organisations. From the freelance photographers point of view it was impossible to explore their relations with the national media. To fill this research gap, I incorporated the voices of other photographers currently working at the Ethiopian Press Agency. I, therefore, expanded the research question to include an exploration of the institutional role of the Ethiopian Press Agency.

The Ethiopian Press Agency owns newspaper publications, namely *Addis Zemen*, an Amharic daily, and The Ethiopian Herald, an English daily. I have conducted research on published photo-journalistic works of *The Ethiopian Herald*. These published materials have the ability to omit other narratives outside of accounts of the state's poverty reduction and development activities. Davies et.al (2002) examine the problems of researching published materials, as they are often reflections of the opinions of their publishers. In order to tackle such institutional biases, they provide alternative narratives by investigating documents that were discarded during selection processes. In order to make comparative analysis I compared conducted research between published photos and archival photographs from the EPA. These materials contributed to an exploration of gender portrayals and representational practices of this national institution.

As Leeuwen (2001) argues, it is difficult to select systematically from archival materials. One of the challenges in systematically selecting archival images has to do with the way they are kept in the photography unit of EPA and IES. Most of them are film strips with no index or technology. With such limited accessibility, it was impossible to employ quantitative content analysis of the whole archive. Another challenge of working with archives in Ethiopia is that there is no coding system or database enabling a researcher to follow through systematic sampling or selection process. Most of the image archives of EPA are still kept in the form of films, which need technology to identify content. The files are kept in terms of regional location.

In order to identify photographs of everyday people, I had to rely on the documentation staff. The aim of this photographic archive is to have photographic accounts of state officials. Even if the government's development activities influence the everyday activities of people, and the practice of development journalism, very few photo archives are about everyday women scattered in folders based on regional locations. Fortunately, one archivist, who is in charge of this collection, knew the location of photographs of everyday lives of women. She randomly pulled out 20 photographs with the permission of the head of photography unit. The archivist knows most of the contents of files. However, these random selections may not be a representative sampling technique. They are not my own selections because I could not go through thousands of files kept in the form of film strips. Since the EPA is in charge of documenting government activities by picturing government officials, it may not be an exemplary institution to generate pictures of everyday citizen.

Given the thematic diversity, I commenced by narrowing the selection process by grouping images in terms of content. Based on Gillian Rose's 'content analysis' method that

combines quantifying and sampling, I have grouped the photographs by looking at the patterns through which images appear. This includes recurrence of images based on themes (Rose, 2007: 62). I have, therefore, employed purposive sampling which relies on the researcher's intuition to reasonably group the data. I counted the number of occurrences where women and girls appear together or each separately. Subsequently, I grouped the works in relation to the spaces of their production and distribution. These forms of disseminations include postcards, which are an example of print media that could be easily disseminated before the rise of mainstream media, catalogues or books, newspapers, magazines, archives and the cyberspace.

In order to investigate how the female body was pictured before the rise of capitalism, I have included the historical photographic encounters between Ethiopians and foreign photographers. I thus incorporate other sources that are useful for the project. In terms of distribution, postcards played a significant role in producing specific narratives about the South. Pinney (1997), for instance, has used postcards as a site of analysis to explore how the female subject was depicted in India during the colonial era. Since there is no detailed analysis of postcards in Ethiopia, I have included these historical encounters as a significant period where visual knowledge about Ethiopian women was constructed. The 1930s marked the climax of the photographic documentation of Ethiopian people. Such documentary photography 'combined dramatic image making with defined social goals' (Reinhardt, 2006: 15). Such productions served the fantasies of colonialism. Even though it is technically incorrect to use the word colonialism in the Ethiopian context, Ethiopia was not shielded from colonial fantasies. Since Ethiopia was never colonized it is better to discuss the practice of imaging during six years Italian occupation, as well as in the post-liberation period.

We cannot deny tourism and its visual presence as forms of development. Looking at the production of images in Ethiopia, any student of visual culture would find a good number of travel pictures in the form of books. Even though I do not focus on such productions, such practices have an impact on the way a nation produces its own images to advertise sites as tourist attraction. Such productions have direct relationships with the contemporary postcards produced by the Ethiopian Tourism Commission. Comparative analysis of two sets of postcards from different period, allows an interrogation of the relations between representations of 'self' and 'other' in imaging women.

An additional photographic source came from the commissioned works of freelance photographers. Save the Children has commissioned most of the works that I have employed

in this project. In an attempt to address changing images of people with urgent social needs, for example, food insecurity in the Horn of Africa, I also gained permission to use the photographic works of Khuraam Mahsood from Save the Children’s International office, who was assigned to take pictures in the refugee camps located in the Horn of Africa. He has captured 10 photographs of which four are analysed in chapter five. In a similar fashion Ethiopian photographers were assigned to produce images in the region. Yemane Gebre Medhin has produced 14 pictures for German Agro-Actions and Michael Tsegaye has made 24 pictures for the Red Cross and Crescent Society. Out of these commissioned works, the project comparatively analyses seven of Tsegaye’s works and six of Gebre-Medhin’s. These images are selected by counting the number of images depicting women and children. These bodies of works supplement already existing literature on the usage of female bodies in depicting food insecurity in the Horn of Africa.

| | Red Cross and Crescent Society Photo by Micheal Tsegaye | Save the Children Photo by Khuraam Mahsood | German Agro-Action Photo by Yemane Gebre Medhin |
|---|--|---|--|
| Number of images of women only | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Number of images of women and children only | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| Number of images of children only | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Number of images of men only | 8 | 2 | 5 |
| Number of images of men and children only | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Landscape pictures | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| Total Number of Images | 24 | 10 | 14 |

Table 2: Contents of Horn of Africa’s drought situations in 2011

I have used collections of images as opposed to a single image. Juxtaposition of photographic images could be helpful not only to trace codes and conventions of representations between the historical and contemporary image productions (Collier, 2001: 51), but also to carefully articulate contents in the photographic frame. Discussion of

stereotypes of female bodies and their contested narrations demand the specificity of time so as not to reach ahistorical interpretations. In the Ethiopian case, there is a rich literature on the famine images of Ethiopia. Articulation of contested narratives is impossible without addressing the relationship of stereotypical representations with contemporary photographic representations. However, the project is also aware of the richness of the scholarly works on famine images, especially those produced and circulated in the west. I do not intend to repeat of such scholarly works. I, therefore, used selected scholarly works to discuss the stereotypical images. An important theme that developed in the course of the main phase of data collection was the inclusion of photojournalistic practice at a national level.

I, therefore, conducted library research on disaster and famine images that give insights into stereotypical representations. Major research materials conducted in western institutions have articulated such media studies (Burman, 1984; Clark, 2009; Childs, 2006; Simpson, 1985; Siliwinski, 2006; VSO, 2005). I have also incorporated unpublished research works in the school of journalism in Addis Ababa University and other IES collections dealing with representation by the national tourism commission. Although I was unable to thoroughly investigate the photographs of The Ethiopian Herald news daily in Ethiopia since 1990, I have looked through a range of its publications of early 1991 to 1993 and in 2008 in order to make a comparative analysis on development journalism trends in Ethiopia. I have selected photographs from the Ethiopian Press Agency because it has the largest photography archive after the Ministry of Information.

Since the project specifically focuses on the issue of representations of women and girls, these works are discussed in the analysis section where I compare images on contested narratives of aid and development in relation to how images of female bodies are spatially organized in galleries or museums, mainstream media and NGO spaces. This data enables the researcher to explore how global transformations cause change or maintain photographic conventions through the production of images of women and children.

As part of the methods, I presented the proposed research to senior and junior scholars in 2011 at Asni gallery in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Since most of the images deal with serious social issues, one of the criticisms was that the focus on images that have better opportunities of circulations hardly answers the possibility of other narratives. They rarely portray the capability of everyday women and children. Such criticism demanded an investigation of processes that influence constructs of narratives because images are about absences as much as they are about presences. Elizabeth Edwards (2012) refers to the ‘invisibility of histories’ that are set aside as archival collections, especially the ones that narrate everyday culture and

society. She has argued that it is up to individuals to make these archives visible, especially in the documentary practice.

I then included an exploration of unpublished photographs of women and girls produced by the EPA to explore what their publications reveal by making other narratives invisible (see Appendix 3). The notion of editing and selectivity come to play an important role since this organisation is inclined to narrate state history rather than the everyday lives of people. While it is important to raise issues that are normally neglected simply by the choice of images published on the front page of the daily newspaper, it is important to compare the gender biases that are usually considered as newsworthy.

3.3.2. Works of Independent Photographers as Case Study Materials

These photojournalism works are fractured accounts of some everyday people. In order to complement this, I have explored the photo-essays of freelance photographers. These include two photo-essays of Antonio Fiorente, one picture book of Aida Muluneh, three photo-essays of Micheal Tsegaye, one photo story by Yemane Gebre-Medhin, and one visual aid produced jointly by Yemane Gebre-Medhin and Aida Ashenafi. Unlike the above archival materials these photo-essays are relatively easier to work through and systematically select pictures based on content (see Appendix 3). As the research progressed, the aim of the project expanded from focusing only on photographers' intent into incorporating the institutional roles and processes of the images used in publications. This allows a tracing of the change in the meanings of pictures that goes beyond the photographers' original encounters to institutional demands and iconographies.

To analyse the work of individual photographers, I designed a strategy to include both their commissioned works and independent works dealing with social issues. I approached Ethiopian freelance photographers who have worked on independent projects as well as commissioned works. Independent projects are identified as published works in the form of books, and/or photographs displayed and circulated in the exhibition space and in cyberspace. Commissioned works include published materials in magazines, books and cyberspace by the respective commissioning institutions.

After carrying out key informant interviews I decided to use the works of five contemporary freelance photographers namely, Aida Ashenafi, Antonio Fiorente, Aida Muluneh, Michael Tsegaye and Yemane Gebre Medhin. The choice of photographers was made on the basis that they are freelance photographers based in Addis Ababa with national

and international reputations. These photographers are engaged in the making of important social documentary. They are experienced at working for international charity organisations, three of whom are currently using both national and internal exhibition spaces to showcase their works. These photo-essays fill the gap in the contest of aid and development. These works are also the least explored in relation to development discourses.

Tagg makes a distinction between ‘the space of the look’ and ‘the space of pictorial representation’. The former has made a woman objects for feelings and pleasures while the latter has used ‘a woman [image of a woman’s body] as sign but never as speaker’ (Tagg, 1994: 86). He argues that pictorial representation allows an exploration of intersections between the private and public binaries that exist in other social sphere. In such a way images can speak back to stereotypical representations in the global image world. This is a useful lens to implement in order to explore the perspectives of female and male photographers living in Ethiopia. It also helps to explore whether or not knowing the landscape and culture of the people helps with the re-working of visual languages in representing third world people, even if the image is about relief works. See appendix 1 for a brief biographies of the freelance photographers namely Aida Ashenafi, Aida Muluneh, Antonio Fiorente, Micheal Tsegaye and Yemane Gebre-Medhin.

3.3.3. In-depth Interview and Key Informant Interview

In-depth one-on-one interviews with the above photographers are a useful tool through which to explore the processes of imaging. This includes pre-preparation to picturing, and making of images or ‘point of view’ through which viewers are guided to look into the pictures. I have used a photo-elicitation technique that attempts to interview while at the same time showing images to the photographers and social workers. The photo-elicitation process is important as stimuli to remember the situations during pre-photographic time and actual photographic encounter. International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art’s (INNCA) research methods in interviewing artists suggest that conducting interviews while the work of art is present may yield better information about data analysis (INNCA, 1999). I have used this technique for two reasons. One is that the images were useful to serve as stimuli to trigger memory. The second is to enable me conduct both the direct and indirect analysis of images (Collier: 36-57).

As part of the preliminary research, I identified the photographers using a snowball sampling technique. First, I contacted Aida Muluneh who is a photographer and the then director of Gebre Kirstos Desta Modern Art Museum. The rapport that I have already established with renowned photographers such as Antonio Fiorente and Micheal Tsegaye has further enabled me to identify knowledgeable individuals capable of talking about photographs, the industry and historical data. In total I conducted in-depth interviews with 38 individuals (see Appendix 4) including independent photographers, individuals from the local press, and lecturers at the School of Journalism, employees at the national tourism office, museum and gallery practitioners, academics, older generations of photographers, photography instructors, and social workers.

Prior to conducting interviews with some of the key figures, I explained the aim of the project via e-mail conversations specifically to Aida Muluneh, who was organizing the first photography festival named as Addis Foto Fest. For some individuals, such as gallery workers and the Save the Children communication officer, I sent email messages including discussion points to be undertaken during extended interviews. First I prepared interview guides as a general checklist under each of the research objectives. I prepared structured and semi-structured questions for key personnel and research officers. Open-ended questions are a useful means to avoid biases and preconceived ideas about the practice of picturing in Ethiopia. This enabled me to check if there are emerging topics (see Wengraf, 2001: 33). How are practices of looking negotiated in the complex relations? What processes influence such practices of looking in producing and circulating them? At the same time photographers undertake independent projects. What elements of images of the female body are perpetuated in this practice? These were some of the questions raised.

The data generation process was in particular important since it provided an opportunity to explore the intentions of photographer's and other practitioners. Rose (1997) specifically refers to the difficulties of bringing out such knowledge as practitioners rarely talk about the meaning of an image. Most of my informants were also comfortable to be interviewed about the practice rather than the meaning of an image. In order to make them talk about a specific image, I had to wait until I realised that they were comfortable sharing their knowledge about certain issues.

3.4. Data Analysis

There are a number of ways of analyzing photographic images to better understand the relations of representation, aid, development and the female body. Due to my diverse academic background, I have chosen to analyse how visual culture plays a role in the way we produce, perceive, replicate, accumulate and interpret the meanings of the visual. Therefore I use the methodologies of visual cultural studies that take into consideration the ‘everydayness’ of culture that are set out in social relations. This approach offers interpretations taking images as the agenda of interdisciplinary enquiry. It derives its method from all sorts of disciplines that employ images as primary source of data. It acknowledges the power and the materiality of an image that involves the emotion of viewers (Lister & Wells, 2001: 64). Images are open to interpretation by artists, curators, discourse analysts and other professionals (Mitchell, 2006: 47). I have used such diverse perspectives to resituate documentary works within the larger literature that takes photography as an uneasy medium for materiality, discourse, and subject/object relations.

The methods of visual data analysis are primarily based on those outlined by Banks (2007), Leeuwen & Jewitt (2001) and Rose (2003). Banks (2007) makes a distinction between the internal narratives and external narratives of an image. The former refers to the content of an image itself, while the latter relates an image to its consumption and interpretations. In the ‘context of production’, or ‘external narratives’ I focus on understanding the processes of imaging the female body. The meanings of images are about their contents in as much as they are about outside of their frame.

Gillian Rose’s (2007) book provides visual methods of interpretation. Rose classifies these methods at *site of production* (the relations of an image with the producer), *site of the image itself* (composition and content); and *site of reception* (how an image is perceived by its audiences). She places these sites to theoretical concepts and social and technological modalities that assist critical analysis. I have analysed images based on Gillian Rose’s ‘compositional interpretation’. She makes a point that compositional interpretation uses two modalities, the social and technological modalities. The social modalities refer to the photographers’ relationship to institutions, especially in commissioned works. The social modalities overlaps with *the site of production* through which I intend to address how, why and who select, edit and produce images of these subjects.

Visual technology is also a relevant component used to make an image meaningful. This technology does not necessarily determine the meanings of images. It needs to be contextualised within social relations to make images meaningful (Shirato and Webb, 2004: 35-50). The making of photography takes two dimensional spaces to rearrange the objects/subjects in the framework. Leuween et.al (2001: 81-84) specifically address the influence of photographic conventions in the production of an image. These conventions not only include composition, light, perspective, depth of field, and focus but also the juxtaposition of objects/subjects in two dimensional space of a photograph [see Winget (2009) for explanation of different forms of the work of art]. Taking the stereotypical pictures of the 1984 famine in Ethiopia, the authors explain how analysis of photographic conventions can help researchers to articulate power relations.

For this reason I have incorporated images from different time spans. This is helpful for making a comparative thematic analysis of the female body. When relating these narratives with other discourses of representations it is essential to identify the *intertextualities* of representations. This technique also supplements the use of *semiotics* in scrutinizing the relations between the signifier and the signified (Duve, 2010). As explained above, key informant interviews involving participants in image production were also sought to complete the data triangulation process, as well as objective interpretations of photographs.

Interpreting an image in terms of its composition and content will be partial unless one places it within the social and historical practices of image-making. Hence, relating an image to other discourses and representations becomes essential to identify the *intertextualities* of the female body. Struver (2007:13) suggests that incorporation of the hermeneutic interpretation, which includes interviews with artists, together with post-structural ideas, is good practice when studying the representation of people and places. Drawing upon postcolonial and feminist approaches, I intend to address the influence of the practice of picturing people since documentary photography flourished around the world. This technique also supplements the use of semiotics that takes images as signs rather than as resemblance or mimesis of reality.

For all the visual data incorporated in this thesis, this research acknowledges that new knowledge could be created in the photographic image rather than simply assuming that photographs are evidence of actual events. As an important component of news items, photographs are often used to convince viewers about reality claims. State-owned mass

media in Ethiopia is particularly known for its problematic use of photographs, despite the fact that photojournalistic works are essential components of any news items. The Ethiopian Press Agency may use photographs to fill up empty white spaces in newspapers. Whenever there are bulky textual narratives such as news items, they may opt to omit photographs. The media also has the power to mystify constructs of reality (Croteau & William, 1992).

By blurring constructs of reality from visual events, we find that there are different subject positions ascribed to different groups of female bodies. As a state owned agency, The Press Agency produces news items about everyday government activities, portraying the state as an active agent of development activities taking place in all regions. Rather than everyday Ethiopian citizens, pictures of leaders dominate reports in this newspaper. Selected photojournalistic works from the EPA about everyday pictures of Ethiopian women explored in this thesis are, therefore, bi-products of fieldtrips in which photographers accompany important government officials. The photography unit documents the activities of government officials, rather than the everyday lives of Ethiopian citizens. Scattered pictures of the everyday tend to be the outcomes of additional work by a photojournalist.

The issue of reception or *audiencing* (how an image is perceived by its audience) is not included in this research since it is very difficult to categorize the public and to explore how they engage with visual material. However, as already discussed, for the purpose of data triangulation I used photo-elicitation while interviewing academics, trainers, artists, curators, art critic, museologists, photojournalists and workers in the press agency. They provided factual information as well as helping the researcher with triangulated and objective data analysis. For data analysis purposes the consultation of other documents of institutions included in this project provides a thorough investigation of representational practices shared among various agencies. From historical documents to contemporary accounts of such processes, these documents were used to investigate narratives outside the photographic image. These narratives may, therefore, provide broader context.

These discussions help us unsettle some realities beneath the surface of figurality where one can read the representation of bodies (Mitchell, 2006). A more conventional name for this is deconstruction that illuminates the relevance of narratives in the interpretation of documentary photography. This research, therefore, applies Derrida's notion of contextualizing and deconstruction as methods that take data not merely as sources of absolute truth, but as materials useful for interpretation. Deconstruction also possesses some

elements of iconography that focus on the relevance of time and place where the image is made, as well as how meanings of an image are accumulated historically (Adams, 1996). Derrida's adoption of the interpretative approach, semiotics and understanding how the image is made by evoking memories of photographers through hermeneutics technique for alternative research analysis are useful for objective interpretations of photographs (Smith, 2001: 130).

3.4.1. Semiotics

Semiotics as the study of signs is one of the most popular concepts in studies of photography. The adoption of semiotic theory largely focuses on aspects of iconoclasm, or the image's resemblance to the signified object. Such approaches have been criticized as reductionist, with limited understanding of representation. Adopting Peirce's conceptualization of the semiotics of photography as icon, symbol and index, Thierry de Duve (2010) argues that image as an object of sign made at a snapshot has a 'superficial relation' with the real subject standing in front of a camera. Paradoxically, through composition and framing, 'reality' is produced, which he calls 'referential series'. This view diverts from Roland Barthes' realist ontology that takes photography as evidence (Tagg, 1988). For instance, in criminal investigations, mug-shot photographs of suspects are used to hunt criminals because photographs have a high degree of resemblance with that of the subject. Current debates about visual representation revolve around the question of the level of photographic experience, and whether the superficial or the referential help to understand the semiology of photography. The referential is often considered as the most important aspect in issues of representation.

This research adopts the idea that the 'referential' and the 'superficial' cannot be disentangled from one another. The content of images that resemble the subject in front of a camera during snapshot is as relevant as the referential series. Photography relies on the technology of image making, but its conceptual understanding should go beyond the device, and include practices influenced by ideologies, cultures and histories at the time of production, distribution and exhibition (Solomon-Gideau, 2010: 256).

Iconic images can superficially be understood in their likeness to an object. Such denotation can only be meaningful within the larger system of symbolic knowledge. Accumulated visual language and the knowledge of seeing during pre-photographic time may explain the influence of such knowledge that reinforces iconic representations. This is where

the iconic becomes part of the symbolic modes of signification that perpetuate recurrence of iconic images to narrate specific stories. This relation diverts photography from the Saussurian semiotic/sign as intelligible only to its current use. Saussure's idea focuses on understanding photographic images synchronically without looking back to traces of visual codes on the image at present (Tagg, 1988).

Hall (1997, 31) further argues that Saussure's idea of representation between a perception of a thing and a 'linguistic referent' could be altered due to accumulated meanings through time or history. Noticing the paradigm shifts that contest the meanings of photography in criminology, documentary and photo-journal experiences, Wells (2010: 345) asserts that 'the relation between image and referent', that is 'indexicality', as a finale to theory of photography would be ahistorical. Rather than resemblance of a photographic image to an actual object in mind, indexicality refers to a word or phrase used to signify an object (Hall, 1997: 31 & 32). Photography is rather more complex due to its heterogeneity. Resituating the concept of indexicality is, therefore, relevant not just within the discipline of art, but within the genre of documentary photography across disciplines which some call the 'medium specificity'. Theoreticians such as Wilson (2007) argue that in photography the subject and object, the material and the semantic are intertwined together. This specifically focuses on the interface of word and image by which accumulated knowledge about representation can be explored. Can this be extended to the relation between picturing people and place? How are symbolical representations of people formed by space, and vice versa?

3.5. Positionality

I do not claim absence of researcher's role in shaping over all research outcomes. Critical geography as a discipline often stresses the researcher's position in academic writing (Rose, 1997; Staeheli et.al, 2000). This notion assumes there is no neutrality in the way geographers research and produce knowledge. It involves relations of power and knowledge between the researcher and the researched. The concept of positionality has moved to understanding processes that go beyond the race, sex, and class of an individual to reflect upon the 'self' in the research.

As a woman who has an understanding of local culture and social issues in Ethiopia, I had easy access to the elites who work within visual art. Most of the interviews ended up as critical engagements with images of female bodies, as well as photographic practices in general. Among these groups of individuals, the interview process worked as a series of

conversations that at times also provoked debates. In such a way, the difference between the researcher and the researched was insignificant. However, those who work in the NGO setting, that is, those who engage within the practical problems of women in Ethiopia, were initially suspicious. Because I am based in a UK academic institution, they did not want to engage with debates on development critique. What stood out through the fieldwork was the interplay of insiderness/outsiderness through the interactive processes of interviewing. The insider/outsider distinction is insignificant because it “---neglects the interactive processes through which ‘insiderness’ and ‘outsiderness’ are constructed” (Naples, 2003: 49). Since I am an Ethiopian, I have a privileged status of being an insider to research in Addis Ababa. And yet I have an outsider status since I am based in a UK academic institution.

As an Ethiopian researcher, I situate myself within the scholarship of subaltern studies that acknowledges the fluidity of knowledge around the globe. It acknowledges the hybridity of transnational knowledge (Spivak, 2003). I do so as a student who has been trained in my home country and abroad. The idea of hybridity focuses on the values of different forms of data and concepts that possibly nullify differences between the South/North, East/West, and subject/object (Spivak, 1999; Jacobs, 2000). It takes people of the ‘South’ as active participants in meaning making and knowledge productions. Such fluidity may shed light on research practice that takes into account the importance of place and the everydayness of ‘live’ culture.

Escobar (2004) refers to the politics of place in reference to the ‘situatedness’ of everyday culture. Criticizing the ‘imperial globality of knowledge’ he emphasises the role of the subaltern movement in challenging the dominant knowledge produced about the Global South with special reference to modernity. He opposes the linear evolutionary notion of modernity that assumes a single path without admitting the multiple modernities in specific places (Escobar, 2004; Wolde Ghiorgis, 2011). Escobar’s notion of challenging dominant knowledge productions through subaltern studies explain why this research explores local photographers’ contestations in picturing own people. Knowledge is always mediated. Multiple positions are the result of experience, academic background, and access to debates on contested representations.

Through multiple positions, scholars seek to situate themselves in the ‘visible landscape of power’ that relates places to a space (Rose, 1997: 310-311). Assessing processes and links of places within the fluidity of space in spatial organisations, in other words,

geographical imaginations, geographers focus on how such imaginations have implications for the representation of people (Staeheli et.al, 2000: 138; Schwartz, 2003). What is a concern to feminist study in particular is an attempt to create dialogue for embodied knowledge about the female subject. The concept of embodied or situated knowledge seeks the inclusion of local voices through in-depth interviews, and by giving a camera to a community so that they participate in representing themselves. By doing so, feminists do not claim the binaries of particular/universal in the knowledge they produce about gender (Narain, 2010). They rather reflect on the role of the self in designing processes of data generation that ultimately shape the discipline.

Post- colonial feminist approach is relevant to development discourse specifically in the representation of vulnerability of everyday women and girls. In participatory approach, for instance, down to top approach argues about the involvement of everyday people so that the voices are heard though speaking may not be a means to an end (Parpart et.al, 2003). The subaltern studies that adopt the rewriting of history from below (Young, 2003; Witz, 1988) demand an exploration of the voices of everyday women and girls. Such rewriting argues that everyday people should write their own history. This approach is problematic because it lacks the criticality of representations through time in rewriting own culture, and history or in making own photo-essays. Methodologically thus the research adopts an elite interviewing so as to check if it assists to speak with the everyday people whose voices are underrepresented in critical writings.

I acknowledge my own role as a researcher since I design research questions and check lists for interviews. In order to take subjectivity into consideration, I have avoided guiding questions which may lead informants to focus on a particular aspect of an image and its influence on representations. Elite interviewing also demands a good relation between the interviewee and the researcher. Since I have had prior contacts with most of my informants, the rapport I have developed has made my relationship easier. I do not want to make a distinction between conducting elite interviewing from that of local community interviewing. However, I was privileged to have access to practitioners such as those involved with contemporary photographic production, and curatorial practices in museums and galleries located in Addis Ababa. Interviewing other elites, such as lecturers in Addis Ababa University and social workers in different charity organisations, also helped with the

development of wider perspectives about historical image productions, and contextualized them with information provided by professionals in the field.

Feminist geographers favour research of situated knowledge through participating individuals who are knowledgeable about the subject (Rose, 1997; Martin & Staeheli, 2000). In similar fashion, I conducted interviews among people residing in Ethiopia, including academics and those who participate in the practice of picturing. I acknowledge the power of the researcher to influence the design and final interpretation of the research.

Most of my informants in the NGO setting found the issue of imaging less significant than striving to change the social conditions of women. And yet, as I shall discuss in chapter 5, communication officers are critical about how photographic images can go beyond the relation of the photographic image with that of an individual. For social workers, it was difficult to make them aware that the world of the photographic image differs from that of the real situations of women and girls. In the international NGO setting, the fact that I am based in a western university creates obstacles. It reduces the willingness of social workers to discuss the problematic use of images of female bodies. In such a way the contents of the interview directs itself into normalized discourses such as picture policies and communication guidelines. Informants from charity institutions were comfortable discussing photo guidelines, and communication rules within their respective organisations. Changing the interview location from the informant's work place to elsewhere in the city assisted my efforts to gain deeper and more critical understanding of their perspectives more critically. This strategy assisted to conduct in-depth interviews in a conducive environment where there is less work place stresses to speak freely about the topic. In some instances, changing the interview location from a person's work place to other places, such as cafeteria, created a friendly and free environment.

As a student of visual history, I have noticed that stereotypical representations of the female bodies were formed initially through the historical encounters between people of the West and others. Missionaries, news, media and aid organisations have played their role in shaping not only visual narratives about people living in the global South, but also the photographic conventions (Lister & Wells, 2001: 78). As someone who has access to image productions in Ethiopia as well as western mainstream media, I found the metaphors of poverty and famine using images of female bodies from the Global South very problematic. The negative public perceptions of Africans in the western world are informed by the

mainstream media that construct Africans as ill-mannered, thieves, and starved. As Enwezor (2006: 11) puts it 'to live in the West is to be intimately acquainted and ruthlessly confronted with the evil eye the media casts on Africa. Africans are turned into spectre haunting the photographic imaginary and western conscience'.

As such the practice of picturing has reduced the African reality to fiction. Rather than talking about how Ethiopia as place is imagined through its female subjects, we need to raise questions about how the female body is imagined in both historical and contemporary productions beyond symbolism. Exposing the material situation of women often portray the subjects as victims of the human condition. Analyses of historical visual narratives thus help the researcher to scrutinize how such encounters affect or influence contemporary productions of photography. Explorations of complex relations of the photograph, its modes of distribution, the photographed, and the photographer may provide critical thinking about the medium's specificity.

3.6. Visual Culture & Postcolonial Discourses

Concepts of analysing the female body are driven by an impetus to understand the interplay of power manifested through political, social and economic relations. Through an exploration of the geographical imagination, visual geography studies have interpreted such images in their quest for spatial representations. Feminist art historians and feminist geographers share this view, but they claim that a discourse on political and economic dominance suppresses other social and cultural narratives operating outside of the political economy. One argument is that there is limited possibility for the emergence of new narratives as the global market economy pre-determines ways of looking by the photographer and spectator. The concept of visual economy especially insists on institutional demands and power in cropping, distributing and interpreting images over that the photographer's (Croteau et.al, 1992; Poole, 1997).

Pinney (2004: 8) argues the antithesis, that 'rather than visual culture as a mirror of conclusions established elsewhere by other means,' it should be considered as an 'experimental zone where new possibilities and new identities are forged'. 'Third World' photographers are seen to tackle stereotypes by generally re-working the dominant visual language such as composing, framing and content. In so doing, they affect the ways that the audience perceives the meaning of an image (Pinney, 2004: Enwezor, 2006). Perhaps beyond

an 'experimental zone', and perhaps beyond the identity of a photographer, this project considers an image as a challenging place of 'complex social interaction' that takes the apparatus as an essential component from which visual meanings are completed at reception (Cartwright et.al, 2001: 47; Mirzoeff, 2009).

In the Ethiopian setting, photography crews as well as communication workers based abroad produce images for international development agencies. At the same time freelance photographers, both foreign and local, based in Addis Ababa work for international agencies while also undertaking independent works. The agencies are potential consumers while local photographers are agents for western institutions.

The materiality of an image breaks free from preconceived classification such as sex, gender, race, ethnicity, and class. It means that a focus on essentialism may exclude other individuals who study the gendered representations through social constructions. Colls (2011) argues that feminist geographies [including post- feminists] stress the dangers of essentialism that focus on the role of male or female academics. She argues women's obsession with the study of the body does not merely come from the natural/biological condition of the body itself, but from its gendered socio-cultural constructions. Hence, it is relevant to look at perspectives of men and women as they make photo-essays about social issues and everyday narratives. An exploration of the visual narratives in different media needs analysis of 'multiple forces' operated through the process of imaging: '...formations, and entities are central to understanding the spatial contingencies of when, where, and how a sexually differentiated body emerges' (Colls, 2011: 11). Tracing the ways images are formed in their respective modes of distribution provide us with an explanation of how the photographic image affects the image of a female as subject, and eventually the scale of spatial organisations in the photographic image.

I began by questioning the forms of relations between the camera, photographer, the photographed, overall visual culture and the forms of distributions. This approach also paves the way to understanding the relations of the historical and contemporary images of the female body within their forms of distribution (Kratz, 2002). The mainstream media has almost made images of the drought and poverty affected female body as its accepted photojournalistic convention. The assertion is that people can relate to women and girls easily. This tradition is problematic because it neglects the role women and even children play in developing countries. For some, the way to challenge dominant representations is by

engaging with alternative narratives (Ashcroft, 1995). These scholars claim that the system of knowledge production, especially about social problems, produces negative images about everyday lives of people in the ‘South’. Afro-centrists such as Murphy (2000) argue that the burden of Africans is to produce a political critique that could serve as an alternative to dominant representations. Without neglecting the practice of imaging social issues, this project thus seeks to explore the photographic images of the female body taking Ethiopia as a case study.

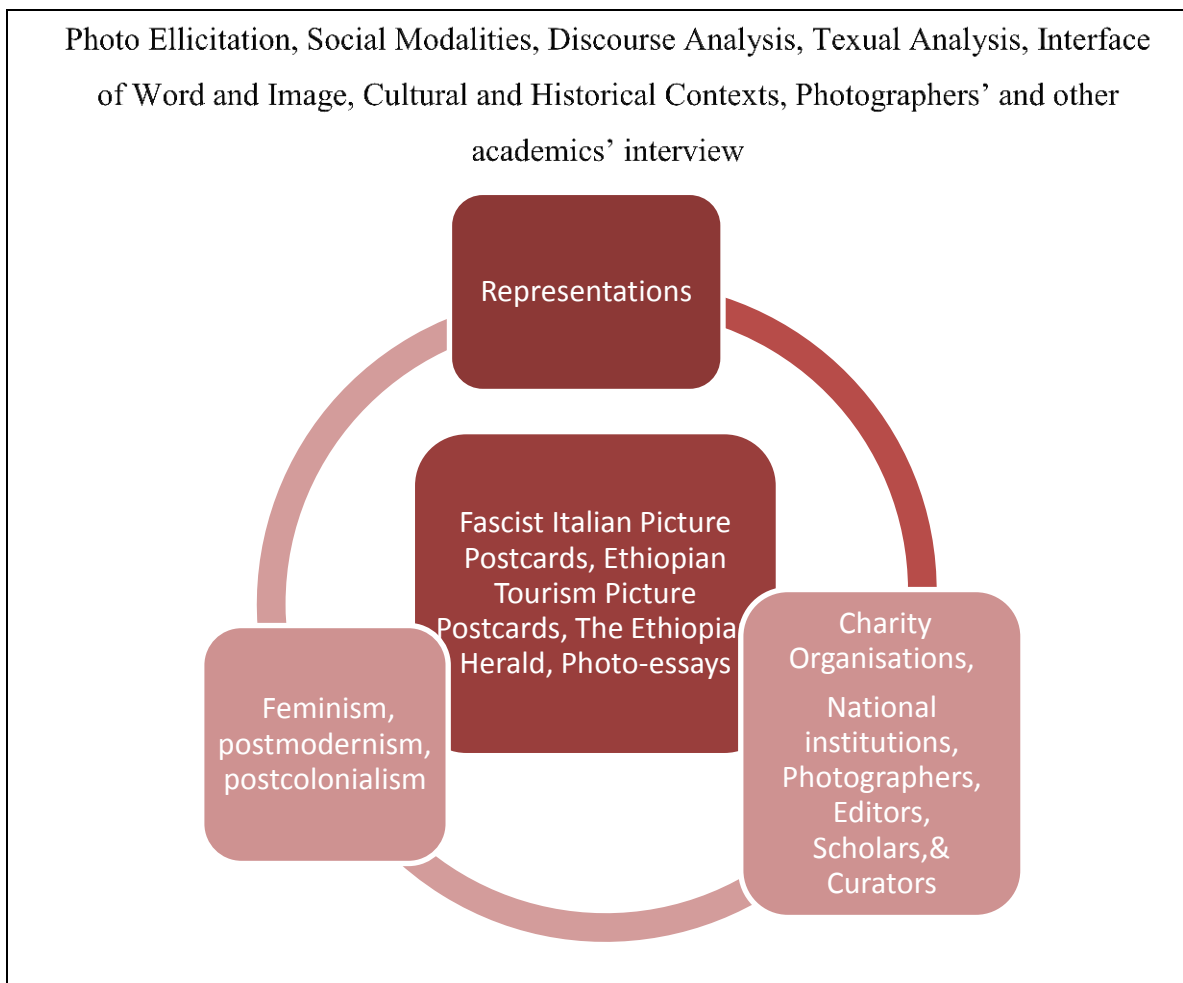


Figure 4: Summary of Methodology

3.7. Limits/ Scope of the Research

The research has covered photographic narratives of female bodies that spanned over a long period of time. Its main focus is on contesting narratives about development, development aid, and gender, particularly in the visualization of female bodies in Ethiopia. It is limited in scope to selectively explore certain representational practices without claiming

any representational data collection methods as in the case with quantitative research. The samples used in this research, therefore, do not claim any representative technique due to the fact that the archive in Ethiopia is poorly organized. It is difficult to carry out content analysis in the image archive in Ethiopia and to count the number of images and group them based on content.

One of the challenging aspects of conducting research on visual representations of female bodies of Ethiopians by Ethiopians is the limited number of independent projects of photo-essays that have been produced in the form of sequences or photographic narratives. Commissioned works for charity organisations are still photographic images about the marginalized in societies, such as women from lower economic background. Such narratives dominate works commissioned and perpetuated by the charity organisations.

In Ethiopia, with the exception of a few works that discuss photographic histories and studio practices, we do not know much about the works of Ethiopians. The other challenge was generating information about the number of contemporary photographers who take on work in the field while working in studio. Some informants were suspicious about providing information about practice of photography in studios and even the overall number of studio owners in Ethiopia. Some studio owners suspected that I might be secretly investigating the photography business by collaborating with The Ministry of Finance's revenue office. Another challenging aspect of the research was accessing archival materials. During the fieldwork period, my attempt to explore previous exhibitions in institutes such as the Alliance Française was unsuccessful because they have not yet created a data base that enables researchers to access historical exhibition pamphlets or catalogues.

The research has used different visual data, ranging from published materials such as postcards, catalogues, books, photo-essays and publications on The Ethiopian Herald Newspaper, to the archival materials of some institutions. I have not looked through all of the Ethiopian Herald's from 1991 to 2010 as it was too huge to undertake. Methodologically I have selected two groups of newspaper publications, those printed in early 1991, and late 2008. One of the challenges of doing content analysis that spans longer periods of time is the limited opportunity to regroup and organize laborious archival materials of EPA and IES. Selections are not meant to be representative of the whole archive. Identified with the help of archivists of EPA, regionally labelled folders are often difficult to pick photographs from film strips that were not yet available as digital data. The research thus does not cover all of the

photographic productions throughout these years. The research is not thus supported by quantitative data sampling that would have benefited the outcome by avoiding biases from random selections. Despite this limitation, the project has benefited from in-depth interviews that I have conducted among scholars in the School of Journalism and practitioners from the Ethiopian Press Agency. The theoretical framing of the project that adopts an interdisciplinary approach provides a wider conceptual discussion on pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial practices of picturing.

Chapter Four

4. Gender Embodiment and Print Media

4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a missing link between the colonial and post-colonial practices of picturing Ethiopian women. By tracing historical representations, it lays a foundation for the body-space politics of representations. The metaphor of womanhood and the gendering of bodies are two major elements that this chapter unravels using print media. While tracing the histories of gender portrayals and representations is important to explain the relationships of worldwide historical photographic practices to contemporary practices of picturing in Ethiopia. This chapter compares different subject positions of female bodies within the practice of picturing in the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) and the Ethiopian Tourism Commission (ETC). It does so by providing a comparative analysis of picture postcards produced during the Italian Fascist occupation and ETC postcards published under the logo of Thirteen Months of Sunshine. The earliest picture postcards were circulated in 1936-1941. This is also a period in which surrealism and claims of realism through documentary photography reached a climax in western traditions of adventure and explorations. Donald Levine explored the changing images of Abyssinians as

It was indeed only in the latter half of the nineteenth century that the image of highland Ethiopia as a savage place gained any currency, as European attitudes toward Africa hardened into arrogant ethnocentrism at best and a vicious ethnocentrism at worst (Levine, 1974:11).

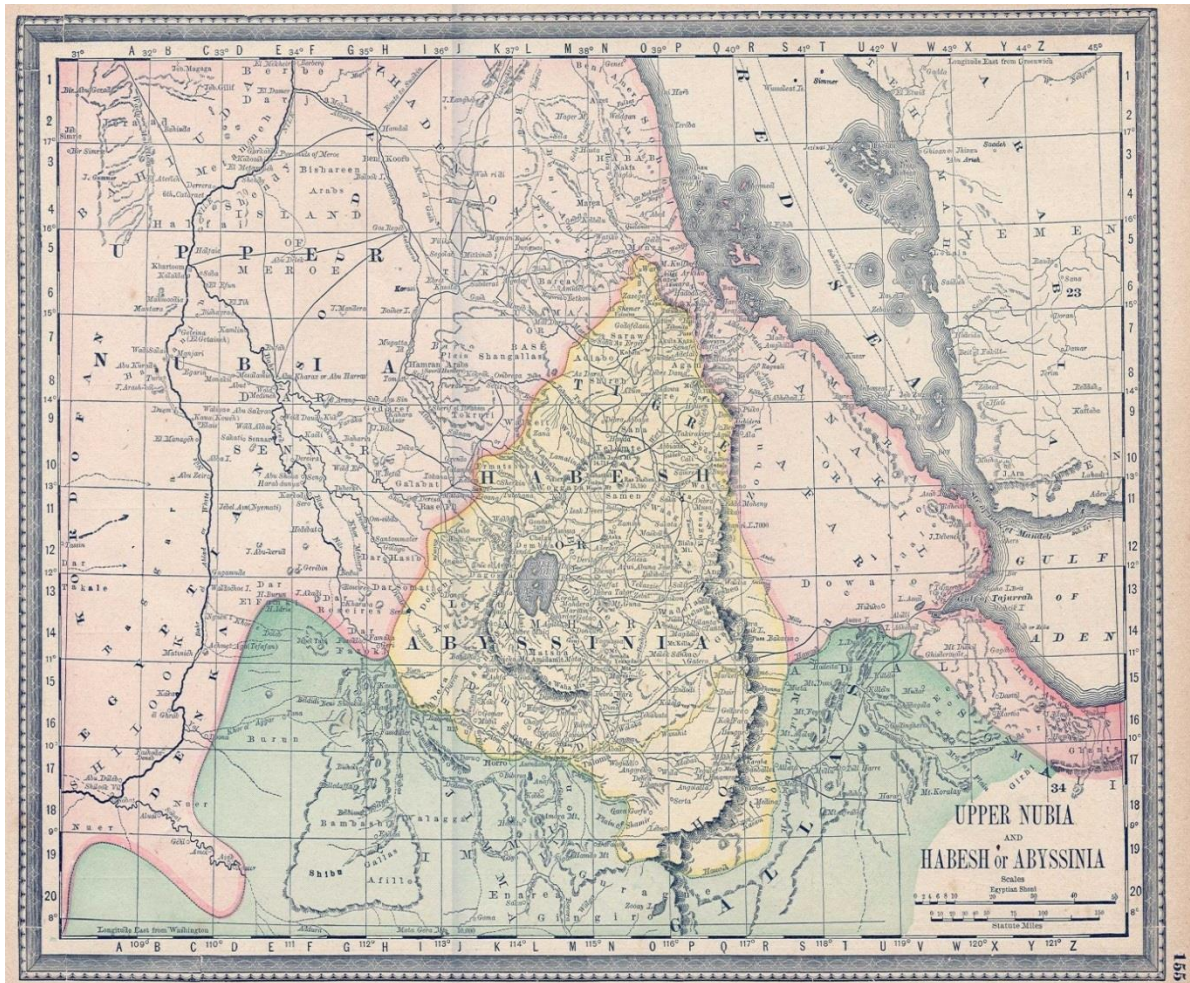


Figure 5: Historical Map of Nubia and Abyssinia,

Source: www.griffons.org

Despite differences among African countries, Ethiopia was exposed to ethnocentric ways of imaging that were similar to the rest of Africa. Comparing figure 5 and figure 6 borders and lines were introduced to Abyssinia later with the military advance of the Italians into the Horn of Africa. Figure 6 specifically shows imaginary borders that sub-divided the land of Abyssinia into five regions based on linguistic divisions such as Amhara, ‘Galla’⁷, Tigre, Harar and Italian Somalia land with the exception of Addis Ababa being the capital of Italian East Africa (see Bahru Zewde, 2002). Articulating earliest maps of Abyssinia and Ethiopia, Clapham (2007) argues that the cartographies of Ethiopia between 1460-1856 justify the European intents than the actual place in Ethiopia. This was part of the Fascist Italian mapping of East Africa that imagined strict lines and borders between four major linguistic

⁷ The term ‘Galla’ has become a derogatory term to refer to a category of language as well as people called as Oromo.

groups. As section 4.2 articulates the picture postcards of the nude bodies were made to assist the Italian mappings of Ethiopia that divided the country into five regions as part of a divide and rule policy.

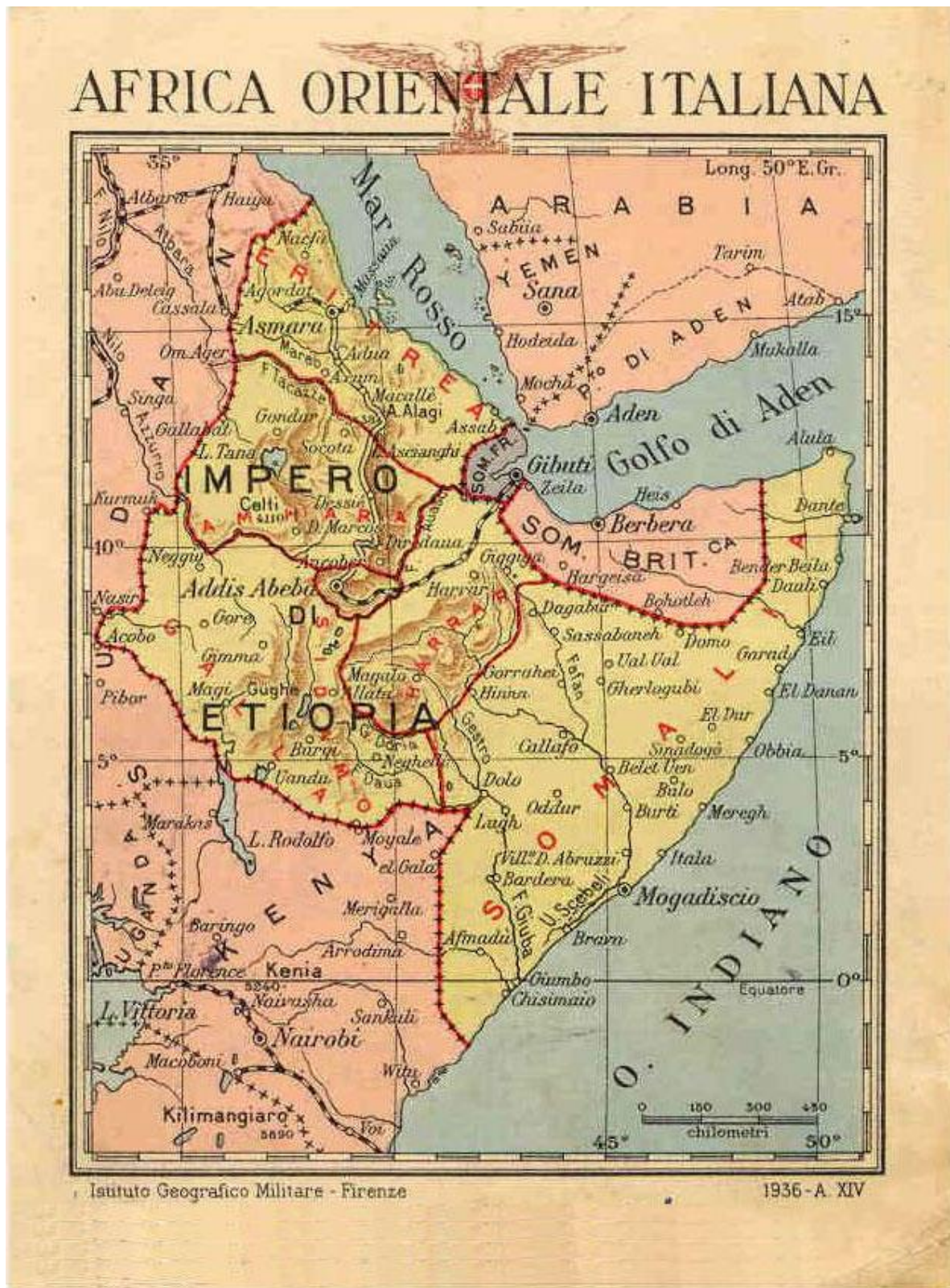


Figure 6: The Italian mapping of East Africa

A revisiting of such historical visual encounters enables us to explain better the current practices of bodily representations in popular print media, such as picture postcards and newspapers, and also in aid and development campaigns. From the adoption of photographic techniques to material commodification, analysis of print media demonstrates how ‘othering’ and self-representations are mutually constituted through transnational, mobility-based development activities such as tourism. Any re-reading of contemporary image based materials only offers an incomplete survey of the representations of women. Historicising this data in relation to earlier postcard encounters not only provides a decolonising of historical postcards, but also reveals their narrative commonalities and differences with contemporary print media published at a national level. Historical picture postcards need to be decolonised because they are colonial in content and ideology.

In order to understand globalised practices of picturing, we need to trace how the local was pictured in the national and international visual narratives. Historicising practices of representations from earliest to contemporary publications may provide a critical analysis of state narratives about national emblems, performance of identities and overall self-representations. Contemporary visual productions show the exegesis of visual codes and symbols adopted from earliest photographic practices. The analysis sections are grouped thematically to compare and contrast published materials in the form of picture postcards, and newspapers with selected EPA’s archival photographs. Comparative analysis of unpublished archival materials and media publications may answer questions about omissions and inclusions in the visual narratives of everyday people in Ethiopia.

The first section of this chapter begins by outlining dominant practices in picturing people of Ethiopia and the landscape. Special reference is given to a debate about self-representation and ‘othering’ in transnational visual materials, such as the postcards produced under fascist occupation and by tourist agencies. The next section provides a brief account of the place of the national press in state media. Part of this chapter is also dedicated to visual representations of the capabilities of women in rural landscape, by comparing the archival materials of the press agency with publications of its English daily newspaper, *The Ethiopian Herald*.

This newspaper covers different subjects as gender issues. At a policy level, the EPA reports women’s issues as major components of everyday news items. Portrayals resonate

between women leaders, often based in Addis Ababa, and marginalized women who live in urban and rural landscapes. Comparative analysis of photojournalism between men, women leaders and everyday women are discussed in what follows. Though the press archive has the potential to tell stories about the different capabilities of citizens, including women and children, selection bias often excludes other citizens in preference for representation of political leaders.

Archival materials are also subject to partiality as they are the outcomes of the official activities of the government. Criticising archival materials, Sekula (2006) questions the neutrality of archival sources due to collection and cataloguing bias. The same is true of the collections of the press agency. Since most of the photographic materials are concerned with important dignitaries or government officials, there is less coverage of everyday people both as news items and as photographic subjects. Few selected pictures of these subjects are discussed in relation to the photojournalism practices of the EPA. Special reference is given to how existing social power structures silence image-based knowledge in Ethiopia that has a direct link with the way a state-owned agency collects, publishes and selects images.

The power structures embedded within coverage of news items still demand explorations about visual productions. What levels of metaphors or different ways of seeing are there specifically about the everyday lives of citizens? Why are narratives about the everyday lives of citizens omitted from dominant print media? What relationships do media portrayals have with dominant photographic practices at the national level, particularly in forming state narratives such as identity and nation branding? In order to address the above questions, I begin with the earliest photographic circulations by taking postcards of the *Della Africa Orientale* provided by the archival unit in IES.

4.2 The ‘Other’ and Colonial Fantasies: Fascism in Picture Postcards

Postcards are means of circulating ideologies including different elements of culture and identity politics. In this section two sets of postcards are compared to critically analyse how ‘self’ and ‘other’ representations are related to each other. The earliest postcards about Ethiopia were published under the fascist Mussolini government during the brief Italian occupation period, 1936-1941. These photographs that were produced by Italian Geographical Societies and explorers were used to mobilise the public in Italy. The second

set of postcards was produced by the Ethiopian Tourism Commission (ETC) under the direction of its founder, Habte-Selassie Taffesse.

The latter set of postcards was published to promote tourism. These postcards were branded as Thirteen Months of Sunshine that was named after Ethiopia's calendar. The name is driven from the idea that Ethiopia has 13 months in a year enjoying sunshine throughout the year. This means of circulating images from different time periods allows us to examine how power has been performed by controlling the production of image based publications. Comparative analysis of postcards enable a reader to trace changing photographic codes, the agency of institutions as well as the agency of the photographic medium. The first group of postcards is a classic example of gendered bodies as colonial fantasies of the Italians without the presence of direct control, while the second set is an example of state narratives. The former give some insights about the relations of portrayals of the 'self and the 'other', while the latter are performances of national identities in visual art.

These bodies of publications from different time periods are considered in order to explore the earliest dominant practices of looking and their influences on contemporary practices. Rather than considering picture postcards as factual documentaries of 'native' lives, this section seeks to deconstruct orientalist depictions of Ethiopia at the beginning of the 20th century. As Edward Said (1978) pointed out, orientalist ways of seeing were common to all European powers such as the Italians, Spanish, Germans and British, and there were common tropes of representing Africa and Asia. Transnational visual practices make arguments about 'othering' less popular since the root causes of adoptions of other culture, that is, acculturation, diffusion, and adoptions of visual codes are more complex than just concepts of globalisation.

One reason is that representation is no longer about resemblance within sign and symbols, between the signifier and the signified, but about processes, conscious manipulations of photo techniques and discursive practices about who has power to say something about someone (Foucault, 1970: 74). Comparative analyses of the Ethiopian case give us access to contesting narratives of 'othering' and self-representations at the national level. It is, thus, intended to inform the influence of dominant, historical practices of looking on contemporary practices in development activities such as tourism. Historicising dominant picture postcards at the national level provides access to the persistence of certain visual

codes in the contemporary world. It allows us to trace gendered portrayals that may have changed or reappeared in contemporary publications of the same medium.

Twentieth Century Italian archives about Ethiopia hold sexualized, eroticised, studio like poses of women (see figures below). These rare postcards were initially used to recruit soldiers in appeals for colonial aspirations of Italian fascism under Mussolini. *The Della Africa Orientale* postcards that were produced in collotype were some of the earliest productions that were circulated before the rise of mass media in all regions of Italy. These constructs are especially pertinent to what fascism under Mussolini demanded as formations of specific ways of picturing Abyssinian female figures as same as the rest of African people (IES, Ethiopia in Black and White exhibition, 2006). Fascism manipulated aesthetics for propaganda purposes and self-assertions. Postcard images of women, adults and children as subordinate others started with earliest circulations that spoke little about the real situations of Ethiopians. These postcards were framed as studio portraits where half nude bodies were staged and captioned as Abyssinians.

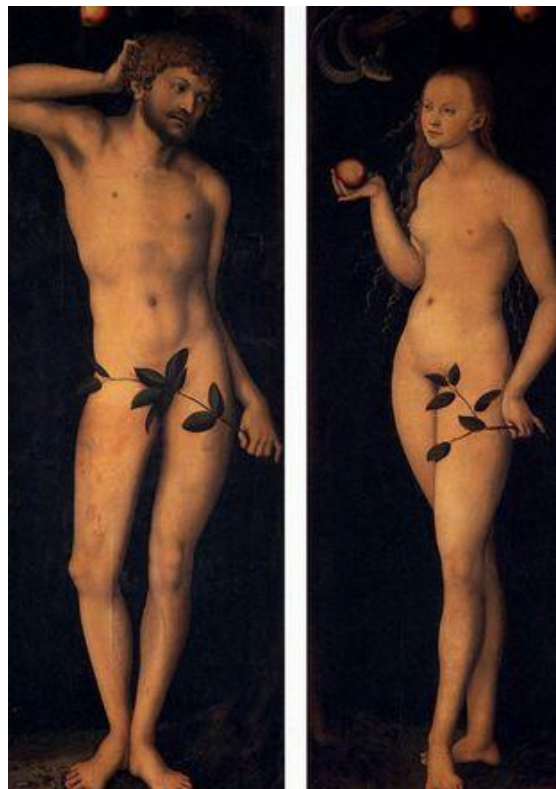


Figure 7: Adam and Eve



Figure 8: *Africa Orientale, Donne, Dancala – Guraghi,*

Source: Courtesy of Collections of Ato Niguse Teshome

Imaging ‘Abyssinian’ women and girls which is now from Ethiopia and Eritrea in this way reduced them to objects of sexual fantasy. Ethnographic image productions of women and children of Abyssinians visualize native inhabitants as homogeneous to each other as well as to the rest of Africa. The Dancala and Gurage of the southern regions (figure 8) and the Bilen of Eritrea (figure 9) were, for instance, pictured by deliberately undressing them or by forcing subjects to uncover parts of their bodies so that they were posed in a sexualised manner. The Gurage of the southern regions and Bilen of Eritrea are known for fully covering their bodies due to their adoption of Christian and Islam. Exposing bodies in public spaces is taboo among these communities. By homogenising different groups of people of the North

and the South as barbaric and simple, regional diversities were undermined in the narratives. Ethnocentric referent of a linguistic term such as Gurage and Bilen meant that a category of language begun to divide groups of people into types despite physical resemblance. Private photographic encounters of foreign photographers were also circulated as if they showed the public realities of these women.

In Edward Said's (1978) account of 'orientalism', the British, French, Italians, Spaniards and the Germans adopted constructions of oriental societies as self-expressions and manifestations of Europe's identity as modern and civilized. The geographical imaginations of the Italians had reproduced Ethiopians, both highlanders and lowlanders, as barbarians. Locational knowledge was undermined in favour of creating homogenised cultural and racial types. Such archives cannot be used as historical documentary archives about the Ethiopian people since they say more about Italian aspirations and ideologies than facts about Ethiopians (Bekele, 1995: 174). Geary's (1991) point about the arbitrariness of historical photographs of Africa is more evident in Fascist traditions of picturing Ethiopia. The nude art has been historically concentrated on picturing young adults as objects of beauty. In the case of disaster such as war or disaster relief works, since the outbreak of WWI, the iconography of women and children as symbols of misery has been adapted to western practice of photography.

Nor are these types of postcards unique to Ethiopia. Between 1900 and 1930, the French produced postcards of Algerian women revealing a similar gaze, whereby a camera angle was directly panning onto nude breasts. The captions are not the narratives of erotica, sensuality and sexual fantasy of the foreign photographer, or the fantasies of colonial ideologies. Instead they contain anthropometric detail about the bodies of different groups of Algerian women under the pretext of objective scientific reasoning. Alloula (Godzlech et.al, 1986) has examined the political and social use of postcards in the production of overly sexualised images of Algerian women. He noted that despite the medium's cheap reproducibility to further propagate the colonial space, picture postcards were confrontations with the colonised gaze. In addition, postcards were one of the most important visual objects that were fully practiced as violations of human rights, especially over the bodies of women. Deconstructions of such images expose 'the sexual phantasm' of colonial ideologies (Godzlech et.al, 1986: 5).

Images of Ethiopian women (figure 8 & 9) were created by photographing them posed in a similar style to paintings and sculptures of women in western nude art. The way the photographer poses these women in figure 8 is similar with depictions of Adam and Eve in western Christian paintings. The inter-ocularity of western paintings and these picture postcards thus show the shift in gender representations by which photographers practiced the nude photography in Africa, Middle East and Asia. Adam and Eve, Andromeda, and Venus de Muci, as well as the above postcards should be problematized as they present the idealised bodies of women as tempting for sexuality. Photographers were not able to compose idealised female figures in Europe specifically during Victorian Era (Pultz, 1995). They were, however, able to practice orientalist depictions of women similar to classic western Christian art. Picture postcards commissioned by Fascist Italian are some examples of the practice of picturing that took place based on the notion of 'elsewhere'. Such inter-ocular characters between picture postcards and western art signify the power relations of Europe and Africa in the production of gendered spaces.



Figure 9: Africa Orientale: Ragazza Bilena ed Hangareh

Source: Courtesy of IES Collections

In figure 9, set in a studio, the girl is made to lift her nude leg onto a bench and to rest one of her arms in her lap. With her staged, artificial smile, she has a strange relationship with a camera lens that indicates uneasiness in allowing a stranger to photograph her body. Overly sexualized images of women were used to appeal to soldiers, as well as to justify and legitimate Italian military advances in civilizing or modernising Abyssinians. These picture postcards are examples of dominant visual perceptions about the non-west by western-centred knowledge. The portraits are exclusively of women and exclude male members of society. They also exclude portrayal of advanced Ethiopian Christian traditions, which were contemporaneous to Europe's rituals. Such picturing does not seem to go along with other travellers' accounts dating back to the sixteenth century.

The majority of sixteenth century travellers were astounded by the Christian culture, state formations, and ancient architectures of Ethiopia (Levine, 1974: 6-8). In the twentieth century, however, regional varieties and complexities were excluded from productions of the *Della Africa Orientale* postcards. These postcards intentionally construct the land of Abyssinia as simple, savage and primitive. Its long standing complex Christian Kingdom or the narratives of semitic civilisations that reached a climax by the 1890s due to Menilik's expansion policy are ignored in these postcards (Tamrat, 1972; Marcus, 1975). The unique image of Ethiopia as a longstanding independent, autocratic state that had defeated Italy at the battle of Adwa was silenced from the postcard imagery of the Italians. Instead both the highlanders and lowlanders were imagined as savages.

Postcards of Abyssinian women and girls bear witness to the fascist Italians' fantasies about conquering and eventually occupying Abyssinia. Drawing her argument from Walter Benjamin's 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Simonetta (1997) has extensively explored the use of art as a means of imperial expansion. Still images, as well as motion pictures in black and white, were extensively used to persuade the public about the legitimacy of the western colonial presence in East Africa. As an ideology it was a common trend to objectify women as if they were close to nature while their male compatriots were constructed as occupiers of public spheres, such as politics. Fascism's objectifications of women as close to nature were pertinent even in Italy (Simonetta, 1997: 12-18).

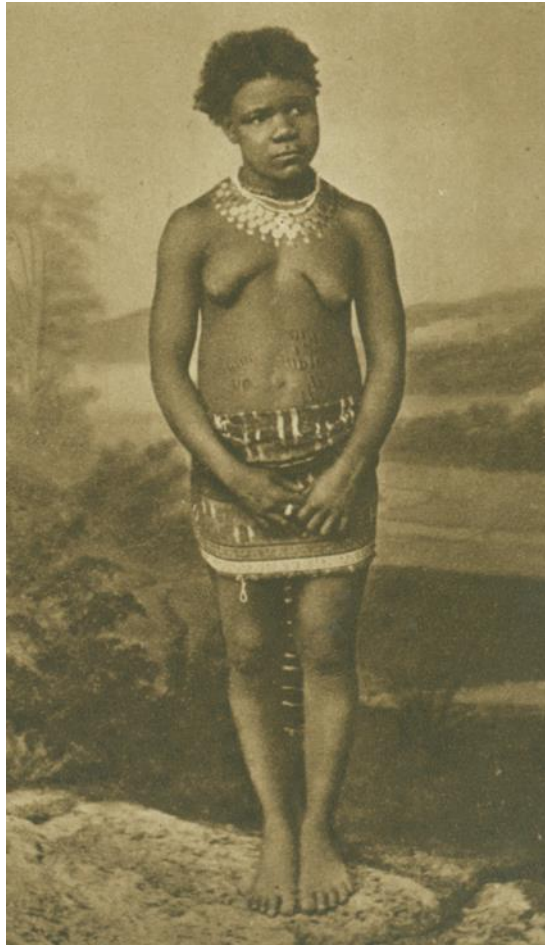


Figure 10: *Africa Orientale: Young Abyssinia con tatuaggio sul ventre*, n.d.,

Source: Courtesy of IES Collections

However, Italian women were portrayed as respected women, as lovers and wives, while Abyssinian girls were pictured as sensual bodies, and as whores, particularly women from Eritrea (Barrera, 1996). From a feminist perspective, this imagery of Ethiopian women in the early 1920s were the result of male spectators or the power that allowed male individuals to look at and picture female bodies (see Wright for concepts of male spectators, 1996: 402). The ‘visual empiricism’ of the time demands a de-constructivist approach to reading and rewriting twentieth century photographic encounters in Ethiopia. Such an

approach provides a move from using photographs as empirical evidence of life styles, to the creation of new subject positions by providing artistic, social, historical and cultural contexts.



Figure 11: *Africa Orientale: Donne al Lavoro*, n.d.,

Source: Courtesy of IES Collections



Figure 12: *Africa Orientale: Capigliature di Birginie*, n.d.,

Source: Courtesy of IES Collections

The last two postcards are unique. Figure 11 is a portrait of women doing basketry work where the photographer is amongst the community. In the frame a metallic bowl and a kettle are spatially organized in a way that demonstrates that these two women were not from a hunter-gatherer community. Though the cottage-like structures give some clues about

housing, we do not know exactly where the picture is taken, except that it could be in the Eastern regions of Ethiopia. Figure 12 is also a powerful portrait that emphasises the beadwork as well as hair styles of the girls. One girl is looking straight to the camera lens while the other one is posed in a classic anthropometric style familiar in representations of racial 'types'. These two girls were pictured in a depiction of 'less civilised girls' with a *sadula*, a typical hair style in Wello County for unmarried girls where the middle hair is removed while the surrounding hair is left to be plated. One girl is posed in a way which compliments the visual scene of the hair style of the other. All of the subjects were pictured as nameless individuals.

There is no information provided about the photographer or on the exact dates of these images. Most of them were re-touched in a photo-laboratory. There are limited explanations in the archives about who the subjects were and why they were posed in studio. Depersonalised images were freely composed. Such imagery became popular with Italians who used them for propaganda purposes. Sensuality was visualized as a sign of African savagery. Barrera (1996: 9) refers to such erotic postcards as 'powerful vehicles for exciting male fantasies'. The compositional similarities of these postcards could be compared with tourism adverts at the national level. Triangulating postcards with interviews reveals complexities of meaning making that demands historicising and contextualizing constructs from socio-cultural perspectives. As one head of a museum put it:

You read stress from the images, if you look at images of Binihammer woman; they used to wear eka, the one that covers the whole body. But what they did was they made her naked and then made her flag a fan and took the image, the one that was made from basket but her face tells another story. ----- (VN850038, Interview with Head of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Museum, 25/07/2011)

Picturing the nude body was a western tradition that gained popularity when surrealism and realism were practiced as forms of artistic expressions. Such objectifications of female bodies were not only pertinent to the Ethiopian case but also practiced around Europe. There was a limited opportunity to picture the nude body during the Victorian era in England (Pultz, 1995; see also Fao, 2012). However, British photographers practiced the genre in British colonies. The same is true of photographs of women in French West Africa (Godzlech et.al, 1986). What was particularly unique was that in the early 1920s to 1930s and 1940s, Africa was seen to possess an exotic character. The landscape was reproduced again and again as an over sexualized space constructed through symbolic figures of women (Jarosz, 1992). The

introduction of photography, therefore, facilitated the development of pictorial representations of the nude body. Some of the photographs reveal the subject's unhappiness. Specific gestures and performed gesticulations indicate deliberate photographic techniques as opposed to natural self-expressions of the body. As the head of IES's museum said:

----- *They deliberately use different posing so breast looks bulged; they make them to lift their hands so breasts look tidy. There are technique and the art of picturing that they used to deliberately narrate that story. --- there is a story behind the use of technique and art of picturing, to explore what they were thinking. It is up to the viewer to articulate such representations* (VN850038, Interview with Head of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Museum, 25/07/2011)

What did picturing Ethiopia look like before the coming of the Italians? Do you say the Italians started taking images of the nude body? Were the people not naked? (Interviewer)

They [in reference to people of the South] were but intentionally focusing on breast was not there. If you investigate the ethnographic images of Ethiopia, if you go to South, in Afar [East Africa]--- what have you---, especially in Afar, those young girls who are not married walk half naked, the breast is nude. Kereyu, Harrar, Dasenech, all of them are half naked. The men do not even notice that these women are naked. Breast in pastoralist's society is not an expression of beauty. It is considered as for kids. 'Ligoch yemitebut' new (It's to feed babies). But the influx of tourists/travellers to those area see breast from their own perspectives, as an object of sexual sensation. It does not give any such meanings to their boyfriends but it does to foreigners (VN850038, Interview with Head of the Museum of Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 25/07/2011).

Such contextualizing of the cultural and social contexts of the body shows the acultural and ahistorical reproducibility of bodies into symbolic codes. Picturing of traditional societies shows similar visual codes to classic ethnography pictures (For more see chapter 2). Used as colonial fantasies, picture postcards of the northern and southern peoples of Ethiopia, particularly female figures, were presented as authentic individuals. Naming individuals with reference to their 'ethnic' belonging began with the *Della Africa Orientale* postcards. People of the North and South of Ethiopia began to be constructed as disassociated others or as nameless creatures. There is no reference to individuals' identities other than their 'ethnicity'. The images are, therefore, staged authenticity. From Butler's (2006) account of rereading body gestures, photographs provide unique access to the situation where and when the actual picturing took place. The earliest snapshots narrate Italian fantasies in propagating sensual bodies of Ethiopian women. If the rest of Africa were imagined as an over eroticised landscape (Jarosz, 1992), earliest postcards of Ethiopian women published under fascism are

classic examples of photographic aesthetics where power was manifested and envisaged in picture postcards.

Those publications had political and economic dimensions. Italy's humiliating defeat by the Ethiopian army gave an impetus to wider efforts to represent the Ethiopians as barbaric and primitive. All of the women were represented in a uniform fashion as if they were sexually available. This connotes the association of polygamy and wilderness to Africans. None of the social and cultural elements of individuals were the subject of publications. The postcards were used to recruit Italian soldiers and construction workers. In Italy public reception of such images was as follows:

Italians soon convinced themselves that there would be work in Ethiopia for everyone and that we would no longer have to emigrate. But what made up young men's minds was the publication of postcards of naked Abyssinian women. No-one had ever seen such firm, pointed breasts. Southern Italians especially couldn't wait to leave; in their eyes Abyssinia seemed like an endless forest of beautiful breasts all within reach. (Duncan, 2004: 59; citing Sturani 1995: 137, translated by Duncan)

From historical to contemporary publications of people of the South, photographs of pastoralist societies, as well as those that inhabit the Ethiopian highlands, had again and again reproduced the ethnographic 'othering'. In this sense Italian practices of picturing are no different to other male European photographers who had accompanied different expeditions and geographical societies as early as the nineteenth century (see Chapter 2). Recent critiques of gendered discourses still decipher tourism as a 'masculinist' space where disembodied visual narratives are publicised.

Pritchard et.al (2007) demand a move from just interpreting these as patriarchal and sexual to 'indeterminate bodies' where depictions of the 'other' could say more about the 'self', that is the presenter. In such a way there is no clear line between the 'self' and the 'other' representations. Markwick (2001) argues that postcards produced at the national level are subject to the visual economy and market demands of tourists' desire. He further articulates the agency of the national tourism office in representing Malta. Romanticising the place, Malta is pictured as a sunny, Mediterranean and beautiful place for tourist destination. Postcards are thus representations of symbols of 'exoticism and authenticity'.

4.3. Contestations of Gender: Tourism, Identities and State Narratives

For a country that prides itself on defeating a European colonial power and maintaining its independence, it's ironic that some of its [Ethiopia's]

self-representations reflect Europe's longstanding image of Africa as a static site of primitivism against which one hones definitions of progress and modernity (Dagmawi Woubishet, 2009: 12)

Produced as portraits in the 1960s, the postcards of the Ethiopian Tourism Commission (ETC) provide contexts that could be juxtaposed with earliest postcards of *Della Africa Orientale*. The earliest productions are useful to explore about the contents of picture postcards within the ideology of fascist Italians. The narratives of some of the portraits provide access to ETC's agency and reveal dominant state presentations of Ethiopia. As with earlier postcards, these too predominantly use female figures to propagate the ideology of national identity formation by selecting few photographs of highlanders. However, focusing on functionality dilutes the power differences between the agency of an institution and the silences of history. These silences of history are about people who live in the margins.

Contextualising the different societies of Ethiopia, Alula Pankhurst and Dena Freeman (2003) have discussed the deliberate marginalisation of communities either based on occupational roles or on their 'ethnicity'. As I shall discuss later these postcard publications have narrative similarities with that of state or national identity creations in tourism industry. Postcard publications by the ETC shifted toward visualizing modernisation processes in Ethiopia by picturing and publishing new buildings in different urban centres, particularly Addis Ababa. Among those were photographs of newly built hotels, bridges and government owned buildings⁸. The 'Thirteen Months of Sunshine' postcards of the Ethiopian Tourism Commission have similar visual narratives with visual art pieces that are produced for commercial purposes.

Founded by Taffesse in the 1960s, the Ethiopian Tourism Commission had become an institution through which the earliest visual encounters had reappeared in the process of state formations and identity creations. Taffesse preferred shooting portraits in outdoor settings rather than in studios (Interview with Taffesse, 05/09/2011). Before the establishment of the ETC, there were already studios in major urban centres such as Addis Ababa, Asmara, and Dire Dawa that date back to the beginning of 1950s. There were also a good number of professional photographers who had opened up studios in major urban centres as early as the 1950s. The majority of these individuals had Armenian origins, although Ethiopians emerged as photographers immediately after the post-liberation period

⁸ Almost all of the collections of Ato Niguse Teshome show that postcard pictures published by the Ethiopian Tourism Commission show these thematic choices.

(Interview with Niguse Teshome, 2/08/2011). The ETC had to rely on different sources to circulate images of Ethiopian people and landscapes in both urban spaces and rural spaces. There are, however, no tourism postcards made by using the work of prominent Ethiopian studio photographers⁹.

Taffesse branded the landscape of Ethiopia as ‘Thirteen months of sunshine’ where he published posters and postcards under this logo. He is one of a number of pioneering Ethiopian intellectuals who have used women figures as national emblems (Interview between Daniel Tadesse and Taffesse, Ethiopian Television, 2012). Referred by many Ethiopians as ‘the father of tourism’, almost all of the famous posters of ‘Thirteen months of sunshine’ are figures of female bodies posed in different settings. Images were selected by the agency to promote positive values of Ethiopia that were regarded as tourist attractions (Interview with Taffesse, 5/09/2011). National Geographic photographs and many other works of foreign photographers were published as postcards at a time when documentary photography outside of studio spaces was in a nascent stage in Ethiopia.

Most of the postcards that are still widely circulated in different tourist shops are contesting images of poverty. Like the National Geographic magazine, ETC excludes visual narratives of extreme poverty. Using photographs of women and girls are part of the general trend since all of the photographers were male photographers. Women are regarded as photogenic and as expressive of culture. The main differences in these representations lie between portrayals of women from North/highlands and South Ethiopia. Some of the images reflect the preferences of the state for contesting narratives in identity formations at the national level. Despite the government idealises a unified national identity, it uses the images of ethnically organized people as currency and symbolically different from the majority groups.

In figure 13, “the woman is real – Lulit; she used to work as a secretary in the tourism commission” (VN850030, interview with Interpreter and Gallery owner, 5/08/2011). Habte Sellasei Taffesse brought her from the northern region outside of Addis Ababa at a time when women’s participation in public sphere was not widely acknowledged (Taffesse, Interview by EBS, May, 2012). Such a national branding is expressed in terms of captions such as “Wubit Ethiopia” [Beautiful Ethiopia]. Historical feminisation of Ethiopia continued. Ethiopia is often constructed as female with a green environment in popular culture such as music and

⁹ Nowadays another source of picture postcards are those circulated by individual artists and photographers

poetry. Even Ethiopia is symbolically feminised and often referred to in folklore and classical paintings as ‘Mother Ethiopia’. The text thus shows state narratives without overlooking the agency of the founder, Habte-Sellassie Taffesse who himself had an Ethiopian biological parents, but had Russian and Greek foster parents. The image is rebranded to represent the identity of Ethiopia.



Figure 13: *Wubit Ethiopia*, Photograph by Kyriazis –Zervos

Source: Courtesy of Collections of Ato Niguse Teshome © Ethiopian Tourism

This photograph was taken by Kyriazis-Zervos, an Armenian photographer who had been working in Addis Ababa during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, but he left the country after the revolution (VN850014, interview with Collector & Senior Photographer,

2/8/2011). Postcards of an individual figure are used with a photo text which in turn forms a state narrative. As opposed to some posters and postcards captioned as “Gambella Ethiopia”, figure 13 is classic example of consistent textual reference to imagery of tourism practices. “Wubit Ethiopia” is, for instance, a major postcard that was disseminated through the ETC. There is an obsession of beauty with mixed race. A woman is posed in a flower garden that is set to give a wider context on the landscape. Rather than aridity, a flower garden with a soft focused, beautiful sky is used as a backdrop. The woman is fully dressed and the material clothing embodied in the images in figures 13 & 14 signifies the subjects as the bearers of customs, as does the emphasis on emblems of cultural expressions on the woven fabric. In Figure 13, even the dress is decorated with embroidery of a cross as symbol of Christianity. It provides technical selectivity, dignity and commonality.



Figure 14: *Young Ethiopian Girl*, Photograph by Kyriazis Zervos

Source: Courtesy of Collections of Ato Niguse Teshome © Ethiopian Tourism Commission

Postcards are means by which emphasis is placed on national costumes. Woven textiles are common traditions from South to North of Ethiopia. This type of clothing (Figure 13 & Figure 14) symbolises expressions of commonality among nations and nationalities in Ethiopia. As Levine (1974) argued costume productions of certain elements are results of acculturations within Ethiopia¹⁰. Around the world woven textiles are one of the cultural expressions sellable to tourist and local consumptions. Used for constructs of identity, human figures are used to advertise and to visualise tourist attractions of Ethiopia. Tourism promotions in the form of posters and postcards enact the performance of representations where Christian culture and beauty are selected in the making of highland Ethiopian identity. To articulate on the influence of historical photographic conventions on tourism adverts, I refer to Woubishet's (2009) articulations of tourism billboards in performing identities and spaces. They are symbols of dominant state narratives used as inferences to perform national identities. I will contextualise the diffusive as well as separatist approaches to the discursive practices of the North/South imagery particularly in performing Ethiopia's identity.

Analysing tourism billboards, Woubishet (2009:12) articulated portrayals of the North and South of Ethiopia as

the North is vested with history, the South is ahistorical; the North has time, the South is atemporal; the North is authenticated, the South is authentic;-----the sites of attraction in the North are grand and sacred places, while in the South they are wild plants, game and 'these curious people.

Internal dynamics in performing national narratives are compared as North/South dichotomies where the North is produced as a rich cultural landscape that has its own history while the South is pictured as static, timeless and its people as wanderers. This is where the visual economy plays a role in adopting some of the elements of 'othering' as visual knowledge is increasingly globalized. As figure 15 demonstrates, a 'Gambella' woman of the South is posed in a similar way to the earliest postcards. Habte-Sellase had to get permission from the Ministry of Communications to print nude breasts of Gambella women. His argument was that "foreigners like it!" (Tafesse, Interview between Tafesse and Daniel Tadesse, ETV, 2012). The material commodification of these women performing the cultural

¹⁰ Woven textiles are also common around the world including the Middle East and Asia.

landscapes differs due to the selectivity of state narratives. The founder of ETC explained his picturing of women as:

-----And then the people, they become aware and they become a little bit self-conscious and they lose their original self-expression. They worry --- 'is he going to make money out of my picture? Automatically we do not want to be photographed. Usually, Habesha, the politicians see that --in the old days, somebody with a camera is a spy. Automatically again in the old days, if you approach the people they think that we are going to promote that they are poor. This is their perspective. Again when you put them, [the girls], in a studio, it is not the same. You can pose girls and take beautiful picture but it lacks that original expressions. They become aware of a camera and it lacks that natural expression (VN850029, Interview with founder of Ethiopian Tourism Commission, 5/8/2011).

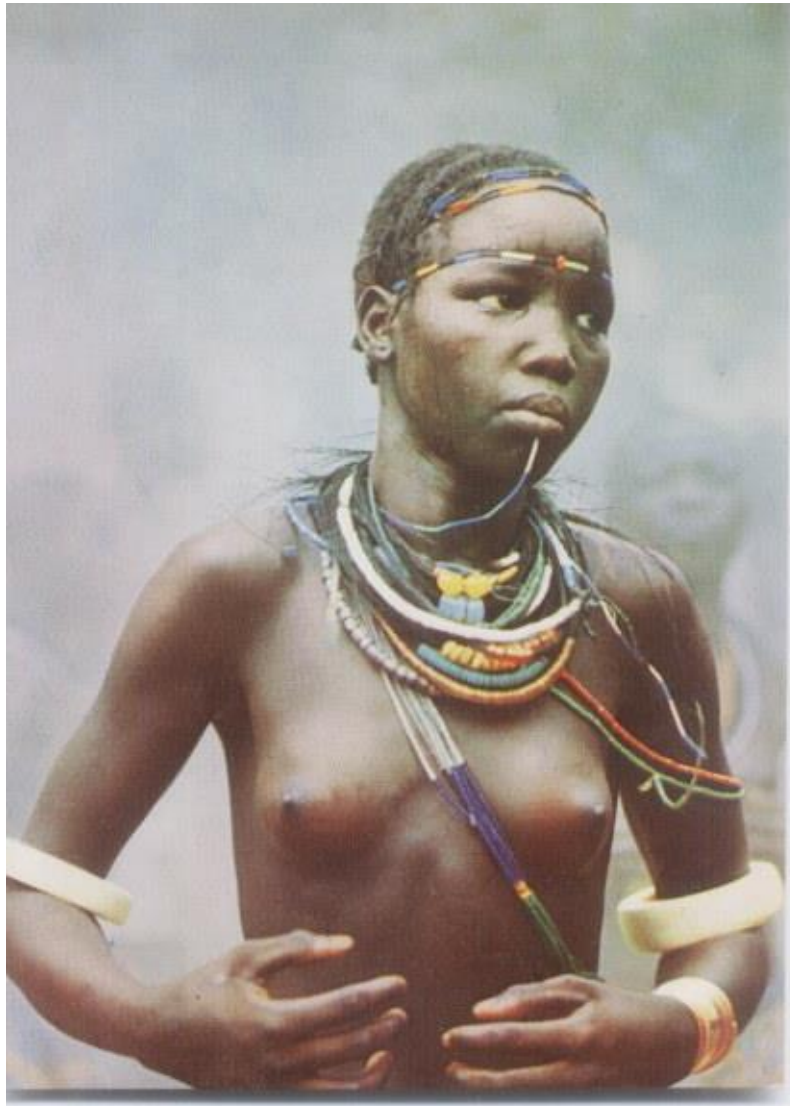


Figure 15: 'Gambella, Ethiopia', Photograph by Habte-Sellasié Taffesse, Courtesy of Collections of Ato Niguse Teshome © Ethiopian Tourism Commission

When asked about the reasons for his particular images and the reason why he chose international photographers, the founder of the ETC stated that this has to do with the quality of an image, as well as state narratives which promote photographs of girls and children to narrate Ethiopia's beauty. Those publications assume that women and girls wear national costumes such as beading and woven textiles. The office still uses such pictures because they capture cultural expressions such as body adornments and decorations better than men. In the most of ETC's commissioned works, the narratives make distinctions between the urban and rural, the sacred and profane to advertise Ethiopia as land of variety. At a time when outdoor documentary photography was not yet practiced by most of the Ethiopian photographers, the ETC had to rely on the works of different European photographers, including those working for the National Geographic:

-----It has to be what is better. They [foreign photographers] come here from Europe, they are professional people. You have to see it with your eyes first, it lasts for a fraction of a second. ----you have to have that sense of capturing. If you want to capture a sunset you have to be there, otherwise it disappears within seconds (VN850030, Interview with Taffesse, 19/08/2011).

Postcards provide interpretations by contextualizing the product through individual's accounts of lived experiences. In terms of subject-object relations narrations of cultural expressions, as well as fluidity, supersede the making of Ethiopia's identity. Cultural commonalities such as clothing and beading are repeated in the process of branding the nation. Rather than totalitarianism, particularism and locationality are playfully used in the self-representations of a nation. This has to do with the dominance of the Semitic culture in political, social and cultural diffusions, and processes of acculturation. At present Ethiopia's identity acknowledges various nations and nationalities by recognizing multiple languages. The current government mobilises support by legalizing local languages as a medium of communication, and, flagging up the significance of regional culture, without threatening the historical domination of the Amharic liturgical language. Some of the postcards provide evidence of such cultural, political and historical domination. Anderson's (1993: 5) definition of a nation as an 'imagined political community' partly explains state narratives of historical domination of the Northern highland cultures over the nations and nationalities of the South.



Figure 16: *Meskel Celebration*, Photo by Kyriazis-Zervos,

Source: Collections of Ato Niguse Teshome © Ethiopian Tourism Commission

Manifested in these postcards, state identity narratives are outcomes of Emperor Menilik's expansion of Ethiopia to incorporate the South under his authority (Clapham, 2007; Zewde, 2007). Men are portrayed performing church related performances taking place during national holidays such as Epiphany. Hence, they are pictured as performers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church culture as they chant in ceremonies with full customary observances. In contrast to these masculinist spaces of culture, there are few photographs of women's participation in everyday culture. In building the nation's heritage, tourism in Ethiopia does not favour homogeneous representations. More diversified customs of societies are performed as 'cultural capital'. Because performing a nation's identity involves selection, this 'dissonance' could take place in terms of 'past national injustice, claims and enmities' (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1996: 48-50). This is where masculinity and historical power relations come to play in branding a nation's identity.

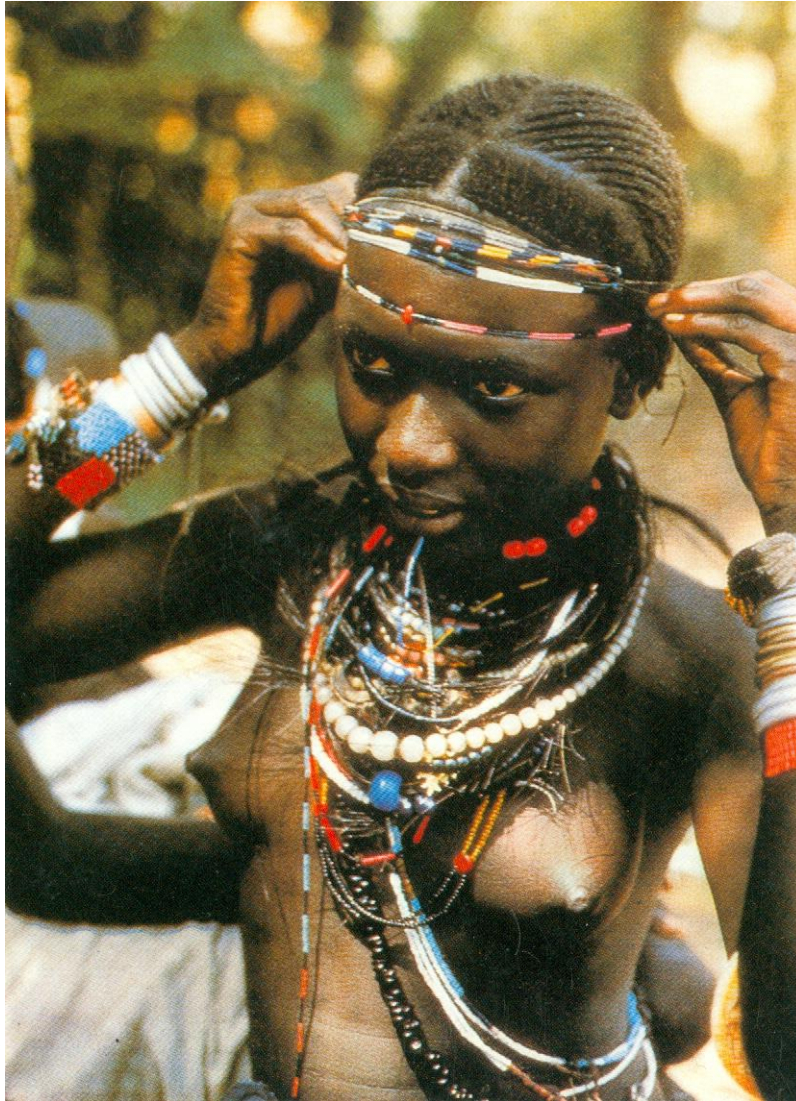


Figure 17: *Ivory and hair of giraffe tails adorn a young Anuak wife.* Photograph by James P. Bliar © National Geographic Society, Reproduced by ETC, 1965.

Exposing figures of women (figure 15 and figure 17) from the South as young adults with firm breasts continued within the agency. Traditionally, beauty in Ethiopia is envisaged as having a sharp nose, wide eyes, thinner lips and fair complexion. These are attributed to Northerners, though all sorts of physical features could be found in all parts of Ethiopia. Tourism adverts portray ethnically organised people in a similar fashion as the earliest photographic encounters, while highlanders are used to brand Ethiopia as a land of beauty with longstanding Christian traditions. The political economy forces us to deviate from the concept of the 'other' as self-representations are mutually constituted to tourist and global demands of the cultural and scientific importance of Ethiopia. The Eastern region of Ethiopia is still an archaeological site where scientists still engage in archaeological excavation

particularly on the origin of mankind. It is also a place where Islam in Ethiopia has shaped the cultural landscape of the eastern region. That is why we see images of Harari women as expressions of Islamic culture in some of the Ethiopian Tourism Commission's posters. Visual state narratives thus become a 'third space' where long standing 'self' and 'other' representations are blurred in transnational development activities such as tourism. The postcards give us access to systematic selectivity of state expressions.

In terms of representations, the performance of an Ethiopian identity is seen as belonging to a represented in photographs of Christian highlanders' rather than to photographs of women of the Omo valley regions. The captions of "beautiful Ethiopia" as opposed to "Gambella Ethiopia" and "Anuak wife" signify state preferences in branding highlanders as representatives of Ethiopia. The people of the South were often identified by the highlanders in history as *bariya* [slave] (Woubishet, 2009). The persistence of sexualised poses in photographs of girls of the South is a dominant way of objectifying traditional societies as marginalised communities. All of the photographers producing these images, Ethiopian or non-Ethiopian, are male. Such visibilities of people of the South as distinct from the rest of Ethiopia symbolize longstanding ethno-cultural hierarchies.

Similar cultural elements are repeatedly presented in The Ethiopian Herald. For example, photographic reports are specifically concentrated in the Society, and the Arts and Culture section of the newspaper. In this newspaper, there is a tradition of linking different aspects of female figures with culture. In most tourist destinations, such as Omo valley, the tourism office still uses half naked or nude images of girls in promoting those places. The Omo valley as cultural landscape is portrayed as a site for adventure (Shatto, 1991). Using photographs of female bodies as adverts for exoticism, the trend reinforces preconceived ideas of these societies as if they are untouched by urban transformations. These images portray female bodies as the bearers of culture. The tourism industry does not consider these images as reinforcing imagined colonial compositions that are not intelligible to the realities of contemporary indigenous society. It does not consider these as bi-products of the ambiguity of global cultures, where modernity and progress are removed from the everyday lives of people living in the margin. In those narrations, however, varieties of nations and nationalities or diversities are favoured rather than maximizing the knowledge of exotic others. The authentic is continuously performed to meet the demands of tourists who are informed by visual representations in western magazines such as the National Geographic.

In the Arts and Culture section of The Ethiopian Herald, we see dominant images of traditional society such as images of a nude Mursi woman, juxtaposed against a portrait of the then state Minister of Culture and Tourism, dressed in a business suit (EPA, 1992). Significant news coverage in this section is about image and change, manipulating nations and nationalities in building different parts of Ethiopia's image. The reproductions of such cultural landscapes continue to deny the colonial legacy in picturing the indigenous community at the national level. Rather than using them as symbols for the benefit of indigenous communities, state narratives adopt such transnational or translocal cultural encounters mainly for tourism purposes. The agency of indigenous people is undermined due to their dependence on the financial income that they obtain from tourists. In such a way 'the cultural landscape' continues to favour commoditising the photographic images of indigenous people as a result of performing acts of these institutions. The cultural landscape is thus a bi-product of 'multiple agencies' where representation is negotiated and contested between various stake holders (Plumwood, 2006: 129). To conclude this section, a practitioner's account of the practice of picturing or filming people around Omo valley is as follows:

You know how it is ----if they [locals] hear that there is photography or documentary [film] project, indigenous people change their clothes, wear traditional costumes and run into bushes just to be filmed or photographed ---I am not joking, this is how it is! While in reality evolution is inevitable to alter the lives of indigenous community either as a result of human agency or environmental change (VN850019, Interview with a BBC documentary Programme Developer, 3/08/2011)

This commentary connotes indigenous people as performers of the authentic in an encounter with photographers and filmmakers. It implies that the performativity lacks to capture change and continuity due to manmade and natural phenomena. The issue of agency is limited to the temporality of snapshots as joint visual encounters. Compared with the Fascist Italian postcards, contemporary postcards of the ETC have some similarities and differences. Some of the postcards perpetuate the traditional representational practices of 'othering'. This is so because the representational practices are linked with material commodification, as well as the political dynamics of the social and cultural domination of the North over the South. All of them were produced by male photographers and male decision- makers. The representational practices of exotic narratives of earlier postcards are over-sexualised images, where women are represented as a homogenized group, not only to each other, but with the rest of Africa. While maintaining the ethnographic landscape of the South by imaging women naked, a more ethically appropriate image of clothed women from

the highlands is branded as Ethiopia's identity. Tourism is one of the systems through which state narratives are perpetuated not only in postcards, but also in other print media, such as the state owned newspaper publication of The Ethiopian Herald. Along with the only state owned media, that is, the Ethiopian Radio and Television Broadcasting Agency, the state uses its print media to portray itself as an activist of development.

4.4. The Ethiopian Press Agency: Gendering Photojournalism

Mainstream media in Ethiopia refers to television and radio broadcasting units, and print media. The government proclamation and policy declaration newspaper, *Negarit Gazeta* published under the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, defines 'mass media as printed matter that includes periodicals and broadcasters' excluding other photographic images based in postcards, posters, and advertisements (No.64, 4324). 1994 marked a dramatic change from government-owned only publications to the emergence of a private press. The government of Ethiopia legalised freedom of expression in the independent print media under proclamation number 590/2008 in 1993. The national state owned press has one of the biggest circulations in Ethiopia. By 2010, the media and broadcasting authority has registered 123 publications, of which 58 are newspapers. Only one newspaper is dedicated to women's affairs (Ministry of Information, 2011). The print media owned by the Ethiopian Press Agency publishes two major newspapers, *Addis Zemen*, an Amharic daily and *The Ethiopian Herald*, an English daily (except on Mondays).

The *Ethiopian Herald* newspaper has five sections. These include a section on political situations around the World, Africa and Ethiopia. Other sections include Society, Economic news coverage, and the Arts and Culture. Even though privately owned newspapers carry out better practice of photojournalism, *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Addis Zemen* still have a higher circulation. Be it in print form or in motion, the media is often used to inform the public with specific visual narratives. Perhaps to attract consumers or convince audiences, journalism in Ethiopia often uses bigger sized photographs, or black and white pictures. Printed in black and white, every day the agency dispatches more than 10,000 copies of each newspaper to different parts of Ethiopia¹¹. Other popular newspapers are *Addis Admas* and *the Reporter* which are equally competent in terms of distribution. The government press and private press often have antagonistic relations. Collectively speaking the private press criticizes state owned newspapers as serving the ruling party's interest. The

¹¹ In 2013 *The Ethiopian Herald* has been upgraded to a coloured newspaper.

state owned newspapers are positively charged with serving the constitution (Petros, 2008). Democracy and freedom of speech are still debatable issues. Over the past few years well read newspapers such as Addis Neger have been banned from circulation because the government accused it of misconduct and ethical breaches. The private press often supports pro-opposition parties and is a politicized and an over sensationalised platform. Even though state owned newspapers are not popular in terms of stimulating readers, individuals often read these newspapers because they contain vacancy announcements and bids and business advertisements. While the main objective of the agency is to convey government activities to the public, news items often have biases in terms of the coverage and photographs that accompany these news items.

Even though photojournalism is an essential component of reporting within the EPA, the profession is still viewed as supplementary to reporting. By 2011 there are twenty permanent photo-journalists accompanying staff journalists. Unlike official reporters these photojournalists do not have formal academic qualifications other than short term training. All of them, however, have been working for the photographic unit of the agency for more than 2 decades. Despite the fact that they are in competition with qualified journalists who have been trained on the right of reporting both in words and photographs, the agency has maintained amateur photojournalists irrespective of regime change (VN850047, Interview with head of the photographic unit of EPA, 13/09/2011).

At a national level, critiques of this practice from its site of production include arbitrary use of photo-files without acknowledging the photographers. Newspaper publications use mug-shot portraits of officials. The Head and the director of print and web media of the School of Journalism, for instance, stresses an emerging genre of picturing only those who occupy permanent government offices, and institutional photo-files, rather than actual pictures that could complement an article (VN850021, Interview, 2/08/2011). Such commentaries are also backed by evidence that reprints from international media without acknowledging the source (see for instance EPA, 2003). As I discuss later, photojournalism is directly related to the notion of censorship.

Within this agency the practice could be categorized as development journalism. Skjerdal (2009) noted that a significant number of news items report development activities. News stories are usually based on activities of the state. Different ministries report formal events or meetings. Journalists and editors-in-chief largely focus on news items that are

directed from the ministry of information. This news agenda is set by Ethiopian broadcasting services such as Walta Information Centre, Ethiopian News Agency, ERTA, Ethio Telcom, and Government Communication Offices (VN850050, Interview with Design Layout Manager & Head of photography unit of EPA, 19/09/2011). The general trend of the national press is expressed as follows:

Some portray [Ethiopian] women as secretary, --- aid recipients but they are not portrayed as managers, or leaders. This is the stereotype. The question is who is able to show balanced & reasonable representations. It is very difficult to claim truth. Even for me the way media portray a country plays a significant role in the way I imagine places. When I think of Afghanistan all that came into my mind is fractured buildings and tanks of the UN. It is very difficult to claim any truth from any news items (VN850022, Interview with a Lecturer and Head of Print and Web Media at the School of Journalism and Communication AAU, 12/08/2011).

From stereotypical representations, gender portrayals have to do with society's long standing perception of occupation roles. The above commentary makes distinctions between commercial journalism and alternative journalism. Dominant commercial journalism practice influences the way individuals imagine places based on mass media coverage. Lower class occupational statuses are given to women while men are portrayed as orators and leaders. The Ethiopian Herald bears witness to such media portrayals despite the fact that Ethiopia's constitution has adopted gender mainstreaming policies such as equality and women empowerment (see EPRDF, 1993).

Gender and media studies in Ethiopia show the difficulties of disentangling gender portrayals from gender issues in the press. At policy level the press covers gender issues through the activities of government offices such as Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. These two offices work closely to expose the practical problems that women and children are facing at different levels. Associations such as the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Associations and the Network of Ethiopian Women Association mitigate the practical problems that women are facing in relation to family, harmful traditions such as female genital mutilation, domestic violence, and access to primary education, and income generation (003, Interview with Head of Ethiopian Entrepreneurs' Association, 10/01/2012).

New offices such as the Ministry of Children and the Youth are also working on strengthening children's rights. There is a shift in focus in mainstreaming gender within the press agency. Increasing news coverage within the women's page in Addis Zemen as well as in The Ethiopian Herald brings diverse issues other than victimhood. Adoptions of

development activities based on rights-based approaches in Ethiopia have become governing bodies of photojournalism practices of the Ethiopian Press Agency. The press agency has a policy of publishing equal numbers of newspaper articles about the rights of women and children as other political and social issues including men's issues (001, Interview with Former manager of Women's Issues Section of *Addis Zemen* daily, 21/09/2010).

The gender portrayal by the EPA also takes dignity into consideration. Ethically questionable pictures are reviewed based on the institution's editorial policy. They do so to make sure that they ethically respect the dignities of a nation and nationalities. Pictures are accumulated as archival materials. They are used whenever ministries write about health, education or commerce, but not for business (VN850050, Interview with Design and layout manager of EPA, 13/09/2011). Unlike non-governmental organisations that consider ethical issues in the act of picturing subjects, the press agency does not have to agree a signed consent agreement form with citizens. Photojournalism is about snapshots without necessarily considering the sensitivities of representing citizens and subsequent photographic uses (VN850047, Interview with a Staff photojournalist of EPA, 13/09/2011).

In picturing social issues, an NGO photographer has codes of conduct such as photo guidelines and ethical issues. In the case of picturing children, he or she may ask their guardian to sign a consent form. Since the practice is picturing government officials, there seems to be representations of everyone else by picturing their officials. Officials are pictured as speakers about social, political and economic aspects of Ethiopia. As such one or more photographers may accompany officials to picture their activities. Works of photographers may be disregarded if they show unpleasant or negative representations of officials (VN850047, Interview with a Staff photojournalist, 13/09/2011).

Photo-journalistic works may also have different characteristics to photo-essays commissioned by NGOs. Press photographs are often authoritative since they do not require permission from citizens. Though they do not picture staged or posed pictures of individuals, they end up producing surveillance photographs due to detachment from their own subjects. Usually people have negative reactions when photojournalists pick up their camera to photograph them (VN850047, Interview with a Staff photojournalist of EPA, 13/09/2011). On many occasions people do not like to be photographed under the assumption that journalists may use their images as evidence of rural and urban poverty (Interview with Getachew, 26/7/2011). Local and foreign journalists may be abused in streets while

undertaking photojournalistic works. For photojournalists, picturing people of the South, a region dominated by ethnically organized societies, takes place by negotiating payments with subjects. People from the Northern region may cooperate with photo-journalists with the exception of tourist sites (VN850047, Ibid).

Dominant media representations can be categorized as global media representations and representations by Ethiopia's media. The press has its own agency on gender portrayals and gender issues in rural and semi-urban landscapes in Ethiopia. It often excludes and includes certain knowledge. For instance, despite the fact that women take in a variety of activities, the press portrays rural dwellers as victims of existing social structures. In the international media, African women are repeatedly pictured as recipients of aid, and are hardly portrayed as care givers and food providers. They are usually framed as they stretch out their hands to receive food or clothing rather than as active agents in their own lives (this is discussed further in Chapter 5). Gender portrayals are discussed in relation to the extensive use of women figures as objects in a patriarchal society where the voices of women, as well as other everyday people are undermined (See EAJA, 2008). Even in success stories, a focus on an agriculture-led economy has influenced coverage of government activities, which in turn governs the content of news items. Government led activities are constructed as activities of women where other narratives about everyday women are omitted from the picture frame. The next section addresses how such print media can potentially burry pictures that portray other everyday activities of women outside of Addis Ababa.

4.4.1. Buried but not Published: Capabilities of Women

The media at national and international level often collaborate with any development agency in order to popularize development activities at grass roots level. Such practice may take place as follows:

In terms of working with the media we sometimes organize media visits to our projects, they come to us and they say they want to see our projects; they would say they want to visit our work and report what we do. We also initiate media to visit our projects. They not only take photographs but interviews and voice reporting. Especially international media will expose our projects and what we do to the world. We also use local media so they disseminate the news to the public. When we have press release people from media would ask for images so we share pictures with them (VN850037, Interview with Communication Officer of Save the Children, 6/10/2011).

Development news is presented as everyday collaborative activities of locals together with the government and other aid organisations. Most development activities are related to Ethiopia's millennium goal for poverty reduction.

We have 4 major programmes---our major work is life saving and life changing. These are our major intervention. Life saving means you have to bring tangible change on a child's life. We build schools, we have also done clean water supply to all regions. These are programmes that even the government wants us to do. These gaps could not be fulfilled by government so we need to support the government on this, ---- so this brings sustainable development. And these are life changing. We support Health extension workers, we train them. We teach them how they identify case symptoms etc., how mothers should support children. So most of the time we work on life changing rather than life saving. This does not mean we do not work on life saving (VN850037, Interview with Communication Officer of Save the Children, USA, 6/10/2011).

Such collaborations of opening up of new schools, potable water supplies, health education and emergency aid are supported through the aid activities of NGOs that often treat media coverage as an important component of development journalism. Even though there is little news coverage about the global South (see Franks, 2006; Godzekpo, 2009), what we read are stories about the visits of celebrities, such as Bob Geldof, Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. These celebrities are pictured and reported in relation to development activities in collaboration with press, the national and international NGOs. Even though the everyday lives of women include their diverse roles, their leisure times, religious activities and family, news about rural women is limited to the way government and NGOs assist them for sustainable development. Jonathan Rigg explains the factors that affect everyday lives of the South. These include 'local and international based NGOs that represent an important local level political presence through which national policies are often mediated and they may also act as conduits for local level concerns to be communicated upwards' (Rigg, 2007: 144). Even though the agriculture-led development policy of the government insists on a bottom-up approach, so that the voices of locals can be heard, all citizens do not have equal opportunities to influence development activities. Even within reports of development activities, press coverage about well-known people and everyday people are incomparable:

In any news ordinary citizens have 4-5% chance to represent themselves in media. News is done based on prominence. One of the problems is the adoption of western traditions and a focus on prominent people. It's the pope, a priest, a village chief, or leader who gets the opportunity to speak about ordinary people----- (VN850021, Interview with a Lecturer, School of Journalism, AAU, 12/08/2011)

Omissions of community from press photographs seem to contradict the ideals of development promises to the local people. The reliance of journalists on official sources often reduce them to mouth pieces of the state (Crotreau, 1992: 374). Image based knowledge is often related to dominant visual culture that includes routine conference pictures in the dissemination of daily newspapers. Even though gender mainstreaming is the major agenda of the Ethiopian Constitution (EPDRF, 1993), the government still fails to achieve balanced perspectives both in news coverage and gender portrayals. As I flipped through these newspapers, practices of photojournalism still depict routine conference spaces as masculine spaces, where women are often absent or else women are composed as attendees but not as speakers.

There is a contrast between the published and unpublished materials of the EPA. The archival materials discussed in this section are photographs taken as encounters of the everyday that may not have found their way to pages of publications. There is an aesthetic quality that one can identify in terms of composition. Compared to earlier newspapers, recent publications have started mentioning the names of photographers who accompany officials when they pay visits to zones or regions in Ethiopia and abroad.

Despite their challenges, the significance of those archives is that they give access to different narratives. These narratives are often omitted from the everyday print media productions. It is difficult to call such photographic images alternative narratives. Alternative narratives are largely about modernity, and social and economic transformations in urban and rural areas. There is a battle between the narratives of continuity and static or unchanging cultures of the everyday (see, for example, the Moroccan case in Skalli, 2011: 480). There is a battle between accepting a western lifestyle and that of indigenous knowledge or way of life. In this context, press photography ignores acculturation or changing cultures. In the Ethiopian context modernity is often equated with ‘Europeanization’ and ‘Westernization’ (Ghiorgis, 2010). The interpretations of the photographic images that were buried in archives permit us to discuss presences and absences of transformations where performance, rituals, and other events can take place in the visual field (see Campbell, 2007 for discussion of the visual field).



Figure 18: *Melese Wolde*, Culture Minister of Southern Ethiopia, Published Material, 28/08/2004 © EPA

In this sense most of the photographic images that I have selected are archival materials of the press agency since I do not intend to discuss routine conference pictures published in *The Ethiopian Herald*. In order to make a comparison of gender portrayals, this section discusses both published and unpublished photographic images of the same event.



Figure 19: *Women Spinning Cotton*, Southern Regions, Unpublished Material, 28/08/2004 © EPA

As shown in Figure 18, an image of the culture minister, Melese Wolde of the Southern region was published while the news item is about the formation of a women's association. Even though the archive offers a better image of who practices formal income generation, the minister appeared as an authoritative and favoured individual who has the power to speak on behalf of economically disadvantaged women. Published in *The Ethiopian Herald*, Figure 18 portrays a political leader as an occupant of authority, and as an orator. The presence of a microphone makes him a mouth-piece for the women. The official is presented in an office setting exercising a certain level of authority within a society. In contrast, the above group of women do not seem to be aware of the camera's presence. They are mothers who have gathered to form an association of spinning cotton as an income generating activity in Southern regions of Ethiopia. The regional cultural officer of the time appears with his business suit and cravat while the women appear with their traditionally woven shawls known as 'shema'. Contrary to practices of picturing the self, where women appear in smart dress, the costumes of the everyday seem to dominate the picturing of working class women. Unlike the representations of women in newspaper publications, the archival photo in figure 19 represents members as active while figure 18 presents the regional culture minister as the mover and shaker. The archive offers pictures that are directly related to the topic of news item. However, it is often those who are in power that are portrayed as the voices of the community.

The everyday activities of people living in the margins are often removed from dominant press productions. Generally gender issues are regarded as women's issues. State owned newspapers use texts rather than powerful photographs to cover a story about the social and economic issues of people living in the margins. Part of the reason is attributed to institutional policy. Since the policy demands the promotion of state officials as representatives for the rest of the community, most of the news coverage is about the activities of officials' visits to a community. This editorial policy has also influenced the level of censorship within the institution:

There is general self-censorship among individuals in the editorial board. I was asked once to bring a powerful photo about electric power cut in Addis Ababa. They asked me if I can have pictures that can illustrate electric power problem. I went back home, saw my little son struggling----- I have seen my own child suffering to do his homework at home! I brought them a picture of my own son sitting at home and doing his homework using a candle light. But among the editorial team there is fear in using powerful images. They said 'No! Are you going to put us in danger!?' Instead they used a picture of a lamp (VN85004, Interview with senior photographer of EPA, 13/09/2011)

This interview is exemplary of the challenges of development activities in Addis Ababa that has created a problem in shortage of electric power cut. It also refers to internal politics in visualising such problems since it overlaps with other aspects such as challenging children's activities' at home. An issue of self-censorship is related to the Ethiopian Press agency's practice of development journalism. The government argues that it is striving to transform lives, particularly the lives of rural women. As a state owned newspaper, one of the main objectives of the guideline is to publicise government activities, policies and laws to create public awareness (Interview with design and layout manager, 20/09/2011). Like any other media organisation, it needs to survive politically and earn money by sensationalising news stories. The argument here is not about whether or not there are social and economic transformations. The postcolonial feminist approach takes gender as an indicator of power relations by examining how everyday women and girls are visualised within other power structures. Feminism has become globalised in objectives that erase the locational significance of the South in shaping its own gender issues (Spivak, 1998: 817; McEwan, 2009).

Rights based arguments, which were adopted in most charity organisations, have influenced topics that were covered as women's issues or children's issues. Human rights and

woman's rights dictated the coverage and portrayals of gender among different groups of women as well as between women representatives and men leaders. Such forms of representations are repeated in various sectors. For instance in agriculture, rural women in the Ethiopian context were not portrayed as active participants in farming. General representations of women in farming are not made visible for a number of reasons. One factor is that farmers are usually considered to be men. When someone mentions a farmer what comes into a person's mind is a man who struggles to work from day to night using hazardous ploughs. What is left out is the invisible role that women (and children) play in agriculture.

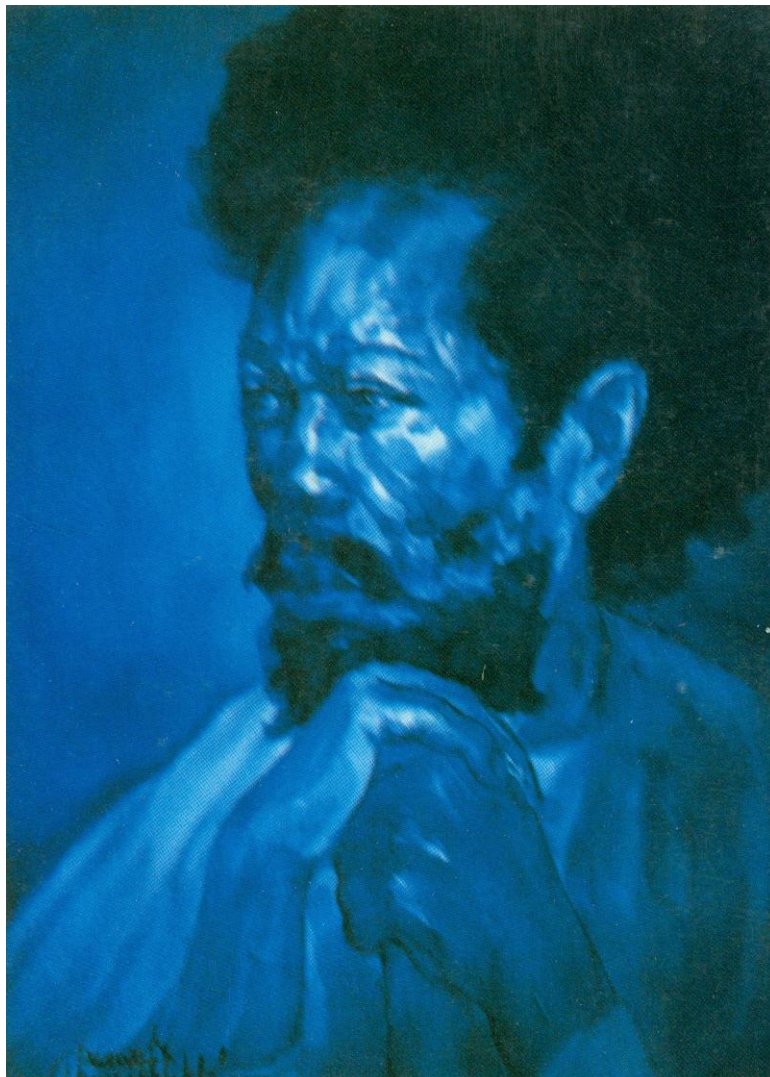


Figure 20: *The Peasant*, Medium: Postcard of ETC, 1974 © 1960 Painting by Afewerk Tekle

Mogues et.al (2009) findings' from participant observations show that women are taking part in different farm activities, though they are imagined only in caring roles, particularly as mothers. Recent EPA policy guidelines have ratified equal news coverage about men and women as part of its gender mainstreaming policy. Better coverage of female headed households in agriculture is visible from 2009 onwards in The Ethiopian Herald.



Figure 21: *W/o Birike Tima*, Apple Plantation Owner, Southern Regions, 18/08/2004 © EPA

In Chenchu Town in Southern Ethiopia, Misses Birike Tima is portrayed as a successful apple farmer. Set in her plantation, Birike Tima is posed with an apple in order to symbolically draw our attention to the fruit. This portrait is related to the traditional ways of picturing women and men in an outdoor settings where subjects are posed in a garden. Such pictures are prominent in family photo albums. Early 1990s publications of The Ethiopian Herald are, however, dominated by studio like portraits. A recent practice of the agency has shifted into posing subjects in an outdoor setting, where a garden or a tree is used as a backdrop. In most cases, the institutions' agency has political dimensions. The government encourages the promotion of women role models in farming in order to enhance their role and ratify gender equality and empowerment policy. The agency of the press in publicising women as role models fed into the government's agriculture-led economic policy, where female headed households are acknowledged as active participants in the agricultural sector.

The following figure illustrates similar portrayals of men and women working on a tea plantation.



Figure 22: *Tea Development, Southern Regions, 15/12/2004* © EPA

The above image was extracted from photo files (EPA, 2008), which is problematic because it does not give the context such as where the picture is taken. There is no physical or actual relationship with the topic raised. On some occasions we find the same image repeated in different news items. With the exception of a few role models, women are removed from textual and visual narratives that show their active participation in group work in plantation areas. Unlike the history of plantations and farming elsewhere in the world, such as in America and Caribbean, women's participation in Ethiopia does not have any colonial or racially exploitative power relations apart from capitalism. Cash crops and flower plantations are the focus of some of the government's forward looking policy where it propagates the news of increasing numbers of women participants in agriculture. This is particularly true if we compare previous removals of women's participation from agrarian economy. Marxist ideas of labour exploitation emanating from low wage payments to these daily labourers are omitted from newspaper articles (see Kalu, 1996). Until recently, wage payments used to be as low as 15 Ethiopian Birr which is a little lesser than a dollar a day¹².

¹² Due to high demand on construction sites in Addis Ababa, daily labourers are paid around \$ 3.5 a day.

The photographic publication often deliberately excludes everyday people from its publications. Since most of press stories present politics, there is limited coverage of other everyday lives of citizens. Press news is also related to freedom of speech, the level of democracy and so forth. Amateur photo-journalists, who are based under the agency, work under strict editorial policies. Market driven journalism that appears to dominate both the national and international news nullifies the gap that we see in representations of people who are affected by poverty and health problems including HIV/AIDS. The Ethiopian Press Agency thus portrays itself as an agent of change in collaboration with the government and international NGOs.

From the news content of The Ethiopian Herald, 90% of news coverage about women is still about female genital mutilation, abductions, early marriage, child labour and so on. There is tendency to represent women in rural areas as victims of 'harmful tradition' (EAJA, 2008). This is continuously repeated in literature and performing arts of television and news drama since mass media is also owned by the state. Often women are portrayed as victims either in exploratory studies (Zinaye, 2002; Jemaneh, 1994), fictional narratives or even in research that was conducted as part of affirmative action (Arefaine, 2009). Analysing fictional characters, Netsanet Gebre-Micheal (2008) classified characters as reflections of society's attitude to gender role stratifications, where women are repeatedly represented as victims of existing socio-cultural practices rather than as role models. Findings indicate that thematic organisations of plots and characters in television and radio dramas have educational value. The focus is largely on the practical problems that women face because of social, cultural and economic differences. This is also pertinent to other sets of argument that touch upon the value of performing arts in changing cultures. Academic work that analyses radio and television stresses the ways that narratives of sexualities have intertwined with other social structures. Zenebe (1996), Wolde (2005), and Demisse (2009) have explored the exercise of power by men and women and conclude that the voices of women are undermined from the family level to the level of giant organisations.

Demisse (2009) has identified that most fictional drama represents women as passive victims of society often occupying labouring positions. They are portrayed as symbols for patience and beauty, while men are presented as solution givers and decision makers. These narratives favour the quality of a traditional woman such as a woman who cooks food and cares for family wellbeing. There is little coverage of liberated and professional women. In

coverage and portrayals, news items, television and radio dramas depict women and girls as victims of society's values in relation to family planning, rape, abduction, and early marriage.

In the case of The Ethiopian Herald, one may categorize photographic publications thematically such as portraits, sport activities, conference pictures, women's affairs, and cultural shows. In the case of sensitive issues such as women's health issues, no pictures are displayed along with articles. Beginning January 2008 the society section covers more images of women as well as children. Family planning adverts or articles are made in such ways that narrate taking care of a family as women's job. There are few educational or representative images of men in the articles about family planning. If parents appear, it is about the relationships of children and parents, where parents are portrayed as authoritative while children appear obedient.

Gender experts stress that revealing the problems of women is more important than focusing on the gender portrayals. In a debate organised by young scholars from Social Sciences of Addis Ababa University (AAU) in Asni gallery in 2011, for instance, young professionals from AAU argued about gender problems in a society. These individuals stress that unless we speak about suppressed issues, practical problems cannot be resolved. Even empowered women do not necessarily speak about the various forms of suppression that they are facing at home, in college or at work. For the majority of young scholars, male dominance in decision making in higher education is considered a major obstacle to achieving gender equality both in number and leadership (Panel discussion, "Women and Art in Ethiopia", 28/09/2011). In the Ethiopian context, there is equal participation of women in the arts. What is at stake is a neglect of our visual narratives. In a society where teaching or telling stories has a long history of adopting pictorial traditions in order to appeal to the illiterate majorities, denying the influence of image based knowledge would make the argument half a story. Effective visual materials create opportunities to speak about gender issues that are erased from written history. Even more so since the press is the dominant knowledge disseminating platform influencing public opinion, its archive can be an alternative to this power structure.

4.4.2. Narratives of Gender Solidarity and Structural Violence

In Ethiopia's press agency, gender issues are no longer about a focus on the sex of an individual, but include existing social and economic hierarchies within power structures. Political issues dominate discussions of other social and interactive narratives that exist

outside of the political economy. In these processes pre-existing, assumed spatial organisations locate everyday women in the domestic sphere as if they have little participation in the diverse activities of the community, including agriculture. Even though they are photographed often when they attend conferences organized by the Ministry of Womens' Affairs, women are portrayed as audiences but not as speakers. According to the archivist of the agency, the majority of photographic works about everyday women are concerned with structural violence from the family level to distant social structures (002, Interview with an archivist of EPA, 17/10/2011). Other than a bulky folder of women officials of the Ministry of Women's Affairs taking part in routine conferences and parades, photographs events, there seem to be absences about the everyday lives of women. Most of the photographs are of ministers and government officials.

In women's pages, structural violence, such as child labour, early marriage, abduction, and female genital mutilation is discussed, but usually images of the directorate of ministry of health and the directorate of women's affairs appear as speakers on behalf of the rest of the community. Over the last two decades these existing power structures are understood in terms of patriarchy, race, class, sex, gender, and ethnicity, with special reference to women's rights and reproductive health (Genz and Brabon, 2009: 27; Blunt & Rose, 1994). In Ethiopian Press Agency, as well as in fictional characters (see Gebre-micheal, 2009), however, gender is mostly understood in terms of harmful traditions, norms that are linked to sexuality, patriarchy, and a long standing dichotomy of women being confined to a domestic sphere while male are visualised in public sphere. This division is based on a long standing argument about the roles men or women are assumed to play in a society.

At policy level gender mainstreaming is one issue on which the government has been working in collaboration with local and global organisations. In recent findings Etalem Tesfaye (2011) has identified that at various levels in government offices gender mainstreaming has focused on women's health issues and training in women's reproductive health. Despite the presence of powerful women throughout the history of Ethiopia, there has been a gendered silence, especially in creating sculptures in urban centres in Ethiopia.

Recently a team of scholars were identifying some of the gender problems in the field of culture and heritage. For example, in a 'Culture and Heritage project' in which I participated in 2012, debates about visualizing changing traditional customs indicate significant differences. Differences between an EU gender officer, Daniela Rofi and an independent visual expert, Alain Sancerni, emerged over discussions about the practical

problems that women might be facing and how those problems could be visualised. For the gender expert, visual art is a useful educational instrument to raise awareness about harmful traditions such as female genital mutilations. These norms and cultures should be represented visually. Other visual art experts focus on changing norms and culture including harmful traditions. In most cases, the majority of western feminists, as well as studies that borrow western notions of gender and sexuality, tend to homogenise Ethiopian women as victims of such traditions, while its changing cultures are often omitted from visual productions.

4.4.3. Women as Leaders

Oral history has it that from the Queen of Sheba or Maqda upto Empress Taitu, women politicians had a say in the political sphere of Ethiopia. Since the 1880s Italian-Ethiopian war, Empress Taitu, wife of the then Emperor Menilik II, had played a significant role as Minelik's adviser. Even in performing arts, the role of Taitu has only been staged since 2007. Press and media responses toward women's participation in politics neglect everyday women. They favour a few women officials as representatives of Ethiopian women. Even though this thesis does not aim to make distinctions between different groups of women, the representational practice at the national level requires investigating as it overlaps with the gender portrayals of different groups of women stratified in occupation roles and wealth. Prominent figures that are playing significant roles in the political, economic and social aspects of Ethiopia dominate the figurative production of press.

Measuring news contents from gender perspectives, a survey of media studies considers Ethiopia as one of East African countries where media coverage about women's participation in leadership is still incomparable to male participants (EAJA, 2008). In most African countries, media studies, including news framing, attempts to reveal stereotypes and power structures in a society. Regional specificities or diversities in terms of the concept of women or patriarchy are not yet explored thoroughly (Gadzekpo, 2009). Since 1991, the increasing number of women participants in parliament has brought about a change in the way a nation represents everyday women. Male leaders take up the spaces of front pages of newspapers. Ross (2004: 68) makes distinctions between male politicians and female politicians as universal representations. Men are often represented as speakers in a self-reflecting manner while women are represented as bearers of culture and emotions.

From content analysis of news coverage in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper, politics is regarded as a masculinised role where male politicians as leaders of Ethiopia dominate

pictures of front pages. In terms of frequency, 99% of pictures published on front page are of male leaders. Fitsumbirhan (2006) has identified similar results after analysing front pages of three privately owned newspapers: Addis Fortune, Reporter and Capital. Leaders are sought to represent the rest of the society. In comparison, women and children get more coverage in Society, and Arts and Culture sections. In these two sections images of women and children often dominate both the pictorial and the written reports. Photographs of women officials from the Ministry of Health, and Office of Women's Affairs appear as representatives of other women. Most of the time these images are conference events of women attending a meeting about health related problems such as abduction, rape, and early marriage. These are similar news headlines that go hand in hand with the work of the Women's Affairs office. These narratives appeal to national and international donors in reference to the need to invest in women's health.

The UN has officially announced the need to still work on women's equality and empowerment across the globe (UN Women, 2013). Women's empowerment in the political sphere at the national level is understood in terms of increasing women politicians or at least increasing the number of women occupying seats in house of representatives or parliament. Action Aid, for instance, has indicated that Ethiopia has shown a better participation of women in parliament with an increasing rate from 21% to 29% in the House of Representatives. Government policy about the increasing participation of women in politics has connections or implication to the journalism practices or photographic archival materials of the agency. News items about subordinate women are accompanied with recent appointments of highly educated Ethiopians such as the Directorate of the Cultural Ministry, Directorate of the Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Pictures of female bodies are also used in the fight against eradicating harmful traditions. The number of frequencies of images of everyday women is less, favouring greater use of portraits of government dignitaries, such as the then ministry of Health. In most still pictures of conferences of women's affairs published in this newspaper, women attendees of the conference are pictured less as speakers, but as listeners. Their images appear in what is termed as soft news such as custom, cultural events and women's health issues. In the earlier newspaper items, even prominent figures such as higher level government officials and women marathon runners are pictured in a similar pose as studio portraits rather than picturing them while in action such as work portraits or sport activities.

4.4.4. Gender and Marginality

Corporate cultures and state media have their own agendas of disseminating specific knowledge about people. Everyday women are particularly in disadvantaged positions due to a lack of tangible changes in gender awareness and equality policy. Regarding coverage of news stories, there seem to be similarities with The Ethiopian Herald and other African based state-owned newspapers. A number of surveys conducted on press media in Africa including Ethiopia indicate that there are limited reports about everyday people including women and children. Studies conducted about international news coverage, portrayals and representations point out that the majority of news items about everyday people are about dominant stereotypes such as disaster, famine, and so forth (see thesis chapter 5).

Franks (2006) argues that there is little coverage of the African continent even among those international media like BBC World Service, whose main agenda is disseminating information to all parts of the world. Content analysis (Godzekpo, 2009) of such news sources indicates that if there is any news about Africa, it reinforces stereotypical representations about African people rather developing alternative ways of visualising or portraying its dwellers. Most of the coverage is about disaster news where there is ‘more emphasis for headlines and less respect for subjects’ (VN850046, Interview with a Communication officer of Save the Children, 06/09 /2011). An African media survey indicated that Africa’s mass media may reinforce such stereotypes as much as mediate and challenge the global gendered stereotypical portrayals. In both the international and national press, everyday citizens are denied subject positions.

State media representation is far more different than private or international media. At the national level, these representations have different categories. On one hand we see more prosperous Ethiopia -- where as we may see negative portrayals in the international media, like now-- focus on drought or famine. Representations should be about balance (VN850021, Interview with a Lecturer, School of Journalism, AAU).

This comment is a reminder of the notion of selectivity in representing drought and famine. VN850021 identifies two constructs. In state owned media the representation of Ethiopia signifies its own agency on transformation and change in current issues. In international media current issue of the time perpetuated negative imagery of Ethiopia in sensationalising drought images. It implies the problems of mediating the ways of representation in exposing environmental change and drought in the Horn of Africa.

The Ethiopian Herald has editorial problems. Relations between the photographic image and articles are often arbitrary. They hardly provoke interest in the way photojournalism can appeal to newspaper readers.

----- So in the end what is published is what you will find as speakers of people sitting in the office. What is published is based on protocol issues. State agencies and private agencies send out photographers into these places but still since the private agency allows publishing such pictures of government officials in different presentations such as mood changes etc., private owned press may allow to publish such photographs. We publish pleasant picture of our officials (VN850050, Interview with Layout and Design Manager & Head of photography unit, 20/09/2011)

In The Ethiopian Herald, most of the photographs that are published may make the editorial board as well as photographers as “boss followers” (VN850023, Interview with a Lecturer, 26/06/2011) since they shoot government officials in an office setting. Often editorial policies are neglected in discussions of photojournalism. From interviews it appears that even though there are rich photographic archives that can depict everyday people in urban and semi-urban areas of Ethiopia, almost all published materials are depictions of rulers, or conference event photographs of women sitting in chairs, with the only exception being the reporting of sport. Even though the reports may be about the participation of women in terms of their creating associations or their involvement in agriculture, the speakers on behalf of these societies are repeatedly those who are in power. In terms of publications and representations there is systematic removal of photographic representations of everyday women from published newspapers.

Used as a forum for women’s issues and women’s rights, the national press shows little difference from dominant global media portrayals of ‘third world’ women and children. In a survey conducted in recent years, news media coverage at the national level places emphasis on brutal cultural traditions and customs that subsume women and girls as victims of established orders (EAJA, 2008). The problems of representation of individuals as a homogenized group signify how society anticipates women as synonymous to victimhood. Part of the problem lies in the fact that there are few women journalists employed by news rooms.

Comparative analysis of EPA’s major publication, The Ethiopian Herald newspaper published in early 1990s and in 2008 yields similar outcome. Comparatively speaking, unlike recent publications early 1990 newspapers depict women as mug shot portraits, and they were

not portrayed when they speak or engage in different activities. 99% of male leaders continue to dominate half of front pages. Everyday women appear in pictures as they fetch potable water to supplement government and development initiatives to make potable water available in all regions of Ethiopia.



Figure 23: Women carrying tap water, unpublished material, 29/08/98 © EPA

Some pictures show difficulties from the older days such as the lack of motorised transport with little use of any modern vehicle. Figure 24 shows two male individuals who are completely unaware of the camera's presence. A sick person is carried on a wooden stretcher. The picture provides a background of a rural landscape, with a cottage on the right, while the left provides a background image of a larger house covered by a metallic roof.



Figure 24: Two men carrying a sick person on a stretcher, 6/3/94 © EPA

The above two pictures are archival materials. Such photographic images barely appear in EPA newspapers. Relations of photographers with managing directors of the press dictate the types of publications. One of the problems is the editorial boards prefer portraits of officials rather than portraits of everyday life and work. Most of the photographic collections printed in newspaper publications since 1993 deal with rural lives. Few of the everyday women who appear in this publication show engaging in different crop productions. Such news items are used to perpetuate the notion that the Ethiopian government is an agent of change and development. These development activities are mainly in agriculture, health, education, and infrastructure. The main aim of state newspaper is to create public awareness by providing positive impressions.

There are pictures of increasing numbers of women taking seats in a parliament and other political activities. In most of the photographic depictions of The Ethiopian Herald, the participation of these women in the political arena is largely depicted as handing over certificates, and engaging in cultural events. The most active office is Women's Affairs. Led by the directorate, the Ministry works on fostering behavioural and material changes. They do so by enhancing awareness on women's status in cultural, social and political issues. Most of the images address exploitations of child labour. These pictures portray suffering boys and girls in their daily activities, with the exception of some boys pictured while they are playing

football. Most of it does not show children's activities in rural areas where big families are regarded as assets to support labour intensive plough-agriculture.

As state owned media, Society section presents gendered stereotypes in as much as it is about changes in a society. An over emphasis on rural women burdened with daily lives, for example, portrays women as victims of harmful traditions, even though education in different parts of Ethiopia has altered the degree of those harmful traditions. In some of the pictures we see that women are portrayed in more positive ways where we see women occupying parliament seats and other government posts and appear as speakers on behalf of the rest of the society. Often times they are portrayed in such a way that they exercise a certain level of authority. Within the photography unit of EPA, a large folder is dedicated to women's affairs. Unfortunately, many of the images portray women in authority attending conferences and speaking on behalf of other everyday women. All of these senior women are pro-government and support the ruling party. In such a way we see little contestations in debates on gender roles as these women are bound to adhere to government policies on affirmative action. They may appear in various meetings, and even the former first lady appears as participating in inaugural ceremonies of new associations. Dressed in traditional styles, women in authority, including the first lady, are portrayed as active participants. In most cases health issues dominate speeches about other women.

Due to long rooted cultural and social roles that are subsumed within society, women who live in rural areas are overburdened with the diverse activities that they have to perform both in the domestic and public spheres. The photographic productions in newspapers do not accurately represent the everyday activities of these individuals. The everyday activities as defined by Rigg (2007) include a number of activities that an individual performs from early morning till the evening. These cultures of everyday life are important aspects of understanding geographies of gender roles. For instance, Aida Ashenafi's documentary film titled as 'Guzo' explores the challenges of everyday activities of rural lives as opposed to their urban compatriots. The documentary takes two women from Addis Ababa to experience the everyday realities of rural lives. It explores diverse activities and features intimate discussions between a woman who live in Addis Ababa and the other who live in the rural areas. First organized as a form of script, such documentary narratives provide us with yet other imaginations of rural lives in its totality, where the urban space is often constructed as having a better standard of living.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter we have learned about the relationship of historical ways of seeing and contemporary practices of picturing. It explores the agency of institutions by tracing historical ways of seeing through picture postcards and photojournalism. Gender portrayals in print media are manifestations of the notion of modernity and progress. These two elements are negotiated and contested in the images made by the fascist Italians of early 1930s, the national tourism office and the development journalism of the EPA. The earliest picture postcards have composed Ethiopian women in the same fashion as the rest of Africa. The visual narratives have exposed the fantasy of the Italians by composing Ethiopian women as if they were readily available to fulfil sexual desires of Italian soldiers.

The earliest postcards were inspired by works of art such as Andromeda, Adam and Eve, and Venus de Muci that were made based on Greek and Roman mythology. These picture postcards mark the beginning of the dissemination of the narrative of all of Ethiopian people as tribes. The highlanders were also exposed to these stereotypical representations because of the arrogance of the fascist Italian ideology by which Ethiopia is pictured and presented as a primitive and barbaric land. This was done by exoticising them through a homogenous picture composition. Regional diversities were undermined. Colonial legacies of picturing indigenous communities through a lens of othering by the National Geographic have been adopted in 1960s picture postcards of the Ethiopian Tourism Commission. These postcards continue to propagate historical othering of people of the Southern Ethiopia since the ETC formed Ethiopia's identities by selecting pictures of women from the Northern and central Ethiopia.

Historical divisions of Ethiopia as North and South are evident in these gender portrayals. Women with Northern costumes are selected as bearers of Ethiopia's identity while women of the South are produced as static and exotic individuals often for tourist consumption. Pictures of the nude bodies of women from the Omo valley regions, which are normally unacceptable in Ethiopia's culture, are often presented in picture postcards and ETC adverts. Picture postcards of women portraying nude breasts continue to perpetuate women from Omo valley regions as if they are resistant to change. Such way of picturing that came from an encounter of two cultures has influenced how Ethiopia narrates its own identities. These visual codes have originally emanated from the Eurocentric othering. Tourism pictures published in The Ethiopian Herald blur the dichotomies of self and other representations

because it has adopted some of the historical visual codes, specifically in picturing the indigenous community of the South. Such portrayals are adopted as common currency by the ETC.

In development journalism practice the urban space is continuously constructed as a space of luxury, while gender issues in rural landscapes, portray women as victims of harmful traditions and customs. In The Ethiopian Herald newspaper men in authority occupying important government posts appear as civilised individuals who speak on behalf of the rest of the community. Most of the photographs are the results of top-down development activities. Most everyday women are pictured as they access newly built sources of potable water. In The Ethiopian Herald, everyday women are underrepresented. The photojournalistic practice of the EPA favours picturing women officials as representatives for the rest of women. In general photojournalism is at its nascent stage in Ethiopia. Despite its capability to visualise existing power structures via the agency of young female and male photographers, photojournalism is not fully developed within EPA.

Photographs of everyday women are removed from publications of The Ethiopian Herald. In order to address this underrepresentation, the project seeks to investigate the agency of international charity organisations in picturing Ethiopian women and girls in relation to development and aid. The next chapter discusses the relations of freelance photographers and charity organisations in picturing slow on-set emergency, that is, relief works and HIV/AIDS relief works. It focuses on the works of Antonio Fiorente, Yemane Gebre-Medhin, Micheal Tsegaye and Aida Ashenafi.

Chapter Five

5. Gender and Development Aid Imagery

5.1. Introduction

Ever since the 1993 Vienna Declarations of the right to development to all people of the world, the national constitution of Ethiopia has noted that international relations through development should not negatively affect its people or a nation (Nahum, 1997: 171). Emergency relief works are immediate recollection when many people in the West think of Africa's development activities. After 1984 images of Ethiopia, images of emergency situations, including famine and malnutrition, were in question because of the long term negative impact on the representation of Ethiopia (Burman, 1994; Dogra, 2006). The fact is that the reappearance of food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition remain key global challenges as identified at, for example, the G20 summit in 2011. Statistics show that every day there are one billion victims of hunger and malnutrition around the world. The summit has emphasised the importance of long term responses to resilience, rather than acting only when food insecurity is causing acute famine and malnutrition. Stressing the importance of working within the context of government policy, aid organisations have sought to change the lives of individuals who are prone to urgent problems caused by manmade and natural disasters. Iconic images of emergencies such as a starving child and a breastfeeding mother are likely to be circulated because they appeal to donors and relief workers (IFRC, 2011).

Commissioned images by charity organisations are themed around drought and HIV/AIDS relief works. Ethiopia is no exception. Visualizations of Africa through development activities show these thematic similarities (Jarosz, 1992; McEwan, 2009). Since the AIDS pandemic in 1989, images of infected African people have shaped the image of development challenges. Such imagery can be easily exploited by the visual economy of HIV/AIDS specifically in the mainstream media. The notion of visual economy raises the idea that 'images cannot be isolated as discrete objects, but have to be understood as imbricated in networks of materials, technologies, institutions, markets, social spaces, affects, cultural histories and political contexts' (Campbell, 2008:97). Charity organisations' commissioned works of contemporary photographers clearly manifest this repetitive imagery because Ethiopia has been affected by the reoccurrence of drought and food insecurity, as well as widespread HIV/AIDS. As discussed in chapter four, charity organisations

collaborate with the Ethiopian government to alleviate development challenges. Their image archives show such activities.

Problematizing images of relief works is relevant because of the ambiguities of development promises in changing the lives of African people or in minimising the impacts of these slow on-set emergency situations¹³. Development often paints more positive impressions by claiming that everyone has the right to it (Momsen, 2009). Technological advances and other material gains through development funds feed the positive discourses of development. Such claims, however, neglect the deep rooted connection of its ideology of progress with that of colonial exploitations.

Development activities are mainly dependent on the international monetary system such as World Bank and IMF. In rights' based development discourse Africa's economic status is levelled as a sign for underdevelopment when compared with the fast growing Asia within the global South (Manzo, 2003). The exercise of power through development in the making of 'Third Worldism' lack fluidity as it raises question about imagined difference with that of 'First World' (Power, 2003). In the global South development challenges are mainly understood in mitigating poverty, in building infrastructures, and relief works in relation to drought, famine and HIV/AIDS (Manzo, 2010; McEwan, 2009). This is significant to portrayals of vulnerability and poverty in relation to climate change. Manzo further argues that the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect economically disadvantaged group than rich people (Manzo, 2010). Exploring photographic images made through translocal and transnational development activities allows us to identify fluidity between the representation of different geographical places and peoples.

The focus of this chapter is on commissioned photo-essays by charity organisations. It mainly explores the relations of freelance photographers with NGOs in imaging people with urgent social problems specifically in visualising drought, and HIV/AIDS. Addressing one of the key research questions stated in chapter one, it returns to how Ethiopian freelance photographers are negotiating and contesting with international charity organisation in picturing people with urgent social needs. This is relevant because most of the works of African photographers are articulated in relation to alternative narratives (see for instance Landuo, 2003; Bajourn, 2010). However, the agency of Ethiopian photographers as they

¹³ Emergency situations are divided into three major groups as sudden-onset, slow-onset and complex onset emergency. Since the impacts of drought and a pandemic such as HIV/AIDS are gradually visible they are considered as slow-onset emergency situations (VN850046, Interview with a Communication officer of Save the Children, 13/09/11).

engage with NGO's commissioned works, for instance, in picturing people with urgent social needs such as food and medical aid remain unexplored. This chapter addresses the representation practices in picturing emergency food aid and HIV/AIDS relief works.

This chapter focuses on the commissioned works of Antonio Fiorente, Micheal Tsegaye, Yemane Gebra-Medhin and Aida Ashenafi (see Appendix 1 & 2). For comparative analysis it incorporates the works of non-Ethiopians such as Khuraam Mahsood and Eric Gottesman. The photo-essays dealing with drought were produced for three international organisations: Save the Children, German Agro Action and The Red Cross and Crescent Society. Save the Children had sent Khuraam Muhsood, a senior communication officer from the Afghanistan office while Yemane Gebre-Medhin for German Agro-Action and Micheal Tsegaye for Red Cross and Crescent Society were hired as freelance photographers. All of them are males on a mission to photograph drought situations in the Horn of Africa. They are well trained individuals in visual communication though from different disciplinary backgrounds (see Appendix 1).

These photo-essays are useful visual documents to scrutinise the agency (see chapter 3, pg.7) of charity organisations and the photographer's intent in picturing emergency. The first section deals with a comparative analysis of the drought in the Horn of Africa in 2011 that had affected border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. It traces the practical aspects of image making from the ground level to editorial processes of sponsor agencies. The second set contextualizes the practice of picturing emergency situations in farmlands by exploring gendered portrayals of food insecurity, as well as the impacts of development aid imagery of pure water supply and food distribution. In order to discuss contemporary photographic portrayals of drought and famine images, this chapter draws from selected literature (such as Campbell, 2003, 2007, 2011; Manzo, 2008, Dyer, 2005; Burman, 1994) that contextualise famine images of Ethiopia and Africa constructed through mainstream media and international charity organisations.

After the 1990s, images of relief works have also centred on the production of HIV/AIDS. Ever since the outbreak of HIV/AIDS, photographic images of affected people have produced stereotypical representations about the sub-Saharan regions in relation to risk groups. There are a good number of photo narratives about PLWA that needs to be contextualised by comparing NGO discourses with those of contemporary alternative means of visualizing people affected by the disease. In order to trace changing images of these

subjects, it finally discusses photo-essays under the theme of women's health issues such as HIV/AIDS, and Save the Children's participatory, photographic aids designed for peer education among 'risk groups' such as sex workers (STC, 2011). It does so to contextualise and explore gender constructs of marginalised people.

5.2. Alternative Ways of Composing Food Insecurity: Comparative Analysis on the Works of Contemporary Photographers

In the Ethiopian context the immediate imaginations of the West are relief works in relation to drought and famine. "There is an image problem about Ethiopia because of famine images especially the image of famine that had happened over 30 years ago" (VN850011, Interview with photographer and laboratory technician, 08/07/2011). Iconic images of a mother, child, and older people who are prone to various food and health problems have negative implications for Ethiopia and its people more than what the images achieve as stimuli for fundraising. After criticism of such imagery, charity organisations have been working at whether negative or positive imagery of social issues could be useful tool to bring about social change (Dogra, 2006).

NGOs have become important institutions by which social documentary works about Ethiopian people with urgent food and medical aid are produced. Local and international charity organisations sponsor the production of such photographic materials of everyday women and the youth. These archives are used for different purposes where images are then developed into posters and website layouts. In the Ethiopian context, NGOs have become important institutions through which photo-essays are constructed as useful tools for different development aid activities. These visual materials touch upon the material situations of urban destitute populations, as well as those people who are living on the margins due to HIV/AIDS, particularly in rural areas. Charity organisations are also expected to act on emergency situations including food insecurity. The focus of social workers and institutions in circulating images of relief works tend to neglect the gendered visual representations in what is termed as slow on-set emergencies, such as drought induced migrants or famine affected individuals. The photo-essays that are discussed in this section deal with the gendered images ranging from the recent food crisis in the Horn of Africa in 2011 to other HIV/AIDS and STD related photographic images.

Produced in collaboration with Ethiopian freelance photographers, charity organisations often prefer their works to alleviate the problems of a de-contextualized

western gaze. Critiques of the typical ‘mother and child’ famine images perpetuated in the international media have forced NGOs to consider alternative ways of imaging drought affected individuals (VSO, 2005; Clark, 2009). Under different themes a significant number of photographic images are archived and circulated through aid agencies. These NGOs play a role in making those social issues visible. The narratives of these essays generally assume realism behind photographic productions.

5.2.1. Gendered Portrayals of Development Aid: Picturing People Affected by Drought in the Horn of Africa

Humanitarian organisations are recently altering dominant practices of picturing emergency situations such as drought and food insecurity. A long standing criticism of negative imagery versus positive imagery (chapter 2, pg. 38-40) of emergency situations has led to ethical considerations by the NGOs in picturing vulnerable individuals. After criticism of the 1984 famine through repetitive images of a lone child and a helpless mother figure (Dogra, 2012), the image of Ethiopia has long been critiqued in relation to the mainstream media and some works commissioned by charity organisations.

Nowadays charity organisations prefer to collaborate with local photographers instead of hiring ‘parachute photographers’, that is, foreign photographers who fly to a place and stay for few days to capture sensational images without necessarily exploring the social and cultural contexts of the situation (Clark, 2009: 134; see David Campbell’s website at <http://david-campbell.org>). NGOs argue that ‘third world’ photographers may know the environment and culture better than those who come as ‘parachute photographers’. One way of mediating such imagery is by allowing local freelance photographers to compose and produce photo-essays. The NGOs use photo-essays for needs assessment, fundraising purposes or to show development aid activities.

For freelance photographers such as Yemane Gebrhe-Medhin, the photographic practices of charity organisations are different from those of international media. He has refused to work for the international news media, since news items are usually about war, environmental or human catastrophes pictured in a stereotypical fashion.

International news media have approached me. Their interest is very sad. It is so seasonal. They only want to make news of disasters. For example, during the 1997 [E.C] [2005 G.C] election period, there were so many chaos in Ethiopia. They came to me at that time. I have told them that I have no interest to work for them. ----- I always wonder why change in a

society here [in Ethiopia] is not news. -----Some of the images that I have taken so far are for international charity organisations (Interview with Yemane Gebre-Medhin, 11/ 07/2011).

Gebre-Medhin's idea indicates that international news agency and charity organisations have different types of agency in propagating different narratives about a place. He negates the idea that news coverage about disaster and chaos in Ethiopia may neglect other narratives that could tell stories of change. In the same fashion Fiorente noted:

---- I worked for two years for Associated Press. I used to cover disaster images. Per picture is 50\$. There is always a hassle for press photography and it is not that rewarding to do a freelance photography for press. After having too many expenses to get there Associated Press or any agency may take only 1 or 2 images if they take at all. I worked for 2 years because it will help develop my career. I covered natural disasters as well as famine (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 01/08/2011).

Amongst Ethiopian photographers who had worked for Associated Press, Antonio Fiorente pointed out the financial risk of working for international news because news agency prioritises natural disaster, famine or war news coverage. It also shows that a photojournalist is not paid for the whole photo documentary because news agencies demand a powerful single image. In relation to famine images, Fiorente further noted that for a news agency the photo subject is the important dignitary or personality who visits those drought and famine affected areas, rather than drought affected community.

I had followed Bob Geldof when famine happened in Gode in 2006. I needed to follow where he was going. Usually they cover stories when one person, important delegate or personality comes to visit sites or places. Those were published in time magazine. International news always chooses what should be a cover story. It is usually war or natural disaster that gets into print media (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 01/08/2011).

Since the focus of the news is on dignitaries the way poor people are represented is in relation to what they have received as aid. Despite the fact that they might have their own agency on how to mitigate drought and other environmental problems, the local community as subjects are reduced to poverty icons. Due to this those photographic images propagate the idea that local communities do not have their own voices and agency in safeguarding their own resources, since all interventions follow top-down approach. As opposed to news agencies, there are a number of ethical issues that NGOs are employing. Individuals are asked about their willingness to be photographed and there is a consent form that they often sign as agreement.

NGOs disseminate positive imagery of women and girls from developing countries to perpetuate their own interventions as success stories (see for instance Save the Children's magazine titled as *Faces of Change* that has published income generating activities of children who have engaged in circus work, and other women who become empowered to teach other people, STC, 2008). Despite this practice, charity organisations still perpetuate 'Third World' women as recipients of aid.

In order to substantiate the above argument I refer to Child's (2006) work. She argues that photo-essays of tsunami disaster images after December 26, 2004 are the means by which specific views of gender depict women as passive tsunami survivors. Four of the photo-essays that she analysed are works by male photographers propagate emotive portray of women tsunami survivors often composed as helpless victims who engage very little in overcoming disasters. NGOs and the mass media use photographs as a way of telling stories using images which they consider 'true' accounts of disasters. Similarly, criticism of famine and drought images through 'infantilisation' (Manzo, 2008) and 'feminisation' (Dogra, 2006; Dogra, 2012) reflect the gendered imagery of emergency situations. The 'human agency' that social scientists refer to as collective thinking often neglects the photographer's role as well as the agency of a photograph in subject formations (Banks, 2007: 11). In picturing people and places, photographers are responsible for composing and applying individual styles, even if they have to adhere to the picture policy and thematic selectivity of their respective institutions.

The photo- essays discussed in this chapter were produced after NGOs recognised the seriousness of the Horn of Africa drought in 2011. There are some problems with the depiction of food aid. The photo-essay by Yemane Gebremedhin is reduced to image compositions showing food and oil distribution in the Afar region of Ethiopia. We need to analyse these photo-essays as gendered views of food distribution. Freelance photographers have an opportunity to confront dominant photographic representations in the image, even if they do not decide on the final edition of their works. In figure 26 below, viewers are made to focus on the aid. The image is taken in such a way that the subjects are unaware of the presence of a photographer. The subjects are captured without casting their gaze back to a camera, or by extension to viewers, because the photographer preferred picturing semi-aware portraits. Viewers do not have access to other narratives outside of the frame as these pictures were not used to supplement articles. The photographer is placed in such a way that avoids deliberate posing of his subjects.

Such unintentional composition of subjects is prominent in aid imagery of male representations. From the photographer's view, these images are meant to draw attention to the work of food aid distribution by aid organisations, rather than that of the subjects. Women are portrayed after they receive food aid, but because they look back to the camera, Gebre-Medhin is careful to preserve the dignity of this woman (see figure 27). The photo-essays rarely portray women in other activities. Photographs, however, allow us to explore not only what is included in the image but also how stories outside of the frame can be traced by interviewing a photographer. Gebre-Medhin's essay is commissioned by German Agro Action that works to improve agriculture sector in Ethiopia. During interviews all of the freelance photographers argued that charity guidelines about the imaging of drought vulnerable individuals enable photographers to avoid portraying poverty by using stereotypical mother and child shots.



Figure 26: *Food Distribution*, Photo by Yemane-Gebremedhin, Afar region © Yemane Gebre-Medhin / German Agro Action.

Working through the grammars of visual languages, photographers have the authority to employ picture techniques such as composition, field of view and juxtaposing. The reworking of visual grammars is mainly influenced by the exploitative nature of disaster photography in imaging vulnerable individuals, photographers' personal experiences and ethical considerations. The dignity of the subject is also linked to framing subjects that

embraces environmental context. The subjects come with the local customs and dress codes that take the environment into consideration. Charity organisations determine the theme of photo-essays even if a photographer has the authority of deciding her/his point of view by selecting a camera angle to persuade viewers about the main focus of a photo.

NGOs adopt ‘story telling sequences’ to convince viewers about their work.

-----We will need pictures capturing the whole [food] distribution situation. Maybe you also have the possibility to take pictures of the loading and unloading. We will need the process of how the food is provided. Some close ups of people receiving the goods and so on. Please try to take pictures of woman, children and man in a similar amount ((An electronic-mail conversation between Yemane Gebre-Medhin and a communication marketing officer, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.¹⁴ for German Agro Action office, July, 2011)

For German Agro Action’s communication officers, there is still interest in producing portrait images of beneficiaries showing their reception of food aid (An email conversation between Yemane Gebre-Medhin and a communication marketing officer, *Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.*¹⁵ for German Agro Action office obtained from Gebre-Medhin, July, 2011).

¹⁴

http://www.bonn.de/wirtschaft_wissenschaft_internationales/bonn_international/internationaleorganisationen/03183/index.html?lang=en

¹⁵

http://www.bonn.de/wirtschaft_wissenschaft_internationales/bonn_international/internationaleorganisationen/03183/index.html?lang=en



Figure 27: Pastoralists who migrated from Eritrea, Photo by Yemane Gebre-Medhin, 15/08/2011 © Yemane Gebre-Medhin / German Agro Action.

Figure 26 and 27 are displays of a pastoralist woman who has a temporary shelter rather than an image of settled agriculturalists. Yemane Gebre-Medhin composes images in order to explore the livelihoods of vulnerable women since he is interested in incorporating the living spaces and environmental situations of the area. In those images, even though the purpose is to tell stories of food distribution, as well as the problems of accessing water¹⁶ in the region, they are actually narratives of gendered role stratifications. In the photo-essays men are often composed as controlling food distribution (figure 25 & figure 26).

¹⁶ The Awash River is the main source of water in the Afar region. During my visit in September 2013 inhabitants of this region do not appear to have water problem perhaps because of sufficient rainfall in the region at the time.



Figure 28: Pastoralists who migrated from Eritrea, Photo by Yemane Gebre-Medhin, 15/08/2011 © Yemane Gebre-Medhin / German Agro Action.

Contents of photographs are predetermined during photo briefings prior to the photographic encounters. The images show the demands of the institutions that ask a photographer to wait until beneficiaries are gathered in an event of food aid distribution. With the exception of a few of the images that Gebre-Medhin produced, the theme of images show little difference from those of other dominant food aid images since the main focus is on grain and food oil distribution as organised visual events. In this sense the agency of institutions overshadows the agency of a photographer.



Figure 29: Men Distributing Food Aid, Photo by Yemane Gebre-Medhin, 15/08/11 © Yemane Gebre-Medhin / German Agro Action.



Figure 30: Food Distribution Series, Photo by Yemane Gebre-Medhin, 15/08/11, © Yemane Gebre-Medhin / German Agro Action.

In this photo-essay men are portrayed as active participants capable of collaborating with aid organisations. In contrast women are framed as passive and only caring for their children. These essays are not as disturbing as appeal imageries since they portray local male individuals as strong, active initiators and collaborators with the work of food relief. A focus on the aridity of the Afar region without how the image of Afar region is constructed denies that space is rather an outcome of a representation of an image where iconography, texts, interactions, discourse etc. came to play roles in its formation (see Claval et.al, 2003). After the ‘cultural turn’ geographers have emphasised on space beyond the geographical facts and causal explanations about a place. In reference to concepts such as the ‘cultural turn’ (Claval et.al, 2003), ‘visual event’ and ‘visual field’ (Campbell, 2007), reworking in the photo image depends largely on the photographers’ lived experience, knowledge of the social and cultural contexts of the region and exposure to global discourses of photography. Since Gebre-Medhin had lived in Italy for over twenty years, he is aware of the influences of stereotypical images in representations of people of Ethiopia specifically from the western perspectives. This is why art historians argue about a photographer’s ability to showcase or articulate iconic images by re-decoding or reworking visual codes in the image.



Figure 31: Photo by Yemane Gebre-Medhin, Afar Region, 15/08/2011 © Yemane Gebre-Medhin / German Agro Action.

The role of a photographer can be identified in the way he/she composes an image. Out of the photo essay commissioned by German Agro Action, there is, for instance, one (figure 31) that sheds light on the environmental situations of the area. Using a wide angle view the image composition seems to counter other dominant representations of the after effects of drought. This is the case when one looks at decontextualized close-up images of carcasses. Close-up images of dead animals are taken to create an ‘extension of a space’ (Benjamin, 2006). By doing so, photographers create the illusion that they have closely observed impacts of drought. In NGO’s discourse of climate change, such image is used as evidence to natural and manmade catastrophes without necessarily showcasing the long term symbolisation of ‘scientific reasoning’ (Manzo, 2009: 97). Figure 31 is a good example of the temporality of the photographic image since Gebre-Medhin was able to capture some other camels crossing from afar. For Yemane Gebre-Medhin, juxtaposing living livestock and some camels safeguarded by a young shepherd, with close-up on carcasses, within a wide angle frame of a pastoralist landscape comes from lived experience and an intimate knowledge of the area:

---a photographer is responsible in what he composes and the way he tells a story. Pastoralists are vulnerable for environmental disasters. Conflict between neighbouring ethnic groups is common due to competition over natural resources such as water (Interview with Gebre-Medhin, 29/08/11).

Movement of people and camels in search of water resource is a typical characteristic of the region. In different parts of Afar region oases are formed because of the Awash River. It is one of the major rivers in Ethiopia that does not join an ocean, travels a long distance from central Ethiopia, Shewa and sinks in the dry lands of Afar region (see Figure 32).



Figure 32: Awash Gorge in the middle of Awash Park located in Afar region. The park is safeguarded by the regional tourism and conservation office. The pastoralist community can cross the Awash Park though it is a well-protected fenced territory for conservation purposes. September 2013 © Photo by Roman Yiseni Belete.

In addition to knowing such contexts, Yemane Gebre-Medhin pays attention to stories gathered either by communication officers or reporters while he composes images. Even if the photo-essays are about drought affected individuals, subject formations are not something outside them, they are formed through accumulated knowledge about multiple oppressions. The making of difference as biological, between the masculine and feminine; or the cultural in role stratifications of women and men do not necessarily explore intersectionality. We find that different subject formations such as class and gender merge in the image itself.

These notions of difference as Valentine (2007: 12) claims do not exist outside of its forms of representation. Ideas of locationality and positionality (Sharp, 2007: 386) help us to better understand the works of these photographers because as Ethiopians they share identities and unique social relations that provide the optics to the conscious male photographer who knows the culture of the area better. We cannot claim that because photographers are male they assume a patriarchal position all the time, since the definition of

masculinity does not encompass different groups of male (Sharp, 2007: 386). Gebre-Medhin has lived in Asmara, Eritrea and has explored the lives of Afar people for many years. This gave him a better opportunity to include both the social and cultural contexts of the region within the photographic image. Due to their experiences, these photographers may have multiple positions because they are both insiders and outsiders despite their race, class or sex.

From figure 29 and 30, gendered imaginations of disaster relief activities such as food distributions portray women as recipients of food aid and passive individuals. Because women were looking exactly into the camera the photographer has included the dignity of these individuals. It is similar with studio portraits but uses the surrounding landscape as a background. By posing subjects as if in a studio but with a landscape as the background, Gebre-Medhin's essay often portrays individuals by providing the environmental context. The photo-essay also negates the image of East African pastoralists as barbaric, stagnant and resistant to development activities (Galaty, 2002). The region is a major route for importing electronics such as smart phones since it is a route that connects Addis Ababa to Awash and Djibouti. Struver (2007) makes a point that images of disaster are not only gendered but also produce places. These productions of place can only be understood if we explore the intersections of gender and geopolitics. In the study of intersectionality, the productions of people and places based on difference do not largely depend on biological, social and cultural elements that exist outside of the work.

Photographic techniques such as wide angle, perspective, and juxtaposing allow photographers to form new knowledge as a result of their exposures to global visual histories. Unlike some of the images in different media, Gebre-Medhin (figure 31) ,for instance, juxtaposes the carcasses of livestock while at the same time showing environment friendly camels, a herder and other cattle in the background. Through such wider angle view the image composition is made to counteract de-contextualised close-up images taken to show only carcasses. It is difficult to view images of drought in isolation from constructs of the Ethiopian and the African places as arid and hostile areas.

5.2.2. NGO Demands, Natural Resources & Gender Role Stratifications

Reworking gendered and iconic drought images depend on the photographer's individual style in depicting the long term consequences of climate change such as acute drought. Persuasion can encompass visual techniques. Benjamin (2006) explains that '---with the close-up, space expands'. He explained the techniques of close-up and slow motion as

temporal experiences of the photographer. The ‘rhetoric’ and the ‘poetic’ divulge in the formation of an image. These images resonate upon the emotional state of a photographer, the photographed, communication officers and social workers who are involved in the image making. The persuasive level of reworking iconic image compositions includes a photographer’s techniques that take the aura of the surrounding more than what the device or the photographers’ intent. For Micheal Tsegaye, this visual language has equipped him to develop an aesthetic quality while picturing documentary photography.



Figure 33: Guya Golicha, Photograph by Micheal Tsegaye, Southern Ethiopia, August, 2011

Micheal Tsegaye’s still photographs seem to be devoid of iconic images of drought constructed through figures of female bodies. The photo-essay captures arid landscapes. As I have explained earlier a community is represented by a leader or volunteer (see chapter 4, pg. 84). Figure 33 captures when Guya Golicha, a farmer and a Red Cross volunteer, explaining the drought situation in Ethiopia’s Southern regions. The land seems very dry with no kinds of crops growing in the region. During the photo-elicitation process with Tsegaye, I was able to explore personalised techniques of imaging drought. Photo-elicitation process is useful since it evokes the memory of a photographer that otherwise would not have been achieved from the site of a photograph. The photograph was taken without necessarily posing a person. It was taken when Golicha was using a corn seed to explain about the drought situation in an

area of dry land at the time when The Red Cross and Crescent Society worker was raising questions to write a report of field visits. Tsegaye explained various uses of his works for the Red Cross as:

*The purpose of this photo-essay is for documentation, to show drought situation and fundraise. I could have pictured dead animals. But I have not shot those things. I was interested to show how people are surviving than how they are dying. There are problems but I have not seen severe miseries like the 1984 famine situations. I took images in the same fashion in Moyale and Welaita region. For example, this is a farmer [figure 33] he is showing me a corn that he sow as seed 2 years ago-----
- all the area is like this ----- empty! (VN850036, Interview with a photographer, 22/09/11).*

Tsegaye's commentary on selecting what to frame in the picture takes us back to the concept of the relations of the visual field (Campbell, 2007), the visual event and the photographers part. Rather than the visual field as a sole determinant of the theme of the photo-essay, Tsegaye uses his own ideas to visually narrate drought situations. While Gebre-Medhin visualises the after effects of drought on pastoralist communities by visualising dead animals alongside cattle survivors and camels, Tsegaye uses a corn seed to symbolically portray the failure of the harvest due to a shortage of rainfall. The meanings of these photographs are, thus, completed during photo elicitation because it provides the researcher with fuller information about the processes of image making. Through the help of a social worker who poses questions to obtain textual narratives, the subject is allowed to express his voice. The photographer composes pictures while at the same time paying attention to the conversation between a farmer and a social worker. Through the unique lens of a photographer that event is expressed in the form of sequences. Instead of a snapshot, therefore, the NGO practice of using photo stories with texts as case study materials are humanist approaches of utilising images (Bleiker, 2007; Runciman, 2008), as opposed to the sensationalist images circulated in the mainstream media at the same time.

This is not, however, a removal of women from narratives of drought as if they were untouched. The contents of photo-essay do not hide away from the practical activities of men & women on the ground. Existing gender role stratifications alter the way photo-essays are produced to assess drought situations in Southern Ethiopia. Like Gebre-Medhin's imagery, Tsegaye's photographs portray women as they fetch water from a river pond (see figure 39), a scarce source of water that some of the Southern settlers had to rely on for drinking.

In order to explore the situation of migrant children in the Southern regions of Somali, figure 34 juxtaposes the emblem of The Red Cross and Crescent Society with an image of young boys hanging out in the dry field.



Figure 34: *Children in Southern Regions of Ethiopia, Moyale*, Photo by Micheal Tsegaye, August, 2011© Michael Tsegaye/ IFRC

The Red Cross and Crescent Societies (IFRC) and German Agro-Action use photo-essays for three main reasons. This could be for assessment, to narrate success stories and for appeals. Unlike STC, IFRC and German Agro-Action were very careful not to produce too many images of women and children in relations to drought and food aid distribution. Since STC specifically works with children and mothers, the charity commissions many images of women and children. Unlike STC and German-Agro Action, IFRC asked Micheal Tsegaye to compose images of beneficiaries juxtaposed with their logo. Previously, The Red Cross was known to perpetuate imagery that captured aid in a way that shows the technological advances of the providers of emergency aid juxtaposed with images of the local community (see figure 35). These narratives are peculiar to colonial compositions through which an image of a western technology is juxtaposed with the indigenous community to visualise that colonial powers had introduced modernity to these communities (Appadurai, 1996).

Such styles have been adopted in the practice of photographing food aid by USAID and The Red Cross (see figure 35). As shown in figure 35 capturing ‘a food convey’ signifies

the agency of intervention organisations in such a way that promotes the presence of USAID and the Red Cross in mitigating the impacts of food shortage. Such way of juxtaposing branded car with the local community symbolises the practice of picturing Africa's dependency on the civilisation of the West. Ethnographers, explorers and missionaries have practiced image making by juxtaposing a modern technological object with the traditional community. There were common tropes of images of women and children often captured next to a camera obscura or an automobile. These images construct the global North as agents of change and modernity (see Collins, 1993; Manzo 2008). Semi-aware portraits of women are juxtaposed with a truck that carries food. Showing the temporality of the photographic image in capturing food aid trucks, the composition signifies the dependency on the foreign aid. Figure 30 replicates this similar picture style using the male body of worker of the Red Cross and Crescent without juxtaposing food aid or a technological material next to him. In order to mediate such historical ways of picturing food aid (see figure 34), Tsegaye composed the Red Cross and Crescent emblem over the male body of NGO worker while at the same time picturing healthy Somali migrant boys in the vicinity (figure 34).



Figure 4.8 Chris Steele-Perkins. USAid, Sudan, 1985.

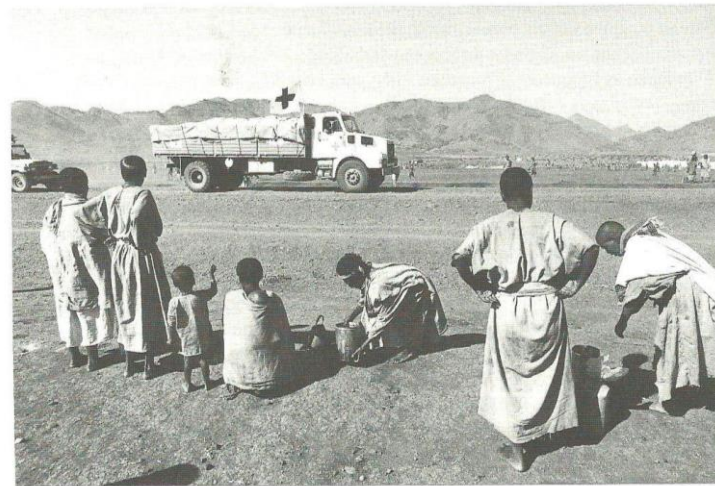


Figure 4.9 Mike Wells. A food convoy passing through Korem Refugee Camp on its way to Mekele Camp in Tigray, February 1985.

Figure 35: *Mike Wells. A food convoy passing through Korem Refugee Camp on its way to Mekele Camp in Tigray* (Source, Jewitt, C & Leeuwen, T., 2001: 82)

Surprisingly positive imagery of people in the global South can be identified when NGOs demonstrate better intervention strategies. The photo-essay of Micheal Tsegaye about a female headed household in the Southern region narrates success stories as a result of the interventions of the Red Cross Society starting in 2008 by supplying emergency sheep distribution, and water tanks to alleviate the shortage of potable water. The water tank images are captured in such a way as to show the emblem of the Red Cross. The following pictures indicate the family situation of a female headed household with a large extended family. These photo-essays were supplemented by narratives that argue that the area had become arid since 2008. The Red Cross had to intervene in providing water and small numbers of

domestic animals to a few members of community. The following figure shows the image of Mengeste Bala in the Waliata region of Southern Ethiopia which is said to have experienced harvest failure due to rain shortage for two rainy seasons (Callaghan, 2011).



Figure 36: *Mengeste Bala now has better food security with her seven sheep after the Red Cross programme, 2011© Micheal Tsegaye/ IFRC.*

Even though it is about the interventions of the Red Cross and Crescent Society the image provides a background of greenery. Walaita region is known for its rich natural environment. Reliance on rain fed agriculture is one of the problems facing some families like that of Mengeste Bala. Emergency livestock distribution is to enable her build sustainable food security in spite of climate change. The photo-essay narrates Mengeste Bala's family situation and her living conditions. In the picture, thus, Bala is set in such a way that she safeguards a herd of sheep. The image is a positive portrayal of a female headed household who has managed to mitigate drought in the South regions of Ethiopia as a result of aid.



Figure 37: *Mengeste Bala has twelve children, who dropped out of school during the last drought, but now she has better food security, they all go to school.* © Micheal Tsegaye / IFRC

NGO's usually provide photo-essays in relation to their own aid activities, especially when it comes to website publications. From the photo-essay, four of them that were published on the Red Cross website selected imagery that exclusively portrayed the aid system. Unpublished parts of photo-essays include other family activities, where young girls and boys are pictured as shepherds while juxtaposing Bala in her green vegetable plot. Most of the photo stories are set in relation to the way beneficiaries like Bala have sought to multiply the number of livestock from the original two sheep she obtained from the Red Cross Society. Figure 38 portrayed a more positive family picture posed on grass land in front of their homestead. The text further provides the context that after two and half years, the sheep had multiplied and she had bought a cow from the sale of some sheep.

From the perspective of the photographer, even if they are receiving some gifts in the form of aid, one cannot have the same measurement on the economic well-being of a family. They may have a bench (figure 37) in their house where families sit and gather around. But a household's economic well-being is measured by what they have harvested from their plots of farmland. In figure 38, juxtaposing Bala with a few sheep signifies that Bala, who did not have domestic animals two years ago, possesses a few of them as a result of the interventions

of the Red Cross. Such NGO imagery is linked to showcasing success stories as opposed to imagery created for fundraising purposes.



Figure 38: *Mengeste Bala now has better food security with her seven sheep after the Red Cross programme, 08/05/2011 © Micheal Tsegaye/IFRC*

A portrait of Gala that blurred the green background along with the above text was used as success story in combating drought situations (Callaghan, 2011). After a few days the same portrait is used for press release launched for an emergency appeal by the Red Cross and Crescent from files. International NGOs can use the same image to show drought situations as well as to narrate success stories in the region. In both cases, the message that they put forward using images of this drought affected individuals show the battle to alleviate individuals from poverty. Despite the fact that NGOs have learnt how to mediate images of emergency situations, portraits of development challenges through such imagery allow us to engage with the historical ways of picturing people often defined in the global visual experiences.

As a result of critiques of the 1984 negative imagery, NGOs have adopted ethical policies on the ways images are used for fundraising (see IFRC's Communication guideline, 2011) purposes. The subjects are aware that their own photographs could be used in publications and for fundraising purposes where they signed an agreement form. In the case of children their guardians are consulted about image of their family. Compared with

photojournalism (see chapter 4), these ethical considerations by charity organisations are examples of good practices, since they consider opinions of beneficiaries on the uses of their own images. However, these beneficiaries are not visually literate enough to articulate the long term consequences of the accumulated meanings of images and their relationship with iconic images.



Figure 39: Portriat of Mengeste Bala and her family in her vegetable plot, unpublished © Micheal Tsegaye/ IFRC, August 2011

Unlike boys, images of girls are produced in such a way that shows that they are burdened with household activities. The other few works of Micheal Tsegaye clearly replicate the theme of women fetching water. As shown in figure 40, these have a similar narrative style to that of Gebre-Medhin. Development activities such as making potable water accessible to all community are pictured by both Micheal Tsegaye and Gebre-Medhin. This practice is similar with other commercial visual art productions. For instance, analyses of some contents of paintings in commercial galleries indicate inter-medial representational practices. Tekle-Micheal (2009) investigates this reality indicating that most of the works of contemporary artists focus on how women are burdened with daily lives. Analysing different photographs, Centime Zeleke (2009) also critiqued representational practices of Ethiopian women as culturally burdened, especially those living in the outskirts of the capital and rural areas. Dominant picture production about marginalized women is as firewood and big water filled plastic container carriers:

Those paintings or photographs [in reference to works advertised in commercial galleries] may show women fetching water ----but they do not show the challenges of going into a river, she might be abducted or raped along the way (VN850030, Interview with an interpreter and gallery owner, 5/08/2011).

This interview thus indicates that the voices of women and girls are often mediated in a patriarchal society.



Figure 40: A water point in Damot Mokonisa serves 4000 households, saving the women half a day's walk to the river. They charge a small fee to pay for any repairs or maintenance © Micheal Tsegaye/ IFRC

The photographic images can be grouped in terms of gendered occupational presentations. The contents of these photographs depict women fetching water, women carrying containers, men distributing food, women lining up to carry water, men cleaning tankers and children in a playground. Thematically rural women fetching water from pipelines dominate the narratives of development activities both in The Ethiopian Herald and images produced by the charity organisations since pure water supply is one of development activities. The Ethiopian government is cooperating with charity organisations specifically to fulfil the UN's millennium goal that claims to 'make poverty history by 2025'. It is a top down approach that mainly works in pure water supply, access to education and health facilities. These are also number one category of the UN millennium development goals (UN

Women, 2013). The above photographs thus made such inaugural ceremonies as codes for development transportations. It also symbolises the discourse of poverty in the global South limited to basic needs and access to primary education as opposed to poverty issues in the global North. This includes supplying pure water to all regions of Ethiopia. Such images are often used as evidence of collaborative works between government bodies, NGOs and local people.

NGOs photo archives should not be analysed on the basis of claims of change, but on the ways in which these images are produced, both during pre-preparation times and actual photographic encounters. In all cases a photographer is given an opportunity to take images in what the institution calls photo case studies. As explained in detail earlier (pg. 142), institutions brief photographers for various reasons. After critiques of aid imagery (Campbell, 2011; Burman, 1994; Clark, 2009), charity institutions provided ethical guidelines so that the images would not show a destitute individual and possibly exploit their vulnerability.

They also guide photographers to take ethically appropriate images in such a way that show aid works. They commission photo case studies that narrate the problems of pure water supply, and newly inaugurated pipe- lines as a source of water. These kinds of projects are overly circulated since they feed into global discourses of supplying pure water supply to all regions. When compared with early 1990s photographs where women were pictured using traditional water pot to fetch water from streams, the above aid imagery marks the inaugural ceremony of opening up of new potable water source as rural development. Development strategies about supplying potable water to all residents of rural Ethiopia seem to repeatedly portray women and youth fetching water. Similar images persist in the archives of the Ethiopian Press Agency.

As shown in table 1 (pg.50), the frequency of photographs based on gender indicate that there are equal numbers of men and women in the case of photo-essays commissioned by the Red Cross and Crescent Society and German Agro-Action. With the exception of Save the Children that predominantly works on the lives of children there seems to be a shift in focus in altering the 'feminisation' and 'infantalisation' of development images. This is partly a result of the photo-briefing from the respective institutions that explains rejections of media portrayal of drought using images of female bodies and lone child and bloated bellies. Unlike video footage that features a severely malnourished child, Mahsood's photo-essay portrays careful selections of individuals who can represent the majority of vulnerable families who

have migrated from mainland Somalia and settled in temporary Dolo Ado Refugee Centre, located in dry lands of Southern Ethiopia.

Mahsood works for the Save Children in their Afghanistan office. He has received intensive training in media and communication from the UNDP office. He was hired as a permanent member of staff of Save the Children based in the Afghanistan office in 2008. Emergency responses depended whether the emergency is sudden on-set or slow on-set emergency. In the case of food aid relief works, one of the challenges of the drought is that its impacts are not visible immediately. That is why it is considered as slow on-set emergency. It takes a longer time for food insecurity to develop into famine and malnutrition. 'Drought is natural but famine is manmade!' (Interview with Khuraam Mahsood, 13/09/11). The initial site was the Dolo Ado refugee centre which was one of the refugee camps for Somalia migrants located in the South of Ethiopia. The lives of the refugees and the surrounding community do not differ in terms of facing water shortages and other health problems.

As Mahsood explained, a person who is in the field may be asked to do two things; one is to do assessment and the other one is to investigate at ground level. These two themes are used to generate case studies. Khuraam Mahsood, as an official emergency officer, had to do two things, to visually explore the situation of migrants as well as the drought situation at the ground level. He has employed textual narratives of the subjects to support pictorial explorations of drought situations as case studies. As a worker employed by Save the Children, an organisation that works in saving lives of children, his photo-essay is dominated by photos of children and mothers unlike the above two photo- essays.

His photographs show healthy looking and pleasant images of migrants, while at the same time showing visual assessments on the host community. This rationale stems from his childhood experiences. Growing up in London, Khuraam Muhsood is critical of the Live Aid images of famine in Ethiopia that publically displayed negative imagery:

I was born in England and when this whole drought happened in the 80s with live aid and that was when I started to see these images. And even from then I did not feel it was a very good way. I just think in terms of --- one is the dignity of the subject and the other is you know I am not really sure if it is related to the fact that I am originally from Pakistan or not, I do not know. May be it has to do with my training in communications. Because I told you I started with UNDP with this 9/11 thing and we did a work on environment, on wildlife, rivers, on wet lands, and I think that using photographs to supplement narrative is better but I do not think that in the long run negative images are useful. Whether it is in Afghanistan or

in Haiti, I see them as my own people (VN850046, Interview with a Communication officer of Save the Children, 13/09/11).



Figure 41: Child Situation at Dolo Ado Refugee, August 2011© Khuraam Muhsood/ Save the Children

As a person who has come to Ethiopia for the first time and stayed in for two months, his point of view is rather different from that of other photographers. His works are mainly portraits with few photographs of healthy cattle. Thematically his work shifts from just incorporating the child and mother situations of migrants from mainland Somalia to incorporating the host community who are given less prominence. Portraits used to narrate refugee stories came from the ethos of Save the Children. His subjects are mainly of women and children partly because Save the Children works in saving lives. Unlike his Ethiopian contemporaries, who picture only polished images of children, Mahsood thinks it is important to include the refugee situations of children who might have flies over their faces. As the following four pictures demonstrate, out of the ten pictures that Mahsood took, portraits of children that were published on STC were those that involve a child receiving medical aid in Dolo Ado refugee centre as well as a portrait with the iconic image of a lone child face. Although Mahsood manages to show the surrounding areas outside of the Dolo Ado refugee centre in his photo-essays, only few of the next two photographs were used to supplement articles about the refugee centre. For example, figure 42 is a cropped image, by which the original encounter of the photographer that included the face of the mother as a primary care

giver to her own baby child has been cut off by the editor (Interview with Khuraam Mahsood, 13/09/11).

The above pictures are not, thus, as disturbing as other photojournalistic works circulated in mainstream media. The decisions are not based on the social workers beliefs that terrifying images of famine are going to help the public to sympathise with victims. It has a long term negative consequences in representational practices, ethical considerations and their effects on perceptions. There is criticism of a typical image of a poor child with flies on his or her face. NGO's iconography of childhood can be interpreted in parallel with the iconography of savagery, which was typical of pre-colonial practices. Children are produced



Figure 42: Laden Malo getting medical aid upon arrival at Dolo Ado Health Centre, Photo by Khuraam Mahsood, August 2011 © Save the Children

inhabiting a hostile environment with flies all over their faces. There is also an assumption that in Ethiopia mothers and the rest of family do not care much about their own children. It is assumed that children are usually left alone to take care of themselves. They are not given the attention and care that they deserve from mothers. Mothers are portrayed as carefree individuals who wait for charity organisations to be responsible for their own children (Jewitt et.al, 2001). There is a strong link with the western ideology of childhood, that states the right of safeguarding children's' living conditions. Picturing children has long tradition in medical photography where the immediate function of a photo is used to study about health risks,

particularly in ‘third world’ (Burman, 1994; Childs, 2006). There are already imagined diseases in Africa. Whether relevant to study about a disease or health risks, those imaginations are made through specific ways of looking, such as dirt all over the face of a child and flies around the eyes of a child.



Figure 43: Kadija Hassan and her children on arrival near Dolo Ado Refugee Centre, 2011 © Khuraam Mahsood/STC

Save the Children uses seven of portraits of women and children but only two show host community. Despite the fact that Mahsood managed to compose portraits of the everyday that would have provided other narratives, such as children playing within the camp (figure 44), those images were not made publicised. His other encounters as shown in figure 43 would have provided a better landscape and group family portraits that were contextualised as case study materials. However, they have not made them accessible on the institution's website.



Figure 44: Children playing in Dolo Ado Refugee Centre, Archival Material, 2011 © Khuraam Mahsood/ Save the Children

Despite the photo-essay captures the different activities of children (figure 44), it is only cropped images of those that capture when a child is getting medical help (figure 45) as well as those that included a portrait of children that were published in the website. The positive aspect of these images is that they do not perpetuate the image of a left alone child. A child is pictured when he or she is getting medical help. His work also shows the common NGO practice of the medical instrument effect, on a child's body. The image was later cropped before use. The London based editor's choice was to further cut off the image of the mother, who is the primary care giver of the malnourished child, and to focus on lifesaving

medical assistance to a child on arrival at the medical centre in Dolo Ado refugee¹⁷ Centre (figure 44).

Communication officers play as significant role as volunteers and professional photographers. Development aid imagery that is produced through government endeavours and charity organisations' activities enable us to trace changes over time. They witness differences between rural and urban lifestyles, while at the same time visualizing the fluidity of urban and rural lifestyles in terms of movement of ideas, and objects. The visibility of emergency situations demands alternative ways of visualizing subjects that does not necessarily mask their capability in overcoming food insecurity and vulnerability to acute famine and malnutrition. Images are thus a direct implication of how different places are connected globally in the space of photography.

Photo-essays are the main site of analysis. Micheal Tsegaye's works deal with drought situations as aid interventions by The Red Cross and Crescent Society and GIZ, Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit Company. His photo-essays narrate a family situation in Gurage Sodo based on the life of a female headed household located in Southern Ethiopia. He was also commissioned to investigate drought situations in the Southern regions of Somalia. Yemane Gebremedhin's work focuses on the same theme, but in the Afar region of Ethiopia where pastoralist societies from Eritrea are crossing borders in search of water. Khuraam Muhsood's works, on the other hand, deal with a situation analysis of children in Dolo Ado refugee centre located in the Southern regions of Ethiopia close to the borders of Kenya.

5.2.3. Analysis of Photo-essays, Freelance Photographers and Charity Organisations

In African and African Diaspora studies, scholars claim that photographers from the Global South are producing alternative narratives about their own people that challenge stereotypical ways of seeing Africans as exotic and primitive societies (Landuo et.al, 2003; Enwezor, 2006). There is, however, limited literature on commissioned photography of social problems including emergency situations in rural landscapes. A critical analysis of photo-essays of relief works may, therefore, contribute to the existing literature on how far African

¹⁷ Mahsood has stated that figure 34 is not his original encounter. During photo elicitation process, Mahsood has identified the editor's role in cropping the image.

photographers are confronting visual stereotypical productions of people in urgent social conditions. A discussion of photographers' intent would be incomplete without an exploration of the agency of the sponsoring humanitarian organisations. Taking photographers' local and global experiences, this section explores the relations of three agencies; the agency of a photographer, the institutions that sponsor photo-essays, and the photographic image. In order to triangulate the meanings of images and processes of image making, this research involved interviewing photographers, communication officers and social workers of sponsor agencies. However, due to limited time, I was unable to interview any one from the Red Cross Society. Instead I use articles that were published on their website using these photo essays.

In NGO settings, using the work of 'third world' photographers is considered an alternative means of visualizing the human condition. This is not to deny that International NGOs hire photography crews from abroad for emergency appeals, and major fundraising events, or even to narrate success stories. 'Within the past five years, NGOs have started approaching us to work with them' (Antonio Fiorente, Interview with the Photographer, 30/09/2009). In recent years, charity organisations are also hiring local photographers to construct photo-essays about food insecurity. They prefer to use locally based professionals, Ethiopian and Non-Ethiopian, instead of allowing new photographers to parachute into the lives of vulnerable individuals. Rather than resisting collaborative works, as they did with international media, these locally based photographers work mainly with UN, US and EU led development agencies (for young people's agency see Jeffrey, 2012).

As discussed in the above section, these photo-essays may have similar contents due to the visual economy. Even though Walter Benjamin claims that 'the camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to the unconscious impulses' (2006), the agency of charity organisations cannot be ruled out as they decide the themes of photo-essays. Their photographic representations of drought and food insecurity can be made by visualizing different aspects. The director of Alle Art School of Addis Ababa University made a persuasive point about how abstract things are represented in the form of realist art. He asserted that 'in any visual art, a representation of an abstract thing is made visible by what is affected by it. A wind is represented by a thing that it destructs on the ground' (Mekonnen, 2011). Like a harsh wind, famine and drought are abstract things. The representations of environmental change and vulnerability are subjective and problematic. As noted in the previous section, some of the photographs (figure 30 and 31) are examples of

the representational choices of photographers in picturing the effects of drought and food crisis as well as charitable interventions to mitigate human and environmental destructions.

Following the criticisms made in the mid-1990s, aid agencies have had to take ethical issues into account when picturing local people in order to gain community acceptance at the grass roots. Such developments have brought about changes to the formulation of guidelines and ethical considerations for picturing vulnerable individuals. One of the practices in humanitarian organisations is that they follow through a strategy that takes into account ethical issues in picturing subjects, with the exception of emergency situations (VN8500046, Interview with a Communication Officer of Save the Children, 13/09/11). The process involves identifications of people who are photographed, by their actual names and have them sign a consent agreement form. The communication guidelines refuse to give mundane power to photographers to take pictures by exploiting the vulnerability of marginalized society including women and children. The guidelines oppose picturing the vulnerable in case an individual's safety can be deterred as a result of such images. Children's right are given significant emphasis to deter the production of nameless, 'lone child' images without the consent of her or his guardian or parents. The consent form further states that:

Consent to such use as given in perpetuity, and does not require prior approval by me. I further disclaim any right to receive compensation or economic benefit that has or could have become due in connection with the use of the film, photograph, tape or reproduction of me, my child/children and/or the recording of our voice(s) (Extract from a consent and release form, Save the Children)

NGOs, like many other charity organisations, have to adhere to the UNHCR human right law that prioritises the dignity and safety of human subjects in all respects. At the policy level, thus, through the use of the consent form, communication guidelines or photo – protocols, these institutions attempt to minimize the exploitative nature of photography, as well as to reconsider the human rights issues in the presentation of socially vulnerable people.

Despite the fact that charity organisations are becoming sensitive to picturing the human subject in disaster and emergency situations, a motion picture of a malnourished Somali child was featured in a video dispatched via social media and on the website of Save the Children in August, 2011. The video featured how a child recovered fully after receiving medical help from Save the Children. Such video footage is dominated by mother and child

figures.¹⁸ From this video footage shot to appeal for global action, children as well as mothers are framed receiving support. Productions of a severely malnourished child signify not only poverty, but also symbolic conventions of imaging a lone child and excluding mothers who give primary care. The video was shot on the assumption that it may convince donors for immediate response. This view, however, overshadows representational practices in picturing emergency situations. ‘Pathology’ as a method of medical science still perpetuates representations of skinny bodies & bloated bellies affected by severe malnutrition (Burman, 1994). It is, therefore, unlikely that sensational images, that necessarily show the dignity of vulnerable individuals will be absent from social media and mainstream media. For most NGO workers, images of mothers and children may appeal to ‘donors’ because they connect easily with those images.

For fundraising purposes, NGOs use video footages. The assumption is that humans do not react if they have not seen severe emergency situations of affected individuals. Even the bible says give hands to those who ask! You do not need to show a living body of bones or skinny bodies (0045, Interview with a Communication and Marketing Officer of World Vision, Sept, 2010)

The above comment indicates that some communication officers do not agree with the idea of perpetuating images of a naked, skinny child image since it affects the dignity of a country, even beyond the rights of a subject. Head offices of international charity organisations often have picture archives that are housed in headquarters located in major cities such as London and New York. In the case of Save the Children, the purposes of these archives are explained as:

You can look at it from different views. Number one is to show what we are doing. For instance, a person who is in Addis will know about projects by looking at images. Sometimes, individually, we share to donors. So, sometimes we share them for accountability---to show what we are doing with the community. We share them via social media, or in our website. In general it is to show what we do as work. We ourselves are accountable to the community we serve for. So, the aim of images is to show the lives of children and in what ways we have brought change to the children (VN850037, Communication Officer, Save the Children 2/09/2011).

As stated in the above interview, STC may use photo archives for fundraising purposes, as well as to witness changes that development aid has brought about to

¹⁸ The video is available at <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/emergencies/east-africa-aappeal>, last accessed on 05/12/2012

beneficiaries. Even though a photographer's point of view may offer an alternative to the dominant picture productions, overlooking the agency of charity organisations may exclude pre-preparations to productions of photo-essays, selection and editions of photographic images. First, I will start with an email conversation between a freelance photographer and a charity organisation in order to demonstrate how they negotiate the content of photo essays and ethical considerations.

While taking pictures of children, please try to capture them with an adult and not only alone. That does not mean, that children alone are not allowed, but because we are not an organisation only for children, it would be good to be able to show family structures. If possible, it would be nice to have portraits of recipients (1 – 3 is enough) in a story-telling sequence (see further details in general Briefing below). While capturing children take care not to take any photos of naked or half naked children---- (An email conversation between Yemane Gebre-Medhin and a communication marketing officer, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.¹⁹ for German Agro Action office, July, 2011)

Going behind the scenes enables us to gain access to the processes of image making, and the negotiations between different stake holders. The above conversation was sent by a communication officer of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.v. This organisation is a partner to German Agro-Action that supports developing countries with food security and food aid during emergencies. The above photo brief clearly asks how a picture should tell a story about the situation of people as well as the distribution of food aid. Comparing their practice from media portrayals of vulnerable societies, such organisations have also become sensitive about what they are producing as photo-essays. Sponsoring agencies makes sure that photographers are producing ethically appropriate pictures that take the dignity of the subject, such as children, into consideration. Before heading to a visual field, a photographer is briefed on the content of photo-essays that may influence the agency of a freelance photographer.

NGOs rely on the appealing nature of photography to tell stories visually. The above electronic mail suggests that NGOs aid activities determine the content of photo-essays. Since German Agro-Action works to alleviate food insecurity, photo essays must cover men, women and children. This organisation is also careful to correct NGO discourses on vulnerability and associated practice of picturing a lone child or a helpless mother. We need

¹⁹

http://www.bonn.de/wirtschaft_wissenschaft_internationales/bonn_international/internationaleorganisationen/03183/index.html?lang=en

to pay attention to concepts adopted by the charity organisations because images may be predetermined during photo-briefing. Devereux (2000: 11) noted that ‘women often face higher ‘social vulnerability’ than men in cultural contexts where intra-household allocation rules for food, health care and other basic needs favour males over females’. Such vulnerability concepts are the means by which some NGOs justify image compositions of children and women as most affected in emergency situations. German Agro Action, for instance, ensures that photo protocols are respected in the practice of picturing. This started after criticism of ‘development pornographic’ imagery (Manzo, 2006). Emergency photo-essays still need to be carefully read to investigate gender portrayals, as well as to articulate how messages about development challenges and aid activities are communicated. NGOs negate dominant media portrayals of iconic famine images. These iconic images produce the child image vis-a-vis women as sexless creatures with a camera angle focusing on the big belly of a child, wide-eyed faces or the thin breasts of a helpless mother (Burman, 1994; Campbell, 2011).

Such humanitarian organisations direct a photographer on what to include and exclude from the frame. Themes of pictures are decided based on what institutions want to show as accomplished aid activities. In this sense photo-essays narrate the perceptual significance of images often used to legitimize aid as a means of dominating the representational practices over the poor and the needy. After criticism of NGO productions and use of images, some argue that the image of woman and girls has been changing through time (Clark, 2009). As discussed in the previous section, the photo-essays of vulnerable women and children are improving. Locally based photographers are forming new codes of representations.

McEwan (2009) critiqued development agendas that are made through ‘metaphors, icons and languages’. These metaphorical and iconic images continue to dominate debates on the image of drought affected women and girls (Childs, 2006; Manzo, 2008). Those ‘ways of seeing’ which are homogenous productions of vulnerable people in Ethiopia have already affected the discourse of food aid. In the 1980s huge amounts of money were collected as a result of the use of appeal imagery based on the ‘infantalisation’ and ‘feminisation’ of Ethiopia (Dogra, 2007, 166). Development aid images used for fundraising purposes assume normalized discourses that neglect the scrutiny of power relations made visible through photographic encounters. Deborah Eade and Suzanne Williams (1995, 216) claim that

Development is about women and men becoming empowered to bring about positive changes in their lives, about personal growth together with public action; about both the process and the outcome of challenging poverty, oppression, discrimination; and about the realization of human capital through social and economic justice. Above all it is about the process of transforming lives and transforming societies.

Such positive attitudes to development and new transformations neglect its uncertainties as neo-imperialist ideas to the subaltern subjects. Capacity building, empowerment, and women's equality are some of the terms that development issues are adopting as discourses (Tembo, 2003). International NGOs have grown into new spaces of representation as agents of development activities (Dogra, 2007). The issue of poverty and lack of well-being are visualized in the 'Third World' appeal imagery while elements of poverty can be found in 'First World'. During one interview, an informant pointed out that such imagery is problematic when it becomes the symbol by which a country is branded worldwide:

If you go to Paris or New York you will see street children lying in subways and streets. Do we see such pictures about these cities?! No we do not! Even in recent Tsunami incident in Japan, the impact is worse since it leaves people empty handed almost overnight! But photographs do not produce de-personified images as they did with the 1984 famine images of Ethiopia (VN850030, Interview with an interpreter and gallery owner, 5/08/11).

Emergency relief works as major components of development (Eade and Williams, 1995, 825) employ photo-essays as a useful tool to narrate the needs of vulnerable individuals, as well as to show work achieved as success stories. Historically, the visual grammars of food insecurity are often depicted by posing mother and child. There seems to be denial on dependency of Ethiopian farmers on rain-fed agriculture. There are only little efforts or frameworks designed to alter the long term effects of climate change (Peterson, 2012, 559). The slowness of the impacts of climate change on food crisis, the delay to mitigate drought before it leads society into famine and malnutrition make iconic images political through which victimhood, as well as the notion of power and difference between the haves and the have not's become visible.

Criticisms of iconic images have altered images produced under the umbrella of international NGOs. However, dominant productions lack other narratives. Photo-essays only compose NGO's support and interventions to drought affected individuals. Though they are different from snapshots, these photo-essays lack completeness like any photojournalism. They do not provide a photographic account of how a child is malnourished due to a long

exhausting journey to a refugee camps. The point here is not about ‘negative’ versus ‘positive’ imagery of development aid. As Dogra (2007, 116) observed, positive or negative imagery is no longer a good way of classifying the NGO picture practice in ‘Third World’. The general trend indicates that appeal imagery must show the dignity of marginalized group such as women and children, while at the same time constructing social problems through ‘realism’. International NGOs must stop using de-contextualised images of vulnerable children, without which accurate representations of emergency situations would not be achieved.

Another development challenge that the media casts on Africans is its use of images of HIV/AIDS affected people. Despite a decline in the stigmatization of HIV/AIDS in Europe and Latin America since 2000, mainstream representation of the disease has shifted in portraying AIDS as ‘African’ or ‘Haitian’ (Campbell, 2008:17). Historically Africa has been imagined as a disease ridden continent, causing immeasurable challenges to global development activities. The images of Africa, including Ethiopia, that visualize HIV/AIDS patients indicate stereotypical representations of Africa as disease and death ridden (Jarosz, 1992). Since the disease affects the human body, its photographic representations are made by picturing affected individuals. The next section seeks to investigate artists concerns and the agency and voices of photographers in picturing HIV/AIDS, without neglecting the postcolonial approach.

5.3. Imaging HIV/AIDS

Like food insecurity and drought, HIV/AIDS is one of the slow on-set emergencies. Ever since HIV/AIDS has become one of the challenges for development activities, organisations such as Save the Children have a department that exclusively works on women’s health issues, including STDs, sexuality and maternal care. Among the commissioned works of Save the Children, Antonio Fiorente was hired to image the lives of sex workers in high risk corridors running along the railway line from Addis Ababa to Djibouti via Nazret and Awash. The area is often frequented by long distance truck drivers. It is also a route where tourists and urban dwellers pass through to travel to different recreational centres, such as the Rift Valley crater lakes. Due to increasing number of long distance drivers and tourism activities, street sex workers often migrate to this route. Young migrants from different parts of Ethiopia move to urban centres to engage in transactional sex. Unlike most western countries, where prostitution is prohibited by law, there are no legal

prohibitions on sex work in Ethiopia. As such charity organisations are engaged in limiting the impacts of STDs among sex workers.

In order to address the health needs of these women, Save the Children provides aid under its TransAction department. Whether it is donor driven or used as teaching materials, this department has produced commissioned photographic materials about sex workers. The visual materials I intend to discuss in this section include the commissioned works of Antonio Fiorente as well as Yemane Gebre-Medhin and Aida Ashenafi.

In 2007 Save the Children took the initiative to produce a photo-essay about people affected by the disease including risk groups in the high risk corridor. Titled as *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies, Courage and Life in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS* (2007), the photo-essay deals with two routes: one passing through Oromiya and the other through Afar region to reach the Djibouti ports. It includes everyday activities of sex workers along the Dira-Dawa- Djibouti routes focusing on the urban centres such as Nazret, Dire-Dawa and Awash. In 2010 Save the Children commissioned another participatory photo-essay to generate peer education teaching material designed for commercial sex workers and daily labourers separately. In order to address gender issues and portrayals of sex workers, this section only makes comparative analysis of the visual aid materials designed for sex workers by Michael Tsegaye and Eric Gottesman.

The independent works of the above photographers enable valuable comparisons to the commissioned works of other Ethiopian photographers. The comparative analysis enables us to develop a better understanding of how Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian photographers contest the representations of marginalized people. Commissioned photographs of NGOs captured by hiring Ethiopian photographers intervene with the meanings of images through such techniques that used performance in producing participatory photography among ‘risk groups’. Through case studies, Gottesman explored the long term effects of HIV/AIDS on individuals while works of Gebre-Medhin and Ashenafi indicate the NGO discourse and used photographs to show what NGOs are doing within their respective departments.

In “The Essence of Life” (2007, 17), Tsahai, a woman living with AIDS in a town named as Awash, is constructed as a victim who has no care and support at family level. She is portrayed as a bedridden AIDS patient, after she had fallen into the hands of community care givers or volunteers for charity organisations such as Save the Children. Women are also volunteers to care for AIDS patients. In figure 45, a picture captures Alem, the care giver, as

she was feeding Tsahai, an AIDS patient who was suffering from diarrhoea. This symbolises the patient's dependency on home care givers trained by Save the Children. Visual narratives are usually predetermined by Save the Children. Since the objective of the photo-essay is to show home care services supported by Save the Children, the main subject of the photo-essay is Alem. It is also a display that confirms what Save the Children is working at the grass root level. If it was not for the systematic home care service of the NGO, a patient like Tsahai could have been left alone at home without having anyone to support her. In order to compromise on the subject positions, Fiorente has framed Tsahai at the centre of a camera angle in a manner that shows that she was living in destitution. Along with the text Tsahai's critical health condition is narrated as she was suffering from diarrhea that left her as a bedridden patient. In contrast Alem is portrayed as pleasant religious woman who provides food for AIDS patients. The written text accompanying the above figure also constructs



Figure 45: Source: *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies of Life and Courage in Ethiopia in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS, From High Risk Corridor Initiatives* (STC, 2007:17)
© Save the Children/ Antonio Fiorente.

that some People Living with HIV/AIDS are isolated from already existing social ties. It is volunteers like Alem who fill the gap in providing home care for AIDS patients.

In the case of infected families, grandparents are constructed as innocent victims who have no knowledge about how they get infected by HIV/AIDS. Juxtaposing photos of the deceased families and lost ones within the photographic image is an attempt to adopt a

holistic approach to the mystery of the disease that could easily spread in a family (figure 45). It also indicates the allusion that photographs can evoke memories of lost ones. Ato Negusayehu is portrayed as a user of the anti-retroviral medicine that the government of Ethiopia is providing freely for HIV/AIDS patients. As a grandfather he is portrayed receiving the home care and support he needs from his wife and grandchild (figure 46).



Figure 46: Save the Children, *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies of Life and Courage in Ethiopia in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS, From High Risk Corridor Initiatives* (2006: 62) © Save the Children/ Antonio Fiorente

The text further contextualises the socio-economic status of this family, which only has a small monthly income. In the same fashion orphans like Ato Negusayehu's grandchild are framed as burdened with caring for grandparents, while at the same time older people are burdened with the economic consequences of the loss of immediate family members whom they had relied for economic prosperity (figure 46). Family member's memories of the deceased are usually positive, mesmerizing the image of their children as kind, beautiful and caring for the family.



Figure 47 Source: *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies of Life and Courage in Ethiopia in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS, From High Risk Corridor Initiatives* (2006: 67) © Save the Children/ Antonio Fiorente



Figure 48: Source: *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies of Life and Courage in Ethiopia in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS, From High Risk Corridor Initiatives*, (2006: 40) © Save the Children/ Antonio Fiorente

In figure 48, Ato Negusayehu's wife is made to raise and hold photographs of her daughter and her daughter's child who passed away because of AIDS. They use fascinating photographs to narrate stories and tales about lost ones.

These photographs are not just pictures of HIV affected individuals. They also relate to how the disease is imagined in Africa. Home care service, anti-retroviral medicines and local social structures that start with family and HIV/AIDS's devastating consequences are supplemented in the text that often accompany these photographic images. While these images capture the livelihood of PLWA that is inaccessible to public audiences, the visual economy of HIV/AIDS leads audiences to understand how these images should be looked at.

The image of HIV/AIDS is used as currency by newspaper publishers. There are subscriptions online. And the values that underpin about those images that go through--- run, I think, based on an international economic model. That has to do with cooperation's that are trying to make money for international NGOs; that are also trying to get money from donors. I think NGOs also make money out of it! But in terms of the images, I think, they end up re-enforcing what these organisations want out of the original visual encounters. And it is very far removed; it is a far distance from what the original moment between the photographer and the subject meant. ---And the viewers of those images demand certain kinds of images and so it shifts how the photographer ends up seeing that relationship (VN850068, Interview with an independent photographer, 11/10/2011)

The image of HIV/AIDS is highly political. The above interview stresses on the international networks of image market. The international funding system impacts the negotiations of photographers from the institutional demands such as media and humanitarian organisation. The agency of institutions through editorial process could change the original meanings of photography. Artists and activists, such as Douglas Crimp in the United States, argue that the images of HIV create impressions of a severely ill people, such as homosexuals, drug addicts (Takemoto, 2003), as well as long distance truck drivers. In the western world the disease is still associated with African and Caribbean women, despite the fact that these women might have been infected after settling in the Western World. It is also associated with homosexuals and labour migrants. In most of sub-Saharan African countries, such imagery is still linked with sex workers, women from lower income backgrounds and immigrant men and long distance truck drivers. The association of the disease with innocents, such as older people and breast feeding infants, and 'guilty others', such as sex workers and long distance truck drivers, has influenced societal reactions to PLWA (Cogan and Gregory, 2001: 267, O'Farrell, 2002).

The image of HIV/AIDS is symbolically linked to symptoms of AIDS such as body degradation and eventually death (Takemoto, 2003). In his famous ACT UP exhibition,

Crimp argued that showing an image or portrait of sick person has negative consequences as it creates distance between a sufferer and audience. He argues that negative imagery of AIDS could easily create ‘hysteria’ among the public while perpetuating an image of ‘abjection and otherness’ (Takemoto, 2003: 84). As early as 1987 activists, therefore, preferred to showcase more positive imagery about PLWA that portrayed their ability to ‘fight back’. Up to 2000, images of emaciated bodies of PLWA from different parts of Africa were made visible in different exhibition venues. For instance, in London exhibition, Gideon Mendel’s portraits of half nude bedridden AIDS patients were showcased as South African voices about the disease (Martin, 2004: 121). The assumption is that people might learn how life threatening the disease can be. In such exhibitions, the horrors of HIV/AIDS have reached to public audiences. The same is true in Addis Ababa. Most of the early works on HIV/AIDS prevention perpetuated the horrors of AIDS in order to communicate with the wider public. The impact of such imagery is rather ambiguous since it did not help to alleviate the social and economic consequences of the disease. In Ethiopia Fiorente is very careful in picturing HIV/AIDS. He avoids imaging the horrors of AIDS symbolised by emaciated nude bodies.

Fiorente’s photo story book titled as *The Essence of Life* is ‘a part of High Risk Corridors Initiatives. ‘It was a donor’s driven five year project. It is closed now. The work is the base for our TransAction project now’ (Commentary of an Officer who works in TransAction Office, STC, 6/07/2011). TransAction is a USAID funded project to provide STD prevention and care services for mobile population and at risk groups.

They are sex workers. They do not want to share their lives with strangers. Before I start photographing them, I explored what they do every day. If they spend a night with clients they come back to their place early in the morning, then they sleep. Around 12 or 1, they get up and have lunch. Now I am telling you about the case in Dire-Dawa. Then they buy chatt and chew chatt till 5. They then start getting ready for work in the street around 7 in the evening. So what I did was I bought them chatt and took it with soft drinks. I sat with them. They allowed me to photograph after we discuss the purpose of the work. How you approach them is very important beyond everything (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 1/07/2011)

Fiorente’s points make a distinction between photojournalism (see pg.136) and photo-essays. As opposed to parachute photography, he identifies the way of life of his subjects and interacts with the community in order to subsequently compose the photo-essay. In such photographic works, the photographer, thus, becomes an ethnographer and a participant observer. Since Fiorente’s task is in visually exploring the everyday activities of

sex workers in High Risk Corridor, he had to first observe what they do during a 24 hour period. “The main task is being in the situation. I share the way of lives of others for some time. It is not about clicking a camera only. You have to have familiarity with the community” (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 5/08/2011).

Kayo in figure 49, a sex worker’s everyday life is included to indicate the behavioural changes that international organisations and HAPCO have achieved jointly in spreading methods of transmissions and knowledge of HIV prevention. Taking Kayo’s life as case study material, the photo-essay in *The Essence of Life* explores peer to peer networks of sex workers and what makes them at risk of HIV. Kayo and her friends are engaged in sex work where negotiations with their clients take place in street. Kayo’s engagement in transactional sex in asphalt is not the major topic of the essay. Rather, it exposes the everyday activity of a peer educator, in order to explore her relations with other sex workers, their means of social interactions, possibilities for knowledge exchange, and to mitigate the challenges that these women are facing due to transactional sex. Fiorente noted that the photographs are in relation to predetermined NGO narratives.

I selected some pictures from the whole documentary. My selection is based on what suits the story book. STC explained to me about their job. They have their own narratives almost like scripts then I have to capture moments that could tell stories of those narratives. It is challenging --- Most of the risk groups were in Awash and Dire-Dawa. I was very careful in approaching them. I was careful not to say any offensive words. If they say I have to come and sit with them to chew chatt or to drink coffee, I had to do it. I see them as among equals rather than seeing them as subhuman (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 1/07/2011).

In such a way Kayo (figure 49-51) is portrayed as a healthy woman, who has networks with her friends who usually gather around coffee ceremony, chew chatt, and smoke a flavoured tobacco called *shisha*. Some of the pictures (figure 49 and figure 50) are displays of peer to peer networks while exposing sex workers’ risky life style. It claims that sex workers live in the margin as they prefer to hide away from other societies during the day because of the humiliations linked to the immorality of sex work in a community. During day light, sex workers stay in their confined living spaces intermingling among themselves.



Figure 50: Source: *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies of Life and Courage in Ethiopia in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS, From High Risk Corridor Initiatives*, (2006: 24) © Antonio Fiorente/ Save the Children

Most of the photo-essays commissioned under this agency are a bi-product of health research indicators that defined long distance truck drivers, daily labourers, waitresses and commercial sex workers as risk groups. Save the Children adopted the idea that there are numerous commercial sex workers in Ethiopia as one indication of factors that affect the health of marginalized women. Despite the fact that HIV prevention educational outreach programs to targeted groups have been undertaken for a decade, these groups are still considered as the most at risk population. Statistics in Ethiopia show that among the above groups, there is an equal number of men and women working as daily labourers, while the rest of the risk groups are mainly women in majority except long distance truck drivers. These are factors through which the visual economy plays a significant role in the productions of photo-essays that solely deal with the lives of marginalized groups such as commercial sex workers. “So the NGO will tell me what they want. But I give them beyond their expectation. It is about your eye. In order to have a powerful image, it is better to share moments with the community. You become part of them and it helps to be more successful” (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 5/08/2011).

The Essence of Life was published in order to explore problems related to the challenges of mitigating HIV/AIDS transmissions among risk groups. Social workers argue that despite behavioural change education, Ethiopia is still struggling to minimize the impacts of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV infected individuals in urban settings. They had already established a rapport with this community. Social workers, who are based in TransAction department and have established a rapport with sex workers, acknowledge *The Essence of Life* photo story book was intended for donors (Interview with a Social Worker, Save the Children, 6/08/2011).



Figure 51: Source: *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies of Courage and Life in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia* (2007: 48) © Save the Children/ Antonio Fiorente



Figure 52: Source: *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies of Courage and Life in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia* (2007: 45) © Save the Children/ Antonio Fiorente



Figure 53: Source: *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies of Courage and Life in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia* (2007: 26) © Save the Children/ Antonio Fiorente

Fiorente was then assigned to make photo-essays in the assumption that they might disclose their private space to a male photographer rather than a female photographer.



Figure 54: Source: *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies of Courage and Life in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia* (2007: 84) © Save the Children/ Antonio Fiorente

Fiorente discussed the process of imaging these sex workers as follows:

I had to wait until they are friendly with me. I had to buy them chatt in order to establish rapport. -----I stayed for few days in the nearby neighbourhood. Then I followed them full day so that I can photograph their daily life.---my principle is that as much as possible I won't need to expose very negative images (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 5/08/2011).



Figure 55: *The Essence of Life: Sharing Testimonies of Courage and Life in Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia* (2007: 85) © Save the Children/ Antonio Fiorente

As part of what they do in the evenings, figure 54 and 55 represent the confined living spaces of the sex workers, their bodily decorations and how they decorate their rooms. The commissioned photo-essays are exploratory of the livelihood of sex workers to construct factors that expose them to HIV. In *The Essence of Life* that published commissioned works of Fiorente, risk groups are photographed in relation to how everyday lives expose sex workers and their significant others to HIV. Factors that expose sex workers to experience unsafe sex with multiple sexual partners are highlighted in the photo-essay. These pictures include coffee ceremony and the use of stimulant leaves such as chatt and shisha in the region. It is also a narrative that establishes a support structure within the community of sex

workers. Through an exploration of the day to day activity of a trained peer educator among sex workers it provides a romanticised images of leisure times at home, where sex workers practice relaxing atmosphere during coffee ceremonies (see figure 50 & 51). If it was not supplemented by a text, these constitutions of social interactions, with the exception of images that portray make-up sharing among sex workers could be about any other parts of the society inhabiting the Dira-Dawa and Addis-Djibouti route.

This is why knowing the social and cultural context of these subjects is so relevant prior to making photo narratives. In most scholarly writings about commercial sex workers, there has been a wider focus on the behavioural portray of women in a bar. This has shaped the image of sex workers. In studies conducted in Europe, America and Asia, the bodies of commercial sex workers are imagined as a dangerous lesion because earlier scholars have adopted medical conceptions of sexual behaviour. From sexual freedom to sex work as pathologies, the sociology of sex work from feminist perspectives provides a more positivist image focusing on the power of a female body. They negate the image of prostitutes operating as a 'safety valve' where semen is excreted from wealthy middle class males. A prostitute is understood as active agents of contagious diseases such as STDs and HIV/AIDS. The image of a prostitute is also studied from a psychological perspective where they were regarded as deviant others resulting from marginality and alienation. They are overly debated using 'you are what you do' kind of hypothesis, as if their lives are solely confined to present spaces of prostitution. Prostitution as an institution is imagined as identical to commercial sex workers (Tekola, 2005). In Ethiopia, their male clients and their subsequent other civil partners as girlfriends, lovers, and wives, are excluded from the photographic narratives of the prostitutes.

More importantly the photographic images of prostitutes ignore histories of how sex work is related to the coming of foreign settlers into Africa. Photographers like Ricardo Rangel produced photo-essays as critics of such stereotypical imagery of female prostitutes in the red light districts of Maputo. Since Rangel belonged to a generation in the immediate Portuguese colony of Mozambique, he negates the discourse of colonialism as an ideology of progress, modernism and transformations by exposing the negative consequences of colonialism and urbanism. In his photo-essays of prostitutes which he calls the *Nightly Bread* (2006), he has exposed the tensions of personal identity and social identity attributed to his subjects (For more see Roman Yiseni, 2008). In Ethiopia prostitution started with the coming of soldiers who settled near the Piasa area in central Addis Ababa. Findings indicate that

there is a misunderstanding about the image of prostitutes, where they are usually equated as undifferentiated from its institution. For instance, Tekola focuses on the importance of other social factors, mainly child poverty, which leads to sex work rather than ‘deviant’ sexual behaviour (Tekola, 2005). In the NGO setting, a focus on how to provide the immediate solution to mitigate sexually transmitted diseases neglects on how sex work is related to clients, such as military settlers during the occupation period ,and contemporary local clients as well as tourists.

The change in imaging sex workers within Save the Children is happening as a result of lessons learned from donor driven photo-essays. After a review of most of scholarly articles about risk groups, including sex workers, STC also produced a photographic visual aid prepared for peer education among sex workers. It was made by the directing role of Aida Ashenafi while Yemane Gebre-Medhin was composing those photographs. Ashenafi has also produced documentary films for different development aid institutions, including the UN and USAID, mainly focusing on the reproductive health of Ethiopians. Since one of the objectives is to look at the influence of the visual economy in imaging marginalised people, I looked at a product of Mango production made for Save the Children (see Appendix 2).

By exploring processes of image making produced in collaboration with Yemane Gebre-Medhin, these visual aids may be useful to interrogate how representations are contested through collaborative works made for peer education. The social contexts of image making within charities give a wider context to the agency of this institution in producing images of the marginalised. Based on assessment, social workers have identified sex workers’ networks, where they identify that peer education is a better way after training peer educators from these groups. The HIV/AIDS communication framework states that peer education is one of the most effective communication approaches to fight HIV/AIDS (WHO, 2000: 31-32). In Ethiopia sex workers share their day to day challenges, for example, in how they negotiate condom use, within their groups than to any outsiders. Selecting visual aids as major source of materials, the scholarly writings as well as the photographic teaching materials have focused on the narratives of the everyday lives of sex workers based on their vulnerability. This concept assumes that women are exposed to sexually transmitted diseases. Among risk groups STC focuses on women’s role to minimize HIV transmissions. A focus on women came from:

Sex workers are women, waitress are women. Daily labourers are men and women. Truck drivers are also men. So it is like 3 out of 5. But this is not because we say that women are more affected than men. When we assess factors that indicate who is exposed to HIV, we have found group of people. The fact is that women are exposed to HIV because of social and economic reasons, education etc. (VN850054, Interview with a gender expert, Save the Children, 6/08/11).

The above conception seems to articulate two things. One is that the incorporation of images of actual sex workers in the peer education material is because on the concept of their vulnerability. It suggests that providing health care facilities to these women may resolve the degree of HIV transmissions. It gives the theoretical background to the image of HIV/AIDS, sexuality and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD). While both sexes are vulnerable and might have limited access to health care systems, these productions offer access to how gender and sexuality are constructed without neglecting the commodification of images of sex work within the international NGOs. For instance communication guidelines that target the clients of sex workers and daily labourers are missing from the entire project [see *Addis Mela Lehiwot, STC (2011)*]

The assessment focuses on the social status of sex workers, and their social background. The material is prepared based on actual research that participate the community of female sex workers in Addis Ababa.

When we did this teaching material, we first conducted formative assessment. This includes what social background do they have? What social bonds do they have? How are their social networks? What is their value? Why are they doing what they are doing? For instance, if they are sex workers, why and how have they become sex workers? If we are doing on mobility, what sort of health service do they access, how does the service look like? So we did all the assessments. So we realize they have peer to peer network. Then we question why we need this material? First we decided that it has to touch their lives. Otherwise, they won't pay attention. For instance, they have better social network. And since they are women they like more of a story. It will create curiosity. If you know sex workers they get tired of a single story. They like variety. They do not like to just sit together. This is one of the reasons we choose this. Plus we have learnt from experiences of other projects. We have also observed that during various discussions, they usually give examples of their own experience. For instance, if you look at how they negotiate condom use with their clients, they usually mention many things. So we use this method to make them interested. It is why we use true stories. We added pictures because it is eye catching. ----- It is related with their literacy level. They like pictures than written texts (Ibid, 6/08/11)

As noted in the interview, the major themes that were raised as risk factors were mobility, sex work, daily labour and long distance truck driving. Women are the main subjects. Those assessments include their perspectives on their social bonds, networks, and everyday lives.

Social workers who have conducted research influence the scripts by which the photo-essays are produced through this agency. NGOs have a say in a way they construct gender and sexuality in these photographic narratives. These visual events were created based on research that explored factors that expose sex workers as most at risk groups. The procedures were as follows: collecting true stories by social workers, writing scripts based on these stories, and then asking sex workers to perform the act while Yemane Gebre-Medhin was composing each scene under the direction of Aida Ashenafi. One of the photo narratives is that women are more vulnerable than men. Due to their lifestyle, they are exposed to intensive drug use such as chatt, cigarette and alcohol which in turn influence their assertiveness to negotiate on safe sex or use of condom (see Appendix 2).

Aida Ashenafi as a director transformed those NGO narratives into visual narratives that involved commercial sex workers to perform certain activities as their daily lives. As director of Mango Production Company, Aida Ashenafi directed all staged photographic events while Yemane Gebre-Medhin composed and photographed those visual events.

These are purely commercial works to me! It involved real sex workers who are living close to my neighbourhood. It involved their boyfriends who are living not far from here [her house]²⁰. All of the photographs were prepared after they were written like scripts. The first set was about sex workers which uses actual photographs. But in the second work [a work on daily labourers] we had to transform photographs into paintings due to a scandal after one exhibition event that displayed photographs of sex workers. Whether it is produced in the form of painting or photography it is still their representation----- (004, Interview with a Director, 15/ 07/2011)

The above interview clearly indicates the commercial aspect of photographing sex workers. It also shows the problems of publicising documentary photographs of contemporary marginalised society. For comparative purposes only *Addis Mela le-Hiwot*, peer to peer education material for sex workers is discussed in this section. In these materials gender and vulnerability are given an equal emphasis. Rather than sex workers as active agents of HIV/AIDS, we see changing images of men as clients or boyfriends becoming agents of sexually transmitted disease including HIV/AIDS. Some of these educational

²⁰ See appendix 2 to view some photographs

materials portray their partners cheating on them and clients persuading sex workers to practice unsafe sex (see Appendix 2). This participatory photography is thus an accurate representation of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other STDS.

In order to mitigate the challenges of collaborative works used as a methodological approach, Gottesman employed another approach which was picturing an orphan. His works provide an alternative means of presenting the consequences of the pandemic. Through a case study explored over a decade, Gottesman visually narrates the long term psycho - social and economic impacts of HIV/AIDS on an orphan. For this reason Gottesman creates art works with grants rather than commissions for print media or NGOs.

I was learning and teaching at the same time. I was introducing kids who were not used to using photography as a medium; introducing to them— but not in a technical way---not that staff. -----Artistically I was not interested in the camera as a machine or mechanism. I was more interested in introducing it as useful tool for them. I was interested in what are collaboration together with them in terms of producing alternatives about----different kinds of image, not just HIV but about their lives and about how HIV affected their lives and how other things- psychological problems--- you know poverty, disease, grief, --- being an orphan and all these different things affected these kids (Interview with Gottesman, 11/10/2011).

It provides an insight into artists' use of metaphor and performance to create and rework ethically appropriate visual languages by critically exposing the vicious circle of HIV/AIDS, that is, the failure of mitigating its long term impacts on an HIV orphan.

‘We Cheat Each Other: A Portrait of Selam ’:

This project is a decade-long portrait of a young Ethiopian girl affected by HIV/AIDS. She was born Ruth Alemu but she has many names: Ruth, Selam, Beti, Meron, Nefsua. She was begging on the streets when she was four, six when her mother died, seven when she changed her name to Selam, nine when I met her. Her sister, Yamrot, and she were left to take care of each other. They have no place to stay after their mother died, so they stayed in the hospital. The nurses took care of them. It was two years before they found a place to stay with a foster mother, Hiwot. Latter she left her sister a phone number ----the other girls in the brothel call her, Meron, (artist statement, an e-mail correspondent with the artist, 2011)

Artists are independently engaged in exploring the realities of such deadly diseases that may go beyond the political economy of the disease. Gottesman’s participatory photography work can provide the situations of HIV/AIDS affected individuals over longer period of time. As “truthful messenger(s)” (Galman, 2009), the photographer visualises critical thinking about the impacts of the disease. Most of the photographs are dramatized and thus are different from documentary work. “In the future I want to be an actress” (figure 49), for instance, casts Selam as a pregnant woman showing her desire in what she wants to be in the future. She performed such imagery when she was a teenager. “With this I quit my memory” (figure 59) uses the written text and photographs based on letters and pictures used to support these orphans to come to terms with trauma.

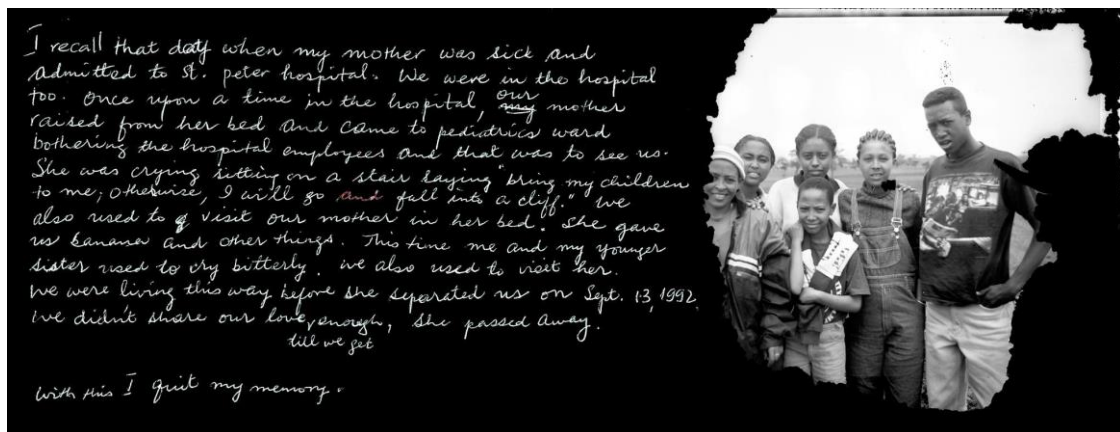


Figure 59: *With this I quit my memory*, 50.8cm X 60.96 cm, Inkjet, 1999 © Eric Gottesman



Figure 60: *In the Future I Want to be an Actress*, Silver Print, 2000 © Eric Gottesman



Figure 61: *When I Grow Up I want to have two Kids*, 50.8cm x 60.96cm, Silver Print, 2000 © Eric Gottesman



Figure 62: *Selam as Meron*, C-Print, 2007 © Eric Gottesman

The above portrait of 'Selam as Meron' represents the change in her name since she has started to work as a prostitute in a bar. In so doing the work highlights the long term consequences of being an orphan due to HIV/AIDS.

Humanist approaches in exploring ethically appropriate alternative means of visualizing the disease and PLWA are developing (Bleiker, 2007). Alternative means of visualizing PLWA in Ethiopia was first initiated by an American artist, Eric Gottesman in 2000 (Interview with Gottesman, 11/10/2011). His initial photographic works about PLWA present the back part of a fully covered body due to stigma and discrimination associated with disclosing one's own HIV status in Ethiopia. Gottesman noted that participatory photography is unique because

--I am involved in them. But I also think that I am changed by them. You know some of these projects have different paths. I mean in somebody's project you have an organisation deciding this is an issue we want to tackle and rather than us [photographers] taking these images they are going to say this is what we like. They are going to give a camera to them [community] and have them tell us what it is like. But then the organisation takes the images, and edits them and decides what is like to be the picture say and then what they would say and coup what the pictures say. So this is something that I am really careful about. I do not want to coup the voice of the people that I am working with (Interview with Eric Gottesman, 11/10/2011).

The above interview suggests that understanding collaborative works includes looking at the ways in which the photographer expresses the voices of children. It puts forward that participatory projects initiated by independent photographers are a better way to engage more with multiple voices. It also indicates that the artist as catalyst facilitates to liberate the voices of others that would have been silenced by the visual economy. It also outlines the challenges of working with other organisations. In the case of commissioned works, thus, the photographic practice is dealing with predetermined agendas that affect the exploratory nature of the photographic practice that otherwise would have been determined by the situation. It also involves dealing with rules and guidelines to such an extent that photo narratives are determined by priorities of institutions. Charity organisations can alter the meanings of images by editing, cutting and cropping.

I guess what I want them to understand is that I think is that people affected by HIV/ AIDS have much more complicated issues than the images of the visual economy offers. And so for instance one of the works I have been exhibiting in the US is that every show that I am having is focused on one person. I just had a show about a boy named Tinsaye. I guess it's our work but also work created with the community installed in the middle of the circle that I constructed. For instance, that—focusing on one person personalizes the whole thing to one individual person. And within that show there are many different images that that person

expresses. I also -----I am interested in how a community project works and evolves over time (Interview with Gottesman, 11/10/2011).

Affected children were also pictured in participatory photography that negated earlier ways of representing the human body (figure 55 figure 62). For artists and activists like Gottesman, trauma and associated family loss as well as long term consequences on affected young children explored the after-effects of the disease. He was particularly interested in the camera as a therapeutic tool for orphans.

---as the very beginning, I was learning and teaching and then I sort of like become personal historian to the kids I was working with. Even the kids asked me some of the things that happened in their lives that they have told me but they do not necessarily remember for whatever reason, for trauma or because they just forgot--- but artistically I was not interested in the camera as a machine or mechanism. I was more interested in introducing it as useful tool for them—to explore not just HIV but about their lives and about how HIV affected their lives and how other things—you know psychological problems--- you know poverty, disease, grief, being an orphan and all these different things affected these kids (Interview with Gottesman, 11/10/2011).

The vicious circle of the disease leaving orphans in destitution as street children (figure 59) and sex workers (figure 62) signifies the link between poverty and the lack of a sufficient support system for orphans. Through case studies of orphaned individuals Gottesman's work conceptualises the disease beyond the stereotypical representations of HIV/AIDS in Africa. It provides an insight into the artist's use of metaphor and performance to create and rework ethically appropriate visual languages developed over longer period of time. The works of Gottesman, therefore, are an alternative visualisation of people affected by the disease in Ethiopia that gives critical insights to the failures of HIV/AIDS initiatives in safeguarding the lives of some orphans.

Micheal Tsegaye's work is rather different. It emanated from considering sex workers as not so different from the rest of the women. Like anyone they may have partners, children or parents with whom they socialise and support financially. They also have other social ties within and outside. Tsegaye's working girls photos have explored the livelihoods of sex workers in Addis Ababa and been exhibited in Bamako in 2011 and in Paris in 2011. His interest in 'working girls' emanates from his accidental encounter with groups of sex workers in the Gurage Sodo of the Southern Ethiopia.

-----I saw the ladies washing their hands and faces outside. They had hangover. I spoke to them first then they take me to their rooms. I stayed with them for two weeks and started taking pictures of their lives. It was more to know them! To see how they live! Then I showed some samples on an exhibition. Expat community commented that I should work more on this subject since it's a very sensitive subject. I then composed a second set of work in Addis Ababa, merkato area. ----the way they live is amazing. Life is very difficult. And yet they have their own social relations. They have boyfriends. They are loyal. If she says that she has work, he understands! He won't come! But, if she has money, they will stay together for almost a month. They would rent a house and they live together. There is amazing dynamics in their lives. It is difficult to show all that dynamics in this project ----- (Interview with Micheal Tsegaye, 23/06/2011)

The 'working girls' series depict prostitutes in their living space. As part of the everyday, his series conveys humanity in desperate living situations. Rather than producing the image of a prostitute in public spaces, such as in streets and bars, his works reveal their social ties, and interactions shot in one of the most poverty ridden neighbourhoods of Addis Ababa near *Merkato*. The largest nationwide bus station is located in this area. There is a high level of mobility because it is a business centre. It is the first place at which rural destitute arrive and settle in to engage in sex work. It is, therefore, a contact zone where different parts of community may have business and other social interactions, including transactional sex. Yet in the midst of chaotic living standards, Michael Tsegaye composes a photo-essay that portrays solidarities and support structures among these groups.



Figure 63: From *Working Girls Series*, Exhibition in Paris, 2011 © Micheal Tsegaye

-----these are not sentimental images of suffering. Instead, the poetry of the image lies with the fact that it reveals hidden moments of human solidarity and humour. Thus, by making that which we take for granted less visible Tsegaye's photography highlights the secret gestures of his protagonists. But in so doing the photograph actually offers evidence of the inner spirit of the people as well as the objects rendered (Zelege and Coetzee, 2011:3).

If previous scholarly writings have shown the relationship of poverty and sex work, the photo-essay visualises the living spaces of lower class²¹ prostitutes characterised in an over populated room with no electricity. Sex workers are not portrayed in seductive poses. They are rather portrayed as urban destitute who inhabit filthy households. In Tsegaye's work, the private and the public aspects of sex workers merge in the image. Readers access the private and public aspects of these women which would have been available due to the secrecy of sex workers in exposing their way of lives.

²¹ In Addis Ababa, there are different groups of sex workers. Tsegaye's photographic works only covers lower class sex worker. He does not cover photographic works of 'upper class' prostitutes, street prostitutes or those who work in a bar.



Figure 64: From *Working Girls Series*, Exhibition in Paris, 2011© Micheal Tsegaye

The photographs have received both positive and negative responses. An online magazine called Tadias Magazine has circulated the images. For most of Ethiopian audiences, exhibiting such works in cities like Paris is shameful, as it creates a negative image. Such public opinion prefers excluding sex workers from visual narratives. Other groups of respondents, however, found such imagery rather sentimental since most of the work focuses on the intimate lives of sex workers at home than in a street or bar scene. They further commented on exploring ‘red light’ districts in historically well-known cities in different parts of Ethiopia such as Gondor²².

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has identified that most of commissioned works of local freelance photographers are reactions to stereotypical images of food aid and HIV/AIDS relief works. These photographers speak back to the dominant image productions about Ethiopians or ‘Third World’ women who were captured stretching their hands to receive aid (see chapter 2, pg. 39-42). Such food aid distribution as specific visual events is pictured and circulated through the agency of charity organisations and the international media.

²² For detailed viewers’ comments visit <http://www.tadias.com/09/16/2011/addis-ababas-red-light-district-q-a-with-photographer-michael-tsegaye/> last accessed at 16/02/2013.

I have argued that Ethiopian photographers who were commissioned to image food aid are able to incorporate portrayals of the cultural landscape, despite the fact that photo-essays are the outcomes of NGO's influence of visual events. Most of the works reflect the negotiations and contestations of Ethiopian freelance photographers in picturing people in urgent social needs. Though three of the photographers have gone to drought affected areas and refugee centres, at the same time, what they capture in the visual field is individualistic and reflect photographers ability in creating alternative visualisations. Chapter 5 also invigorates the theoretical framing in addressing whether the photographic medium can be an experimental zone or just a means to an end for fund raising (see chapter 3, pg. 42). In Ethiopia the research shows that some photographers are successfully reworking food aid imagery and the image of sex workers in relation to STDs and HIV/AIDS.

Influenced by the long standing critique of famine images of Ethiopia symbolised by the vulnerable mother and child, we now see more images of women composed in relation to their cultural and social contexts. In the case of farming and drought situations, some of the photographers have moved into imaging the landscape while farmers are explaining their situation. A significant difference is noted on the agency of institutions that commission images of development activities through relief works. Ethiopia's dependency on western aid to react against food insecurity is highlighted. Affected male individuals are pictured as active participants who have the capability of controlling food distributions within the community. Women are rather composed after they have received cooking oil and some grains. The landscape of drought situations is pictured not by employing a minimalist technique of picturing a stretched hand but by juxtaposing images of other living things that are resistant to changing environment situations.

In picturing health issues such as HIV/AIDS most of the photo-essays are determined by their intended uses. In the NGO setting, at least in Save the Children, photographic images of women, particularly sex workers are still used as currency to generate funding for AIDS relief works (see STC, 2006). Rather than constructing HIV affected individuals as symbols of 'deadly disease', these freelance photographers compose images showing individuals positively fighting back for survival. I have explored how freelance photographers contest and negotiate representations of people affected by drought and HIV/AIDS. The imaging of people in urgent social conditions is changing because most of these images are commissioned by western development aid organisations. Collaboration is becoming a buzz word through which the agency of a photographer, as well as the agency of the photographic

image, is neglected in the discourse of imaging marginalized people. These changing images are happening due to the agency of local freelance photographers.

A complete understanding of the practice of picturing demands from a focus on visual field to understanding processes that affect visual events. Despite the role of institutions in setting up photographic events, these photographers have the ability to alter the main subject of the photograph. As discussed in the last section the independent works of Micheal Tsegaye and Eric Gottesman are critiques of the silencing of sex workers. While Tsegaye has exposed the living conditions of lower class sex workers in Addis Ababa as urban destitutes, Gottesman provides a decade-long visual journey about a sex worker. He provides a case study about an orphan working as sex worker as a long term consequence of HIV/AIDS. In such a way the works are critiques of donor driven policy formulations in mitigating the long term socio-economic consequences of the disease. Instead of adopting a generalised view that claims third world photographers are creating alternative narratives, it broaden our understanding by raising a key issue with regard to whom an image is made. I have also argued that independent projects are better practices of picturing since they are able to represent the voices of affected individuals that could have been erased by the visual economy and agency of charity organisations.

The next chapter explores photographer's agency as they engage with independent projects. The power of the photographic image cannot be erased in gallery and museum where the spaces acknowledge the work of art as a display of ideas through a relation of image and word. Most of their independent works explore the everyday, work portraits, leisure, national identities and emblems. The next chapter compares some of the works of photographers that were circulated in exhibitions, catalogue, books, and magazine.

Chapter Six

6. Comparative Analysis of Contemporary Photographs of Other Everyday Lives in Exhibition Spaces

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I focus on Ethiopian freelance photographers' uses of exhibition spaces for contesting narratives about women and girls. It goes back to one of the key research question raised in chapter one, that is, how are dominant representations in the mainstream media contested in the documentary works of Ethiopian photographers? It discusses the agency of freelance photographers in picturing the everyday. It is organised in order to respond to one of the key question of the thesis which compares representative practices in independent projects with commissioned works outlined in chapter five. Independent works use exhibition spaces as an alternative means of circulation.

As an Ethiopian I do not need to make images of poverty only. For example I have produced images of development and urban transformations in Addis Ababa (Micheal Tsegaye, Interview with the photographer, 01/07/2011).

This chapter addresses how Ethiopian freelance photographers challenge negative photographic representations of Ethiopians using independent projects. At a time when the documentary photography is becoming less popular in the gallery spaces of the global North, photographers from Africa and the global South are producing this genre, and participating in biennales and festivals. The focus of this chapter is on the works of Aida Muluneh, Antonio Fiorente and Micheal Tsegaye in gallery spaces. I consider their independent projects in the form of exhibition catalogues and publications. These photographic images are important because most discourses of modernity have ignored that people inhabiting the global South have their own agency and voice in representing their own people, especially in picturing the everyday (see Escobar, 2004; Wolde-Ghiorgis, 2010).

Picturing everyday lives oscillates between Rigg's (2007) idea about factors that affect the everyday activities of people living in the global South (see, chapter 4, pg. 108), and Hayes's (2009) critique of the approach of a South African photographer, Santu Mofokeng, to picturing the everyday. As discussed in chapter 5, none of the Ethiopian photographers have solely focused on drought and famine, and have used the exhibition space

for displaying such materials. Hayes analyses Mefokeng's idea of picturing daily life 'that means nothing and everything' (Hayes, 2009: 41). She thematically organised Mefokeng's photo-essays into narratives, including pictures of humans juxtaposed with inanimate objects. She acknowledges Mefokeng's work, since it includes the invisibles of everyday lives and visualises abstract concepts such as spirituality. He made such imagery at a time when other photographers were imaging atrocities during apartheid era. One of her criticisms was that the dark side of apartheid should be visualized as 'the horror of the everyday' (Hayes, 2009:42). She objects to negligence in picturing the brutality of apartheid on local South Africans as part of an experience of the everyday. In a similar fashion, independent projects of Ethiopian photographers mainly focus on exploring contesting narratives about the landscape and people of Ethiopia as the invisibles of the everyday.

In a similar fashion in independent projects Ethiopian freelance photographers mainly focus on exploring contesting narratives about the landscape and people of Ethiopia as the invisibles of the everyday. These photographers negate the idea of focusing only imaging the poor. On his website Fiorente noted that

There is so much beauty in everyday moments and everyday people. With over 80 different peoples in Ethiopia the magnificent and richness of each tradition, I beg to differ when this nation is labelled as 'poor'. While Western media parade Ethiopia's poverty & bombard us with greatness of Western living, I choose to portray the other side (Fiorente, 2004)

From the nude to over sexualised images (see chapter 4), and 1984/85 famine images, most of Ethiopia's photographic representation by the western photographers is about creating sympathy and pity specifically in picturing food aid (see chapter 2 and chapter 5). The former was ideologically driven to legitimise sympathy for the military advances of the Italians. The latter constructs the notion of the historical hegemony of the global North and the idea that, without collaborative western aid, the global South hinders its own progress and self-sufficiency. Ethiopian freelance photographers are aware of the visual stereotypes by which the West imagines itself in relation to the non-West. The photographers are aware that picturing images of poverty only is out of favour in Ethiopia. Their independent work often explores other narratives and uses distinct styles to picture the everyday.

This chapter addresses the relevance of representations after the 'aesthetics turn' (Ranciere, 2004), 'spatial turn' and 'materiality turn' (Edwards, 2003). Transformations of exhibitions from spaces of displaying an aesthetic object to where new narratives could be

contested (Ranciere, 2004) lead us to raise critical questions about the photographers and the curator's roles in exhibiting gender and representations. Reflecting back to the 'cultural turn' (Claval et.al, 2003), I ask whether drama or performance (Butler & Saleh, 2006) helps to unsettle the acts of representation by a photographer and by a curator.

It includes a range of analysis from a single photographic composition by a photographer to its careful placement among other photographic exhibits by a curator (Taylor, 2005). It includes the movement of pictures from concentric circles at the national level to their placement in the global photographic discourses in 'concept exhibition'. The photographic representations of the everyday require going beyond the photograph as material object and placing it within the cultural and historical contexts of image making. It addresses the exhibition space as an alternative mode of circulation. Focusing on intersections of representations of people and places, I interrogate representations of Ethiopians by other Ethiopians.

Antonio Fiorente, Micheal Tsegaye and Aida Muluneh participated in exhibitions held to 'reconstruct' images of Ethiopia through their own individual styles. Some works of Aida Muluneh, Antonio Fiorente and Micheal Tsegaye have been in circulation in exhibitions held in different cities such as Addis Ababa (2011, 2008, 2006), Bamako (2001, 2003, 2009), Paris, New York (2006), and Venice (2011). These exhibits range from single photographs to photo-essays that do not fall into the categories of snapshots. In contrast to Batchen's (2009) idea of snapshots as challenges to the claims of art historians, Shapiro and Opondo (2012) make a distinction between snapshots and professional photographic works, since the latter includes the photographer's deliberate compositions. Nowadays an amateur photographer is accredited for being there when a specific event takes place, while the professional photographer is acknowledged for knowing the grammar of visual language much better than the amateur photographer. Using this knowledge, photo-essayists become authors of visual stories in totality. This chapter discusses the meanings of a photograph, its placement in photo-stories and deliberate montage of photographs in exhibition spaces to create contesting narratives as opposed to a master narrative. These narratives span identity issues up to the personal, including photographs of private and quasi-private and public spaces of individuals. Taken together the images explore the everyday lives of people who reside in different parts of Ethiopia.

Exhibition spaces as urban spaces focus on the importance of individual styles in diversifying narratives. Popular photography festivals such as the Bamako, Venice and Paris

Biennales have recently created a dialogue for photography in Africa. Neither Afro-centric nor Euro-centric in perspective, the postcolonial space of exhibitions treat photographic objects equally. This object centrism, however, requires further discussion, as the documentary genre possesses authority about who can speak on behalf of everyday people in a society [see Solomon-Gideau, (2010) on the specificity of the documentary genre]. Focusing on the role of elites, I discuss the ways in which women or men as subjects, that is, as photographers, matter in picturing or representing other women and girls. This theme is significant since curatorial works in big art centres are often dominated by works of prestigious male artists suspended by networks of dealers (Taylor, 2005). What thematic narratives do these photographers choose in the 'visual field'? I also posit a question in relation to the way gender and images of female bodies have been placed in the writings of the photographic image within the space of contemporary museum and the 'white cube' space of modern galleries.

Photographic images as constructs resonate in relation to the 'self' and the 'other', whether the 'self' is a 'mirror' of the 'other' (Meyer, 2009), in casting out the unwanted self into the other, or incorporating positive values to the self (Blunt and McEwan, 2002). The visual materials in postcolonial and postmodernist spaces are often regarded as 'multi-cultural perspectives' (Pultz, 1995: 149). The modernist approaches that claim realism have objectified female bodies in the genre of documentary photography. The 'post-modernist-modernist' perspective from the artists' point of view includes invigorating vernacular visual languages and figures while creating a new image.

Such a view often encapsulates the practices of picturing within the conscious & deliberate constructs of visual materials [see curatorial works of Simon (Njami, 2010; Enwezor, 2006). These individuals have played a significant role in exhibiting works of African photographers, particularly in Europe and the United States. Their exhibition narratives are extensions of what is already happening in different cities and exhibition venues of Africa. They contextualise some of the works beyond local narratives by placing them in global conceptual and discursive practices. Simon Njami is a Swiss Cameroonian, essayist, art critic and lecturer. He is a well-known curator who introduces photographs from Africa in to exhibition venues of Europe (Njami, 2010). Njami also co-curated the Bamako photographic festivals. Enwezor is important figure who develop concepts about the genre of photo art and documentary photographic works by African photographers and African

Diaspora. They place some of these works in the international discourses particularly under the New York photography Institute, United States (Enwezor, 2006; Njami, 2010).

Focusing on photographs that move into different galleries and exhibition spaces, this chapter is organised into five sections. The first section provides an overview of exhibition spaces and its uses in Ethiopia, particularly Addis Ababa. In most cases photographic works are displayed along with other paintings in galleries and museums in Addis Ababa. It outlines exhibition venues in Addis Ababa while introducing the coming in of photographic narratives as in alternative exhibitions. The next section discusses one of the least explored forms of representation, that is, work portraits in Ethiopia. An exploration of work portraits is relevant because it may give us some insights into the voices of working class individuals as opposed to images that capture women and girls as they stretch out their hands to receive food aid. This is followed by other themes such as leisure. The last section deals with men and women as subjects in picturing other women and girls. Contemporary exhibitions that showcase African photographers' in Dakar, Bamako, Cape Town and Addis Ababa speak back to previous representations of Africans as natives and as poor.

6.2. Exhibition Venues and Galleries in Ethiopia

As a ‘developing country’ in sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopia has a limited number of exhibition venues. Most of its art galleries, museums and studios are clustered in Addis Ababa. These venues are located in major city areas near the Piazza, Arat Killo, Sidist Killo and Bole Road. These spaces range from commercial galleries and museums to hotels and open air festivals. Currently, there are 24 commercial galleries registered in Ethiopia’s yellow pages. They mainly exhibit art works since the majority of Ethiopian artists are painters. From my observations during fieldwork period, there were few new commercial galleries that sale mainly of paintings.

Nagi et.al (2007) gives accounts of different galleries in Ethiopia displaying oil on canvas works. Nagi’s exploration includes the then galleries owned by an individual or a group of contemporary artists in Addis Ababa. She has identified that the form of art that dominates Ethiopia’s visual culture is painting. Most of the galleries in Addis Ababa might be owned by a group of contemporary artists who share the studio and gallery space. Only a few of these artists could afford to own an independent gallery space. From my experience, there is no constant number of galleries in Ethiopia since they may close due to financial strains. Art promoters often use halls located in bigger hotels such as Taitu, Hilton and Sheraton hotels. Other recent exhibition venues include the National theatre, Atelier gallery, Tomoka and Institute of Ethiopian Studies Museum.

The majority of artists are not connected to international funding organisations which develop their galleries as successful institutions, or as venue for academics, business, education and entertainment purposes. Independent artists, as well as a few curators depend on grants and funds. ‘We are still depending on the financial support obtained from foreign cultural institutions and embassies’ (Interview with Aida Muluneh, 24/8/2011). Most of the individual artists do not have sufficient networks with the outside world to supplement arts workshop. Over the past five years, the capital city has undergone infrastructural transformations in terms of news roads and high-rise blocks. New buildings that replaced some of the old neighbourhoods of Addis Ababa are transforming the scenery of the cityscape. Displacement and relocations are some of the city’s features. To locate existing galleries can be tiresome since they may be constantly on the move.

The trend of displaying arts became popular with the increasing number of graduates from Alle School of Fine Arts and Design in 1958. The school is now the Skunder

Boghossian College of Performing and Visual Arts of Addis Ababa University.²³

Photography as a discipline did not flourish in Ethiopia since there was no department within Alle School of Fine Arts. Photography is considered a supplement to the Graphics and Design Department in the Alle School of Fine Arts and Design. There are also limited scholarly works about historical images of Ethiopia, even among Ethiopian historians. Bahru Zewde (2007) has explored the use of photography for illustrating historical facts. Travel pictures are often published and are widely circulated. Internationally Ethiopia's church paintings are recognized as vernacular visual art. Many scholars who are based in different academic institutions and universities in the West have contributed to the study of church paintings. As advocated initially by Richard Pankhurst, these paintings were in the public sphere in the early study of Ethiopia's modern and traditional arts (Bekele, 2007). In Ethiopia photography began to be showcased in galleries and museums much later since the discipline had not developed along with other forms of art such as painting or sculpture.

From photojournalism to aesthetics photography or photo art, photography as a discipline has not yet developed fully through formal training in Ethiopia. There is no college or university with a photography specialisation. The common trend is that photographers have promoters and curators who showcase their works in gallery and museum spaces along with other works of art. There is no agency to promote the works of Ethiopian photographers. Even some of the advertising institutes based in Addis Ababa rely on stock photography such as Getty images and istock. Geta Mekonnen argued that factors such as a slow online banking system and the inefficient use of the cyber-space by Ethiopian photographers may hinder their participation in using cyberspace for displaying and selling images (Mekonnen, 2009). It is no wonder, therefore, that there is no gallery or museum that is solely dedicated to exhibiting photography. Even Antonio Fiorente, who was at some point a photojournalist for Associated Press, had to send his works to an agency based in Nairobi, Kenya (Interview with Fiorente, 1/08/2011).

You may see some photos exhibited in some galleries---may be at Makush or at Asni, or here [Atelier gallery] or wherever the other galleries are in the city but we need to create a place for that [for photography] ----a photo agency. -----We don't have photo agency here. That would make a difference! People need to know where to go to get photography (VN850005, Interview with a curator and owner of Atelier gallery in A.A, Leo Lefort, 17/06/2011).

²³ For further history of the institute see Addis Ababa University's web page at <http://www.aau.edu.et/index.php/fine-arts-overview>, last accessed at 16/01/2013.

Despite the fact that there are a few photography training centres in Addis Ababa, they are yet to produce professional photographers who manage to break into global photographic circles. Most of them are hired camera men who work in studio spaces. (VN850009, Interview with owner of Masters Photography training centre, 11/08/2011). There are, however, a good number of photo studios and other galleries that display art works including photography. Curators like Leo Lefort, who has been working as instructor and curator in Addis Ababa for over 12 years, believes that there is enough space for exhibition in Addis Ababa. Exhibition spaces flourished in the 1990s with the coming of foreign professionals who developed cultural exchange centres (Bekele, 1995).

Among the earliest institutions that support local artists are the Alliance Francaise, Goethe institute and Gebre-Kirstos Desta Art Centre, the British Council, the Italian Cultural Centre and the Russian Cultural Centre. Since Ethiopia was under a socialist regime or the Derge in 1974 – 1991, there was no support for private gallery ownership. As a result there were few spaces owned by the government, and they often displayed art for political purposes. The majority of photography and film production had to be undertaken under a government owned Film Corporation (Interview with Abebe Kesela, Former Manager of Broadcasting Unit of Ethiopia's Radio and Television Service, 18/08/2011).

Exhibitions in Ethiopia may have used the work of foreign photographers and travellers' accounts in exhibiting museum's acquisitions of material objects or collections. Such materials were only used as historical documents. At the National Museum, there have been cases where they displayed material culture or collections of costumes of royal dignitaries accompanying photographs that contextualise its collections and acquisitions (Interview with Aynalem Memiru, acting curator of the National Museum, 22/07/11). Other historical museums such as The Red Terror Martyrs Memorial Museum, constructed recently to commemorate victims of the Red Terror in Ethiopia, often use historical photographs to narrate the brutality of the Derg regime. Addis Ababa City Municipality museum exhibits collections of portraits of important dignitaries including governors of Addis Ababa since the reign of Emperor Minelik II (r. 1889 - 1913). The first solo photographic exhibition showcased at the national museum was Antonio Fiorente's 'The Beauty of Diversity', a photographic exhibition curated by Leo Lefort in 2006.

There are gallerists, curators and scholars who are active in creating 'concept exhibition' where photographs are juxtaposed to express ideas. The majority of curators are

women. From government owned institutions to privately run galleries, women dominate in promoting Ethiopian artists. Practitioners from different disciplines include Elizabeth Wolde Ghiorgis, Konjit Seyoum, Meskerem Asegid of Zoma Art Gallery and Lilly Sahle of Lella Gallery. The three major museums namely, the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Musuem, the Gebre-Kirstos Desta Modern Art Musuem and the National Museum have women curators. Elizabeth Wolde Ghiorgis is currently overseeing exhibition spaces of Alle Fine Art School, IES' museum and Gebre Kirstos Desta Modern Art Centre. Aynalem Memiru is acting curator at the National Museum while Aida Muluneh was the director of Gebre Kiristos Desta Centre until 2012. Even though I do not have statistics on the number of male and female artists, recent developments show increasing numbers of female artists. In 2013 forty Ethiopian women artists organised a group show in Lafto gallery in Addis Ababa.

Addis Foto Fest of 2009 and 2011, an international photography exhibition in Addis Ababa, have used exhibition venues around the city. The festival is dedicated to bringing together internationally renowned African and African Diaspora photographers. The only exhibition that showcased photographic works to create dialogue among different professional photographers is *Addis Foto Fest* organised by Aida Muluneh through Desta for Africa private limited company. There are only few curators, collectors and dealers who invest their capital in photography in Ethiopia.

Contemporary artists often showcase their works in galleries of international cultural centres, and in commercial and public galleries. With the exception of a few galleries, the cultural sector including main exhibition spaces have not undergone through changes, for example, on contextualising and recasting their collections, unlike other African countries such as South Africa, Namibia, Nigeria and Kenya. Visual narratives that are backed by research are missing in spaces of contemporary exhibitions. Even the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Museum is used to displaying dioramas without contextualising its acquisitions or histories of suppressions.

What is lacking in Addis Ababa is a major national art gallery that could possibly commission local artists' works. Like many African countries, there are not enough resources for art work. The majority of artists are painters, with few of them producing mixed media. There has been little interest in photographic works partly because there is no market for aesthetic photography in different gallery spaces. With the opening up of the Gebre-Kirstos Desta Art Centre as part of the Geothe Cultural Centre, Addis Ababa is becoming one of the

most important exhibition venues to develop an internationally renowned festival similar to the festival in Bamako. Other potential developments include a promising international gallery that is going to be built in different cities across Africa including Addis Ababa. The aim of this international gallery, named *City Pavilions and Visionary Africa*, is to explore culture as an asset for artistic development in Africa. Run in Brussels, this project has finalised the architectural plans (Adjaye, 2010).

The trend of showcasing art works including photography is related to audiences. There are a limited number of communities who are interested in attending exhibitions in Addis Ababa. With the exception of the art community, the majority of the city dwellers of Addis Ababa have not yet developed a culture of going into galleries to view contemporary works. This has to do with the practice of exhibiting paintings that are usually regarded as high art, intelligible only to a few urban intellectuals or interest groups. In recent developments, photography and cinematography have appealed to a wider public, since viewers can easily understand their messages.

A curatorial practice in Addis Ababa is that each curator showcases limited numbers of contemporary artists who they promote both at the national and international level. Unfortunately, in a country where more than 80% of the artistic communities are painters, there is little acknowledgment of photography in the arts. 'People don't buy artistic photography' (VN850005, Interview with Leo Lefort, 17/06/2011). Discussions about professionalising photography in Addis Ababa started in 1988 (EPA, 1988). The then director of Art School, Abdurrahman Sherif, argues that since photography demands technological equipment, it is only given as a supplement to graphic art students (EPA, 1988). So far, Michael Tsegaye is the only internationally well-known photographer who has trained within Alle School of Fine Arts, though his training was in painting (Bekele, Director of Alle College of Fine Art and Design, 09/08/2011). Prior to the coming of a socialist regime in 1974, there was not many photo narratives on display in exhibition spaces, with the exception of posters used for propaganda purposes. Until recently, 'concept exhibitions' have not been presented in the galleries of Addis Ababa. Leo Lefort often incorporates the work of few photographers to create narratives. 'I do not like the pure effect of [realist] image. I don't care for beautiful images. For me it is beyond beauty--- meanings' (Interview with Leo Lefort, 17/06/2011).

So far Lefort has used the works of Antonio Fiorente, Aida Muluneh, and Micheal Tsegaye. He has also used some works of Dawit Geresu, who produces a mixed media of photography and drawings. Looking back to the history of contemporary Ethiopian photographers in the international scene, only first three artists participate as independent photographers.

Global exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale, Paris Photography exhibition, Bamako exhibition festival, and Addis Ababa international festival are now inviting African and African Diaspora photographers. Photographic festivals held in African cities are believed to counter balance the historical dominations of major exhibition venues such as Venice and New York.

The process of globalization in the realm of contemporary art has been manifested in the proliferation of biennale exhibitions, disrupting the old geographical hegemonies of the big art centres and revealing the multifaceted, disjunctive order of the new global art space (Enwesor, 2007)

The global and the local exhibition spaces as urban spaces have interconnections through history. Photographic exhibitions of 19th century museum and gallery spaces had constructed the identity of race and class in connection to the non-European world. Since the mid-19th century, those exhibitions have combined education, commerce and entertainment to attract spectators. Be it in Great Britain or in the United States, these great exhibitions were used in state formations by tracing modernity in relation to constructing their own identity (Maxwell, 1999). Major exhibition works that took place in Great Britain were even using live native bodies from non-western countries. These exhibitions that took place in London, then in Paris and New York, were displays to legitimize that imperialism and colonialism are expansions of civility to savage and barbaric world (Maxwell, 1999). These museums are destined to play significant role in creating dialogue for inter-textualities of ‘words and things’ (Bennet, 2004: 177). Those grand museum spaces, before the emergence of non-European capitals as major exhibition venues, have played a role in identity formations, and in creating a sense of nationhood among Europeans, while at the same time inculcating the science of marginality and backwardness to the non-European communities (Bennet, 2004; Campbell et.al, 2011).

The savage, backward, pre-modern visual narratives about non-Europeans are still contested and reinterpreted as reflections between Europeans and non-Europeans (Meyer,

2009; Enwezor, 2006). Southern artists are still struggling with historical power structures that dominate the availability of resources, such as funding for independent projects (Bajorek and Haney, 2010). Photography festivals in Africa are viewed as spaces for multi-nationalism such as Bamako photographic festivals since 1994. It has also enhanced the photographic dialogue in the continent, particularly in response to stereotypes such as Africa as land of poverty (Interview with Aida Muluneh, 23/11/2011).

The arguments about the opportunities and challenges facing such festivals are twofold. On the one hand they promote and bring together different photographers, enabling them to popularize their work. These photographers would have otherwise only been known at a national level. There has been a concern with how to involve emerging photographers since the Biennale is repeatedly showing work produced by well established artists. The French commission this Biennale and participants complain that even gallery spaces are driven by donors whose main focus is on development (Bajorek and Honey, 2010). *Addis Foto Fest* in Addis Ababa is also the target of similar criticism because the majority of participating artists are well established international photographers rather than emerging artists from Ethiopia. They are also facing financial challenges because they depend on international funds due to lack of sufficient financial and material resources at the national level. Such difficulties meant that creativity and the displaying of ideas through exhibitions are also part of the global funding system in both global North and global South.

In cities as different as Lagos and Lubumbashi, Abidjan and Algiers, Johannesburg and Addis, initiatives are being devised with a focus on platforms for discourse, overtures to local audiences, and the cultivation of new markets, without which the prospects for new forms of presentation remain limited (Bajorek and Haney, 2010: 3).

In Ethiopia displaying artistic photography in gallery and museum spaces has a different history. Unlike the western traditions, there are no nude art representations in galleries. Duncan (1995: 113) criticised the permanent collections of art museums in big cities. Citing the works of great artists such as Picasso, and Kooning, she makes a point that the emphasis on the profile of an artist has reduced female bodies such as the nude prostitutes either in full or in part into a material object without contextualising the works. They are often pictured as victims of a gaze and not as speakers (Duncan, 1993). Much later in 2005 Taylor highlights the imbalance of male to female attendees in cultural spaces, including galleries of the metropolis, calling it ‘mechopolis’. In Ethiopia, the nude is usually equated with sexuality and, therefore, displays of nudes in public spaces are considered as acultural where children come

to view the art object (Interview with Aynalem Memiru, 22/07/11). For instance, Elias Areda who painted a nude prostitute after exploring the lives of sex workers and their clients in the Piazza, Arada area, had to take down his show from the gallery of the National Museum (Interview with Elias Areda, 2008). Similarly Biniam Mengesha's photographic works of the nude body of women were condemned because audiences regarded his works as shameful acts since Ethiopia's society makes a distinction between the private and public in displaying representations of bodies in the National Museum where children come to see exhibits (Interview with Biniam Mengesha, 21/06/ 2011).

In exhibiting photography earlier displays in the same museum, as well as in IES of Addis Ababa University Museum, may incorporate few photographic archives of court photography often used for illustration in displaying antiquities or royal material objects. Exhibiting aesthetic photography narratives begun with the curatorial works of Leo Lefort:

Back in 1999 we did one show at Alliance; it was called 'At a Glance', where it was about portraiture. In fact I was looking in the streets and ---I was surprised to see that in Addis Ababa-- after discovering that 80% are painters. This is something very interesting for me, what you see in ---glasses-----on those photo shops. So we did one exhibition with a collector of old photos called Denijera. He had good collection of photographs; we went through all his collections you know he has collections of Bojyadian family, photographer of Minelik. So we did a show at Alliance François using the exact chairs of Bojyadian, colons and background. We recreated the studio space using the exact chairs of Boyadian. It was about ---the story of portraits in Ethiopia— who has money to access those portraits---- --- (Interview with Leo Lefort, an artist and curator, 17/06/2011).

Lefort is making a point that there are more number of painters than documentary photographers despite the presence of many photo studio in Addis Ababa. From historical photographs of personal collectors such as Denijera, portraits can provide access to the social, economic and cultural aspects of the practice of photography. In the same exhibition, Fiorente showcased portraits of models in Ethiopia, which was one of his first groups of works after coming back to Addis Ababa. Micheal Tsegaye exhibited some of his early works on portraits of the dead that one finds in cemeteries²⁴.

With the coming of Elizabeth Wolde Giorgis as IES director, along with other art historians such as Neethi Bose, IES has exhibited works to bring the concept of gender into

²⁴ This project cannot cover everything on gender and exhibitions. The history of portraits can be one set of research agenda. This section only provides an overview of a few of the exhibitions that showcased photo narratives in the Ethiopian context.

its museum space. These took place in two ways. One is by contextualising existing photo archives. The other is in bringing women as subjects who are able to create images. Some exemplary works were undertaken using different materials, such as a film produced by a female film maker, Salem Mekuria²⁵, and the only woman church painter, Emahoy Wolate Yohannes Sibihatu of Aksum, Ethiopia. The display of IES's photographic collections in an exhibition called 'Ethiopia in Black and White' is more important because it explores photography history in Ethiopia by contextualizing gender and representation from archival materials (IES, 2006). For the first time historical photographs of the nude was displayed in a gallery space of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies. The textual narratives that accompanied the exhibition altered some of the meanings that contextualised the way female bodies of Ethiopians were viewed and pictured in a similar gaze to other Africans as 'tribes'. The over-eroticised female bodies of the earlier encounters of Europeans with Abyssinians were showcased by carefully contextualising the intents of foreign photographers, as well as the colonial ideologies behind such photographic works (IES, 2006).

Contemporary independent photographers, however, rise to the challenge of offering diverse issues or photo-stories other than a master narrative about Africa and its inhabitants. In different cultural centres the works of Ethiopian photographers narrate the invisibles of the everyday. Perhaps one theme that is least explored in Ethiopia's photography is the work portrait.

6.3. Work Portraits

During fieldwork, I came across Samson Giorgis's (2011) article on photographic practices in Ethiopia. He wrote about creating photographs that capture rites of passage such as weddings and birthdays, and the absence of work portraits. This fact is vivid if an observer walks around the streets of Addis Ababa. Pictures posted on the walls of photo studios capture wedding events and some women posing like models. It is, therefore, relevant to investigate some of the work portraits that independent photographers have produced in addition to the common practice of picturing development aid. In this section, I discuss some of the figures as examples in order to validate my argument on the usefulness of identifying the photographers' intent, as well as the curator's role in exhibiting images to create dialogue.

²⁵ Salem Mekuria is a lecturer and independent film maker whose works could be categorised under the genre of African American film maker. For further information see <http://genetparadise.wordpress.com/2011/12/13/interview-ethiopian-filmmaker-salem-mekuria/>

In the Ethiopian context, the practice of photography neglects picturing people when they engage with something. Portraits are the most common practices. Despite the long history of photography in Ethiopia, which started in the studio and at court, its development is rather limited to local use such as documenting market centres, weddings and other social events. There may be interest in wedding pictures, or holiday documentary within Ethiopia. There is a wider demand for event photography, studio portraits and mug-shot pictures used for identity cards. Leo Lefort, a curator, makes a point that

We cannot disentangle the society's aesthetic and cultural value from the visual objects. It is what is intelligible to the society that will shape the history of social documentary practice (Interview with Leo Lefort, 17/06/2011).

For local photographers, there is increasing participation in commercial photography which is also in demand among the society. These demand and supply chains are one of the major reasons why many photographers are not engaged in independent project works. For example wedding photography has become an important photographic genre, particularly in documenting the rite of passage for the urban middle class community. This is so because a couple may go to popular studio, pose in front of a camera and order their wedding album. Since it is lucrative business, many trained photographers are hired to work in studios.

At the national level, picturing the human subject has historically grown in studio space, often in a timeless fashion where the face is portrayed as a sign of absolute beauty without bruises and lines. It is, however, unfortunate that none of the pioneering photographers, such as Yohanes Haile, Minase Haile and Gabre Sellasie, are known in using exhibitions to showcase their works. These pioneering photographers, who have mastered the technique of retouching filmstrips in a dark room, have not presented their works in different interactive global exhibition spaces (For tinted portraits see Hersnat, 1999). Despite the fact that tinted photographs were only practiced in Addis Ababa, Asmara and Cairo, such techniques that were unique to these cities of Africa had to be replaced by digital retouching with the coming of a Photoshop software that flourished in the cities in 1990s. In the studios of Addis Ababa, those who mastered the techniques of manually retouching filmstrips were used to remove bruises and lines before portraits were printed. The coming of digital photography has replaced such practices. Photoshop software in particular has facilitated the studio practice in the fast growing photography industry (Giorgis, 2011).

The practice that I touch upon is largely picturing Ethiopians by Ethiopians. As in any part of the world, most photographic encounters are accounts of happy moments such as birthdays and weddings, since no one wants to be pictured on a bad day. Sociologists would call such materials ‘rites of passage’. These are either self-made or snapshots of hired professional photographers. They may offer better visual data in exploring secrecy and memory that often have nostalgic effects. One identifies nothing of processes but particular staged and authenticated images within the spaces of studio or home. This chapter is not aimed at exploring studio practice or family albums. These may be relevant for future research since this section does not intend to repeat photographic discourses of the studio as a space of desire and fantasy (Kaspin & Landau, 2002). Future research can explore the studio space since there could be other emerging themes that may be specific to Ethiopia.

The focus of this section is to explore work portraits produced by independent photographers. One reason is that the previous chapters have dealt with the agency of national institutions (chapter 4) and international charity organisations (chapter 5), and have explored contestations and negotiations between photographers and institutions in representing people in relation to development and development aid. We know very little about the invisibles of the everyday that go beyond the agency of charity organisation and mainstream media. As I have pointed out earlier (pg.196) independent photographers have their own agency in representing people and places.

I discuss some of work portraits as examples in order to understand the usefulness of identifying the photographers’ intent as well as the curators’ role in montaging and circulating the photographic image. Fiorente has diversified his works over the past 2 decades since he started his career earlier than Micheal Tsegaye and Aida Muluneh²⁶. He has produced a number of work portraits. I begin with one of his popular work where Fiorente composed a picture of a mother and child that was first exhibited in Addis gallery, Washington DC in 2003. In this exhibition his fascination in rural aesthetics and body adornments along with this image were displayed to create a dialogue on alternative narratives in relation to stereotypes (see chapter 2 for stereotypes). Showcased in a group exhibition of miscellaneous works, this popular image was circulated in different medium after it was exhibited in Washington DC.

²⁶ See detailed works of Fiorente at www.Antoniofiorente.com/.



Figure 65: Mother and Child, Photograph by Antonio Fiorente,
Source: *The Other Side of Ethiopia Exhibition*, 2003 © Antonio
Fiorente

From Fiorente's point of view the photographic composition is based up on his visual experiences:

I was on my way to undergo a fieldwork on environment change. I saw a woman working in the yard. The child was running around her. I waited for the right moment and then I clicked ----- . It reminds me of the sculpture in Rome----- of the she-wolf myth----- about the twins who founded Rome---, Romulus and Remus(Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 5/08/2011).



Figure 66: Romulus and Remus Sculpture, Rome

Fiorente stresses that figure 64 is not an outcome of visual events organised by the photographer. It was rather a photographic encounter that took place outdoors. He also states that the photographic composition is not entirely new. It has similar composition style to a sculpture in Rome (figure 66) that the photographer had in mind before composing an image. Figure 64 poses a question about image making. Historicising dominant narratives, this picture speaks back to iconic mother and child famine images. It is a narration of a woman nurturing her baby, a picture that tries to question the representation of a rural woman as if unable to take care of a baby' (Roman Yiseni, 2008: 7). Fiorente captured the intimate moments of a mother nurturing her child while simultaneously critiquing the dominant media coverage of drought and famine. The original image constructs a woman's diverse activities, including motherhood. This picture becomes visible in an art gallery exhibition where objects are displayed independently of each other. It is displayed to showcase Fiorente's long-time fascinations with rural aesthetics. With exhibiting, the everyday comes

into contact with the materiality of an object to display ideas. Fiorente's composition of a single image contradicts the dominant worldwide media portrayal about reoccurrence of drought in Ethiopia. By showing growth, it also reflects on the baby and mother compositions that shows how a mother nurtures her child. Through such picturing, bead works, and braided hair style blur the urban and rural bodily decorations. It is a common trend to observe different bead works and braided hair styles in posters produced for hair salons in Addis Ababa.



Figure 67: Source: The Other Side of Ethiopia Exhibition held in Washington DC, Addis gallery

The photography of group portrait engages the viewer with alternative way of “aestheticisation” of a female body. The background is blurred so that the viewer is not distracted by the composition of the picture. The hair is nicely combed and sucked with the traditional hair food [butter]. All of them decorated their forehead with buttons and keys that one would not imagine to be used for this purpose. There is a similar way of dress codes and choice of garments among his subjects. A woman to the left is holding a light orange colour umbrella indicating the presence of luxury material to protect the self from sun- light. The photograph conjures up the whole

idea that not all rural Ethiopia are symbols of famine (Roman Yiseni, 2008:10).



Figure 68: Source: *The Other Side of Ethiopia*, exhibition held at Washington DC, Addis gallery (2003)

Along with figure 64 the above two photographs were displayed in a solo exhibition titled *The Other Side of Ethiopia* (2003) held at Addis gallery, Washington DC.

Figure 64 was used in a magazine published by the Network of Ethiopian Women's Association (2008). The association has used Fiorente's works depicting women at work, ranging from caring for children to other development activities. Used for illustrative purposes, selections of his works are based on picture contents. Those pictures are displays of women who have authority in the capital, Addis Ababa, while other everyday women have found better voices through editorial processes. Editors have the final say in selecting, branding and publishing materials. A word or phrase as text complements the representational practices of figurative images [see Mitchell (2006); Stafford, 2010]. From these works, those images circulated by the women's association have used the power of the text to engage with the challenges that women are facing in different spaces.

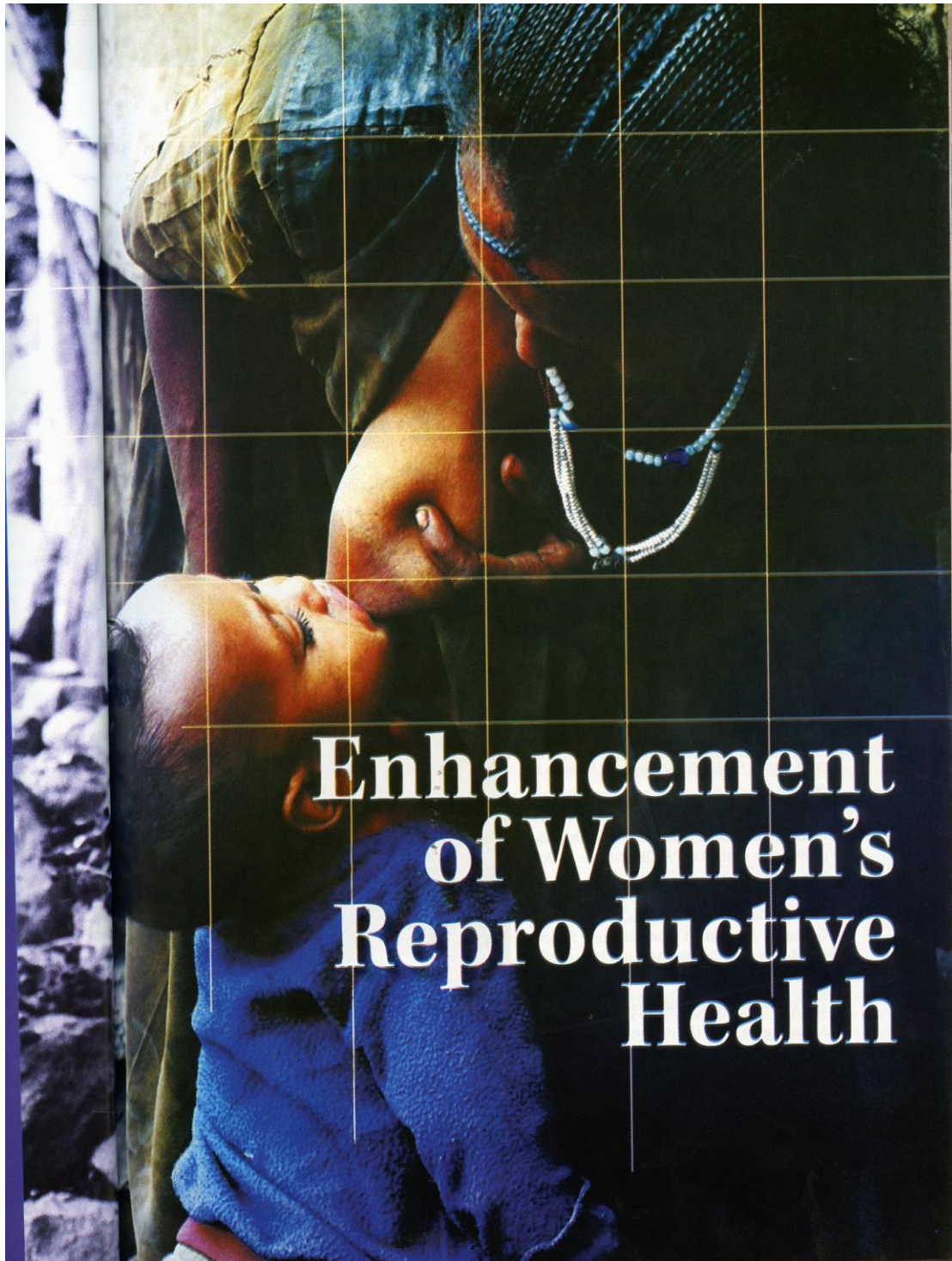


Figure 69²⁷: Original Photo by Antonio Fiorente Source: *Network of Ethiopian Women's Association (NEWA), Annual report for Fiscal Year 2007 (2008)* © Antonio Fiorente

'Enhancement of women's reproductive health' as a text on figure 69 leads viewers to the main focus of a camera angle, which is breast feeding. The phrase also transforms the

²⁷ The horizontal and vertical lines visible in this picture are indications of reuses of the photographic image.

photographic image into ‘photo text’ (Stafford, 2010) through the interventionist approach of women’s association. Words and texts are, thus, capable of altering the meanings of pictures by guiding viewers to certain forms of negotiations. Figure 69 opens up a dialogue on contextualizing the image in relation to what it speaks back to iconic images of mother and child. The composition has adopted a similar pose with Mother Mary and Christ depictions in Christian art. Exploring the change in meanings, therefore, provides a hermeneutic approach. That is to say pictures trigger emotions of photographers by taking them back to a time when they composed those images (see chapter 3, pg. 69). The composition has inter-ocular characters with previous art works. As Fiorente pointed out this picture has a similar style, to a sculpture called Romulus and Remus in Rome.

In the same magazine, an article states that heavily loaded construction site female workers are active participants in development activities. The influx of girls to urban areas has implications in increasing the number of young women hired as daily labourers for construction site workers, particularly in Addis Ababa. Figure 70 is, therefore, an account of relatively new occupational roles. The phrase ‘Enhancing Women’s Participation in all ‘Development Endeavors’ that the editorial team added to the photographic image signifies a more positive interface of word and image to development activities. Since Addis Ababa is under construction, there are a good number of construction sites which in turn have created job opportunities for migrants to Addis Ababa. The majority of workers in these sites are those who have opted out of working as assistants in households. The phrase assumes that such development sites facilitate women’s empowerment. The article seems to acknowledge that developing urban infrastructures has brought women into public spaces through their participation.

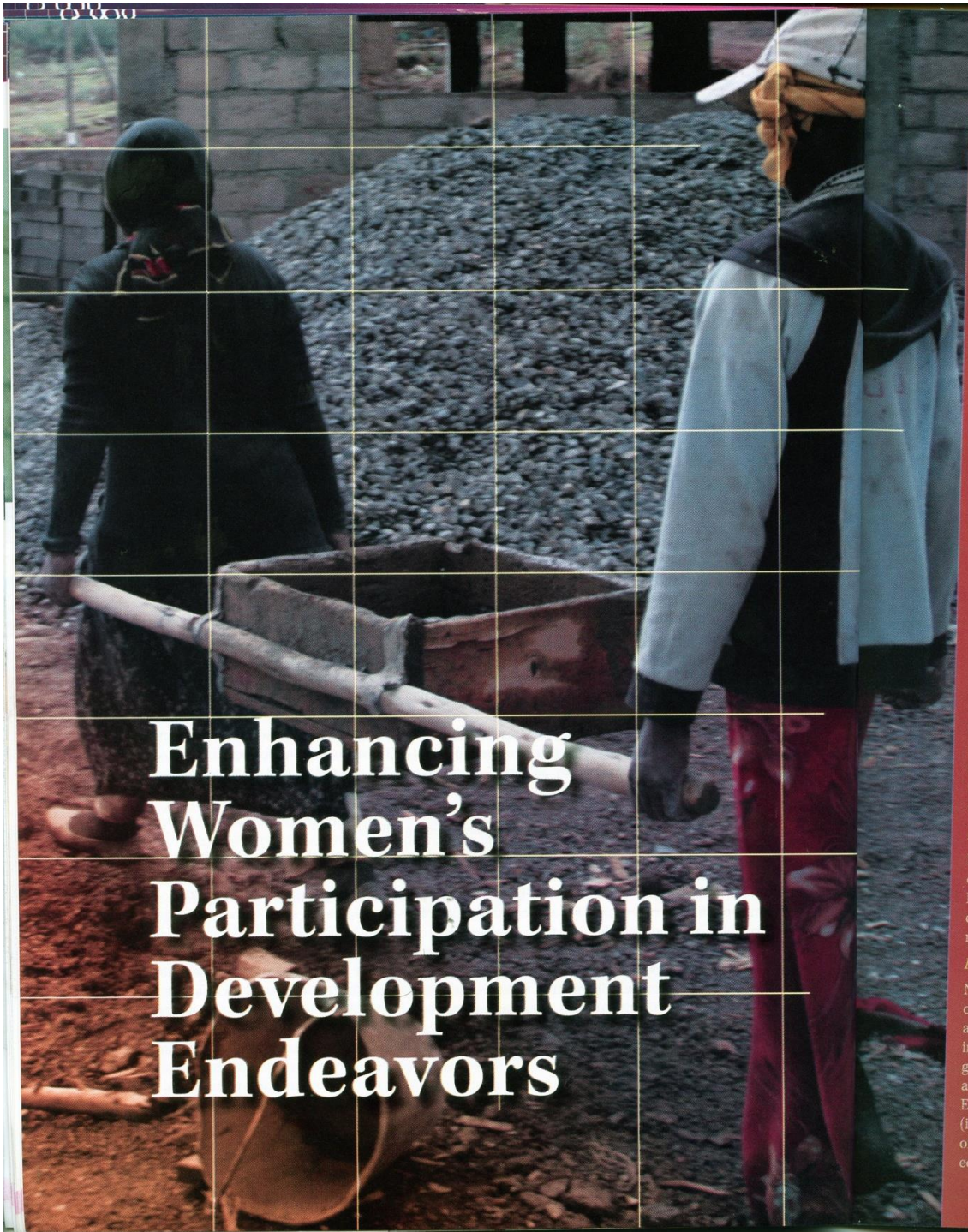


Figure 70: Original Photograph by Antonio Fiorente, Source: *Network of Ethiopian Women's Association (NEWA)*, Source: *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2007* (2008: 27)

Examining the image could enable us to interpret other aspects about the exploitation of the labour force. Grosz (1994: 15) reminds us that the body has become 'a unique means of access to knowledge and ways of living'. The photograph gives us access to some of the arguments on the suitability of this job for women's health. This point is not to support the

claim that women are biologically disadvantaged. The magazine seems to accept the idea that there is no harm in women's participation in such development activities. In the text, this visibility is not argued as harmful to the reproductive or general health of these daily labourers. Even in the 'developed world' we do not see too many women daily labourers in construction sites because it is harmful to women's health. The use of the written text such as 'participation' and 'empowerment' seem to nullify a discourse of exploitation by investors in such job stratifications. Even though the written text is powerful enough to lead viewers into one meaning of an image, as a visual text, the photographic image can be interpreted irrespective of its caption. While posing practical problems, it also leads to critical analysis of the act of objectifying bodies in all development activities. The acts of women as performers refuse any fixations of transformations of visual codes into one set of interpretations. A careful reading and contextualization of such imagery can reveal different subject positions of these construction workers.



Figure 71: *A woman making juice*, Source: Ethiopia Past/ Forward (Africilia, 2009, 28) © Aida Muluneh

As shown in figure 71, Aida Muluneh's works have the impression of 'a photographer as montour and critical journalist' (Wright, 1996: 206; see also Kuhn, 1996). Her photographic works of women labourers expose silences about participation of women in low paid jobs.

These are often considered as normal among society. Depending on the individual's level of the knowledge of seeing, an artist's work may reveal unspoken issues about her society without neglecting ethical considerations and constructs of visual knowledge. Her work portraits focus on localities and differences between men and women, the young and the old.

"There is no need to publicise poverty. Such image is already there but there are million untold stories" (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 1/07/2011). Most of Aida Muluneh's works may provide a perspective of someone who is both an insider as an Ethiopian and "yet as a stranger" (Interview with Muluneh, 23/11/2011) because of her long absence. This in turn has advantages. It provided her with a better perspective with which to explore what the insider

or someone who has lived for many years might take for granted. What is more, as a person who had studied at Harvard University in the United States she is aware of photographic discourses of placing her works within the scholarship of African Americans like Gordon.

The incorporation of both men and women in the formation of subjects resonates in giving ‘voice to the voiceless-----these are some pockets of society who are continuously enslaved’ (Interview with Muluneh, 24/08/2011). This is to say that Muluneh adopts the idea that a picture can give a voice to those who are silenced in the writings of visual histories and also presents the invisibles. Most women are working in a low paid job often in the domestic sphere. The voices of working class women are not exposed visually. There is very little work on the work force in Ethiopia. Figure 71 was taken with a point and shoot camera. It is about a woman who works in local juice shop. It is another example of documentary work, where addressing the problems of the labour force and transformations of visual objects such as the chain come to form visual codes. The chain is symbolic to the labouring of women framed through a narrow window, which was distant to Muluneh, as well as to viewers. Viewers cannot look at the details of the woman other than through aesthetic manipulations of light and darkness.

In such a way figure 72 and 73 witness the photographer’s role in “bringing about subjects into beings” (Butler and Saleh, 2006: 112). Muluneh’s photographic images that have appeared in the ‘Dialogue in the Diaspora’ (2006) exhibition narrate her visual experiences in imaging women while at the same time exploring the merging of the global with the local. In figure 72, she juxtaposes public and individual memories. Muluneh uses remembrance and memory to depict the past in the temporal encounters of photographic images in a timeless fashion. She locates the photographer’s place in terms of ‘perspectives’ in the fluid space of geographical boundaries across time and space. Exhibited in the Smithsonian museum, some of her works contest the geographies of Africa as frozen in time. In figure 73 the main subject is a woman who works in pottery. Her image is juxtaposed with a portrait of a ‘Gambella woman’, one of a tourism poster. In so doing it explores the globalized spaces of tourist destinations as contact zones of our imagined worlds. Mitigating the universal and particular boundaries, those photographic works are indications of the after-effects of globalisation. Women of the Southern region of Ethiopia are often constructed in a de-contextualised manner that is influenced by the explorers and tourist’s gaze as well as the demands of tourism promoters (for more see chapter 4, pg. 97). As I have elaborated in chapter 4, such imagery is circulated by the Ministry of Culture in order to attract tourists and

develop tourism by commodifying a decontextualized body. From the sight of the image, the composition sheds light on the historical relations of creativity and marginality. In Ethiopia pottery workers are historically called people with the evil eye. The woman at work portrait along with the Mursi woman could be regarded as a recast of two marginalised individuals. These are forms of visual signs that attempt to speak with the subjects.



Figure 72: Source: *Dialogue in the Diaspora*, 2003 © Aida Muluneh

The above figure was a *Dialogue in the Diaspora* exhibition which presented the contest of constructing the geography of Africa. It presented artists of Ethiopian Diasporas as critical thinkers who question a geocentric view about Ethiopia. The exhibition was to tackle stereotypes about Africa whose people are regarded as static and unchanging. This is also partly because of emerging women professionals as museum practitioners. As an intern at the Smithsonian Museum and assistant to curator of this exhibition, Heran Sereke-Birhan was one of those who encouraged Aida Muluneh to participate in this exhibition. Some of the works of Aida Muluneh juxtapose these globally propagated iconic photographic images of traditional people. Without neglecting internal dynamics, these works are reflections on the way the local was viewed within the global photographic practice about othering and self-representation.

The Diaspora exhibition challenged the dominant presentation of African people as unchanging or static. Even though the human subject is exoticised in dominant visual

presentations of everyday lives, we begin to see juxtapositions of subjects pictured in National Geographic posters even in remote places of Ethiopia (see Figure 72).

Kuhn (2007) argued that even though the use of captions may lead to certain forms of interpretation, the photographic image can stand independently as a photo text. It has the capacity to evoke memory. Though the photographer primarily selects these images, the editorial team juxtaposed certain images together. The photographer composes & organises subjects by freezing, posing a subject and by manipulating light.



Figure 73: *Hotel Lobby Cleaning*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, (Ibid) © Aida Muluneh

In work portraits, she casts light on women cleaning the hotel. All subjects are captured when they are unaware of the presence of a camera or the photographer. Men who carry tables are cast in a dark picture frames since the focus is on women. Women are usually allocated to fill the labour force such as cleaning which in turn brings low income.

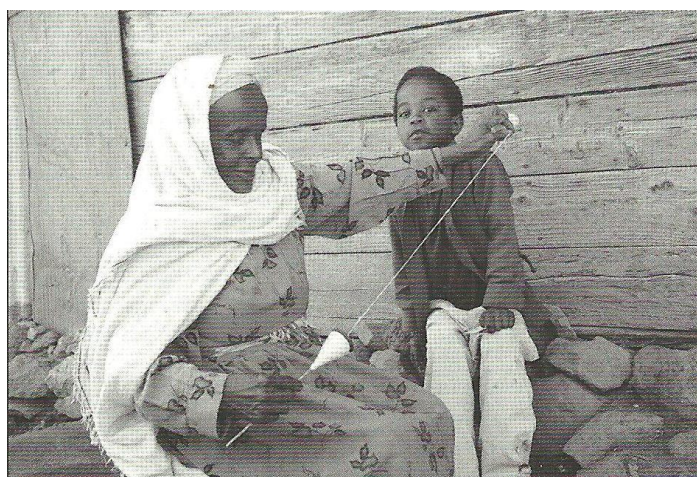


Figure 74: *Grandmother Spinning Cotton*, Dese, Wello, Ethiopia (Ibid, 114)

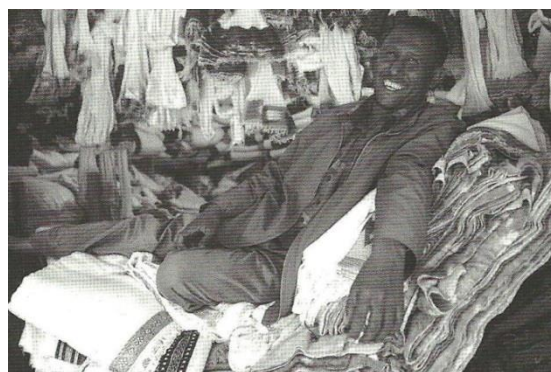


Figure 75: *The Merchant*, Dese, Wello, Ethiopia (Ibid, 114)

Figure 74 & 75 are examples that juxtapose cotton textiles and its makers. Muluneh pictures a woman spinning cotton thread and a man in his traditional textile shop. Figure 74 frames a woman while her grandson is gazing at a camera. These two images are juxtaposed in Muluneh's *Ethiopia: Past/ Forward* book. The editorial board of *Africilia* has juxtaposed the above two figures since they both are about how a traditionally woven cotton textile such as *gaby* is made available in shops. The man sitting in a textile shop is captured as a relaxed individual, lying on those textiles. The textiles could be made in a machine or could be handmade as craft works. Nor does the photographic picture allow us to make a generalized statement on gender role stratifications. For the careful reader, such montaging of images could symbolize Muluneh's claim that in most cases 'men are liming' (Interview with Muluneh, 24/08/2011).

Most of her works are exhibited in different venues in Addis Ababa, in different parts of Africa and around the globe. Most of the pictures are products of a project that she has undertaken along with Micheal Tsegaye and Sebastian, a French photographer who worked in different parts of Africa. From the photographer's intent the book does not claim anything except that it presents a pioneering photography book for independent Ethiopian photographers (Interview with Muluneh, 24/08/2011). It is, therefore, an expression of her own lived experiences as "the duality ----one of being inside and outside, of the past, present and future----" (E-mail conversation with Muluneh, 23/08/11). In such a way these images are collections of photographic encounters that compose images of the Northern tourist route across Ethiopia with special reference to Wello region.

In her works, Muluneh insists on the interlocking of memory and presence. While growing up in England, and later in Canada, she had a nostalgic memory of Ethiopia constructed through the Ethiopian Diaspora community as opposed to anyone who grew up in the West. The wider public predominantly remember stereotypical imaginative portrayals of the human suffering in the mainstream media. All of the photographers are aware of how Ethiopia and its people were pictured historically. As discussed in the previous chapters, there has been a focus on the pain of others and such a focus has a truth claim, but those truth claims are made through specific visual events which are incomplete stories. Touhami Ennadre²⁸ noted that the reportage genre dealing with emergency is most of the time for voyeurs who 'steal' the defeated moments of human beings. Even though Okwui Enwezor found the term pornography for disaster and war images obsolete, he disagrees with Ennadre and still calls that the genre is based on exploiting the human conditions which are still pictured as stereotypical bodies (Enwezor, 2007).

In order to balance those perspectives, some African photographers capture the dignity of individuals who tell stories of both poverty and strength. As most would agree, visualizing poverty is easier if anyone takes a camera out into the streets of a city or town in Ethiopia. Depending on the thematic composition used by the photographer, the narratives are selective in what they include and exclude. Most close-up pictures of women, girls and boys support Muluneh's argument about 'seeking beauty' (Africilia, 2009) in Dese, Wello

²⁸ The artist claims that he develops his own photograph in the dark room in his own laboratory (Enwezor, 2006).

county. Wello is the county pictured as stark through drought and famine. Muluneh's documentary works are, therefore, in relation to stereotypes often circulated in the global arena. Most of the photographic images that these photographers are exhibiting in gallery spaces narrate everyday lives rather than specific and organised visual events. Like his contemporaries, Antonio Fiorente has accumulated an image bank of Ethiopia and its people including classic ethnographic images. As the next section elaborates, Fiorente was seeking 'wilderness' (Fiorente, 2008).

6.4. Leisure Pictures

Unlike Aida Muluneh, Antonio Fiorente is a senior documentary photographer who has developed an image bank over ten years. He is currently working in both the artistic and commercial sectors. Since 2000, his work has been showcased in various solo and group exhibitions both locally and abroad. Throughout his career Antonio Fiorente presents work dealing with various Ethiopian issues covering murals, leisure, architectures, commercial and wedding photography. But for this research I mainly focus on his recent 'Ethiopia' exhibition in 2011.

The everyday of a society is captured as photographers' encounters. In some of the photographic images below, Fiorente captured specific moments of people in a bar scene and natural resorts that are least explored or even visualised.



Figure 76: Source: 'Ethiopia' exhibition showcased in different African cities at Italian Cultural Institute (2011) © Antonio Fiorente

Figure 76 depicts three women in a natural hot spring water setting. The picture is captured when subjects are not aware of the presence of the photographer. Men and women in these spatial settings are organised separately because of culture that allocates separate spaces based on sex. With a careful photographic technique these images do not expose private bodies like that of photographic works of Santu-Mofokeng. Some of the works of Fiorente symbolise smoke as a mystical character that opposes western ways of looking at other people in creating their contemporaries in Ethiopia or Africa (see picture illustrations of Prichard, 1945; Beckwith & Fisher, 2002). Even though he shot some ethnographic photographs, the way he compose these subjects has a different point of view when compared with conventional ways of picturing these subjects. 'There is knowledge attached to seeing' (Hayes, 2009:37). Such accumulated knowledge influences Fiorente's style. Titled 'Ethiopia', his solo show at the Italian Cultural Centre presents Ethiopia's changing landscapes inseparably from its people.

In June 2011, titled as 'Ethiopia', Fiorente's photographs were simultaneously showcased in Addis Ababa and in other metropolitan cities of Africa specifically in Italian Cultural Institutes, and at the Venice Biennale. In this exhibition twenty works with high aesthetic qualities were carefully selected with the help of Leo Lefort. Such title that is repeatedly conveyed in spaces of exhibitions may open up a discussion on the difficulties of disentangling the landscape from its people. His works resonate with productions of other photographers within ethnographic pictures. From historical to contemporary ethnographic image productions of traditional society, audiences are allowed to gaze at pictures of naked bodies and genitals (See picture illustrations of Prichard, 1945; Beckwith & Fisher, 2002). There was very little engagement with dignity of the subjects since most historical images are made by othering subjects. In those presentations, the focus on rituals tends to persuade viewers that such productions are normal typology of 'traditional society'. Composed as black and white images, Fiorente's works avoid such voyeuristic positions.

In figure 74 and 75, Fiorente casts the subjects by incorporating the aura of the surroundings represented by steam, smoke, and fog. He captures public bathing in a lake. Naturally posed subjects seem to balance the power relations of the photographer with that of the photographed. Both of the images become more about the subjects rather than staged

photographs where the photographer has an authority in organising subjects. Technically, manipulation of natural light has allowed the photographer to recreate the aura of recreational centres for pockets of society scattered in different parts of Ethiopia. As a person who has been working in the reportage genre for many years, he knows the landscape better than others. These photographic images may offer other narratives where bodies are pictured in the ways that takes Ethiopia's culture into consideration.



Figure 77: Source 'Ethiopia' exhibition showcased in different African cities at Italian Cultural Institute (2011) © Antonio Fiorente

In figure 76 women are constructed in a wide angle view as distant others and only the back of one woman is shown close-up. The above pictures, thus, indicate how bodies are spatially organised even in public spaces where separate spaces for men and women are allocated within the cultural context of Ethiopia. Titled as 'Ethiopia', the exhibition of Fiorente's works cover landscape imagery and people. Such imagery includes different landscapes as well as leisure centres in different parts of Ethiopia, where one may find hot spring water supplies that the community is using for skin care and recreation. They are examples of mysticism capturing fog by which subjects' identities are blurred in the image. In his later work (Figure 78) Fiorente has captured fascinating landscapes, where groups of

people are captured as they take a public path with a soap. They are captured with dignity rather than vulgarity.



Figure 78: Source *Ethiopia* exhibition, 2011 © Antonio Fiorente



Figure 79: *Ankober*, Source: *Ethiopia* Exhibition, 2011 © Antonio Fiorente

Such photographic image (Figure 79) can be captured anywhere around the globe. Set in one of the coldest towns in Ethiopia, Ankober, the photograph offers transformations of a town centre within development since there are some representations of electric power lines as well as other materials, such as umbrellas that are juxtaposed in the image using the technique as depth of field. Such images confirm the urban realities of contemporary Ethiopia and expose social problems that development transformations might bring about. Elizabeth Wolde Ghiorgis (2010: 56) critically reviewed some of the works of these contemporary photographers who explored the uncertainties of claims of progress for everyday citizens who are facing hazardous conditions in different settings.

Unlike Fiorente and Tsegaye, Aida Muluneh does not claim that she knew the local community in the way Micheal Tsegaye and Antonio Fiorente might claim when she published *Ethiopia Past/Forward*. She works with intensive manipulations of light. In contrast, Micheal Tsegayes' or Fiorente's works are mystical in narrating a nation's history, where the poetic and the representations merge together to formulate the aesthetic abilities of its maker. In Muluneh's work, self-reflections on one's own memory while shooting others are expressed through the more critical lens of a woman. It is not to claim that her contemporary male photographers do not explore in the way she explore gender and visuality.

6.5. Identity

All of the above photographs were incorporated in a theme titled as 'Ethiopia'. These narratives are comprised of human figures, religiosity and festival imagery. Significant numbers of images used in both Aida Muluneh's exhibition and Fiorente's exhibition picture the religiosity or spirituality of Ethiopia represented by Islam and Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. To understand the visual formations of identities through photography, we need to know photographers' agency in picturing identity issues.

Most of the works of Aida Muluneh were made as a joint project with Micheal Tsegaye and Sebastian Cailleux, a French photographer who came to Ethiopia for photographic projects. Cailleux had assisted other photographers in Addis Ababa like Leikun Birhanu to learn combining drawings and photography. Since Cailleux's works do not belong to the documentary genre, his works are not the agenda of this study, even for comparative purposes. Precisely Cailleux works can be categorized as narratives of the religiosity of people, mainly Christianity in a mixed media format. Despite the same visual field or visual

journey with Cailleux and Tsegaye the thematic choice of Aida Muluneh goes beyond religiosity and are put together in a book titled as ‘Ethiopia: Past/Forward’.

This book has similar characteristics with that of travel pictures because it featured Aksum, rock hewn churches of Lalibela, and mosques. The richness of Ethiopia’s culture is presented in different compositions. It seems that since Muluneh grew up abroad listening to the richness of Ethiopia’s culture through the musical productions of Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian promoters, there seems to be recognition of those people in the creation of her own identity as well as her own people. Her composition of a shadow of Francis Falsseto who is a French record producer who played a significant role in promoting Ethiopia’s music, using a re-erected Aksum obelisk as a backdrop is a one example.

One is that I am Habesha and another is that I have lived in different parts of the world. As a Diaspora there is always romance to how I look at my own country and my own people---I was seeking beauty (Interview with Aida Muluneh, 23/11/2011)

Festivals organised at a state level are also depictions of the religiosity of its people. Religion is still one of the cultural assets by which communities gather around both for secular and religious purposes.



Figure 80: *Islam in Ethiopia Series* © Aida Muluneh

Muluneh had also an account of Christianity as well as Islam in Ethiopia. Her ways of seeing are related to her roots or family connection to Wello region, one of the places where Islam in Ethiopia flourished and where many Muslims still live to date. Her forefathers are imam, top religious leaders. The inclusion of Islam in Ethiopia pictured in the Northern Ethiopia is relatively new work, because the representation of Islam in Ethiopia is done historically by picturing Eastern Ethiopia, particularly Harar. These cultural contexts are also vivid in her work. The inside of a mosque is rarely visualised through a female photographer due to its sacred separation of men and women at different spots of a mosque²⁹. Such stories of family connections open up ways to access those places that are not frequented by other female artists. For Muluneh, therefore, the Muslims are also groups of individuals who are underrepresented in the writing and the visuality of Ethiopia, with the exception of Harar, or Eastern parts of Ethiopia.



Figure 81: *Demera* [The Founding of the True Cross] Celebration in Gondor, Ethiopia, From *Ethiopia* exhibition (2011) © Antonio Fiorente

²⁹²⁹ Similar spatial organisations could be visualised within the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian churches where separate spaces for men and women are allocated inside a church during congregations.



Figure 82: Interior of a Mosque, Jimma, Source: *Ethiopia* Exhibition, 2011 © Antonio Fiorente

Antonio Fiorente may go to the Southern regions and compose images of different nations and nationalities. Unlike some South African photographers who have persistently worked against apartheid and colonial photographs, some of Fiorente's early works have ethnographic flavour since he has even produced picture postcards depicting body ornaments and the daily lives of different groups in Southern regions of Ethiopia. The 'Beauty within Diversity' exhibition held at the National Museum was a show that brought together Fiorente's works on nations and nationalities. This genre of his female subjects shows no difference to the dominant productions of touristic images. His work also documents the changing cultures in the ethnographic reportage genre that portrays these groups of people.

Since 2000, like his predecessors who were seeking tribal others in the old world (IES, 2006), he was seeking 'wilderness' in Ethiopia (Mail conversation with Fiorente, 2008). His photographic practice is somehow an extension of 'what he calls knowing the subject well before taking pictures'. Compared with other photographers such as Santu Mafokeng (Hayes, 2006), there is no politics in picturing traditional society. Mafokeng pictures traditional societies and African ceremonies with dignities by blurring subjects so that viewers do not have direct visual access as subjects perform traditions and ceremonies. Yet the 'Beauty within Diversity' exhibition had political implications because the then state policy was mobilizing the public by all means to create awareness in the equality of nations and nationalities. When asked about the issue of exploiting these subjects, Fiorente claims that he has different ways of picturing:

I did not realise that I have unique perspective until I spoke to the official of Ministry of Culture, Ambassador Muhammed Derir during exhibition who commented with excitement that "your ways of seeing is just as I see

my own people!”, so different from foreign travellers (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 13/07/2011)

In picturing there is always the emotion of a photographer and these emotions matter in developing their perspectives into photographs. As Simon Njami (2010) has argued, photographers transform humans and things of the everyday into ‘drama’. He considers photographers as ‘voyeurs’ who give the ordinary event a ‘drama’. That drama depends largely on what he calls ‘the power of our [photographers] compassion’ in creating distance or closeness between the photographer and the photographed. The above photographers present that drama by incorporating the emotions of their subjects into the pictures. The above works consolidate his claim in who has that compassion in picturing everyday women and men in spatially and culturally organised spaces.

6.6. Women Eye versus Men Eye

Women versus men as subjects and foreign versus local eye has gone through literary discourses (for more see Clark, 2009). The idea of women or men as subjects refers to taking control of the camera as photographers to represent other women and girls. In previous section, this thesis has discussed photographic othering and has outlined how the local is influenced by the global in representing women and girls. Some have argued that independent African photographers have subverted historical ways of seeing through a visualisation of alternative narratives. Photographers who work in different parts of the world have falsified the difference between local versus foreign in representing contemporary societies (see chapter 5, pg.182-184; Clark, 2009). This section raises the issue of voyeur. Who is made to see? Is there such a thing as a ‘woman’s eye’ in exploring gender representations? For most of Ethiopian photographers who work in Ethiopia, they find that some of the photojournalism works of few foreign photographers may investigate different parts of the society without necessarily interrogating ethical considerations or dignity of their subjects (Interview with Micheal Tsegaye, 3/09/2011). Antonio Fiorente has experienced working for Associated Press and had followed Bob Geldof in 2006 to photograph him in relation to people affected by famine in Gode, Ethiopia. In the debate over local versus foreign, Fiorente claimed that “--- one advantage is that because you know the community, -- the language, the way you frame and compose becomes local voices” (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 1/08/2011). His commentary suggests that photographers who know the social and cultural contexts of the community can ‘speak with’ everyday people.

There is no need to employ the idea of essentialism³⁰ (Colls, 2011) since the photographic representations go beyond biological reductionism as sex does not interfere with the way we see other people. Women photographers, foreign or local, may have a different perspective in the way they picture other women. Earlier women photographers who have come to Ethiopia had reframed the photographic image in relation to the male gaze³¹. Contemporary women photographers based in Addis Ababa are the French photographer, Merissa Lee, and an Italian photographer, Paola Viesi³². They capture Ethiopia's people in the way that is inclusive of the customs and traditions of the subjects. Lefort, for instance, commented that Lee has that 'woman's eye' in picturing these subjects. "Marissa Lee, for instance, has been working in Ethiopia for many years. The way she engages with her subject is very subtle and gentle with a unique eye" (Interview with Leo Lefort, 20/06/2011).

Accumulated knowledge of seeing, and talent, may determine the creativity that one employs through those processes. The relationship of the photographer with their subjects, and knowing the cultural, historical and environmental contexts of the photographed are relevant to representational practices. For Muluneh, there is not much difference on the gender role of a photographer since there are men who prefer working on women's issues. In the same fashion, Michael Tsegaye claims that he is a feminist since he has explored the daily lives of some pockets of marginalised women. For instance he has argued that the solidarity of sex workers and their social ties come out as most important themes in his works on sex workers. "When I take pictures here [Ethiopia], I think of the poems, songs and many of the cultures in places. -----It means I already know something about this people" (Interview with Micheal Tsegaye, 3/09/2011). He further noted that even the photographic image demands more of the feelings and situations of subjects than the photographer. He considers photography as distinct from painting.

When an artist is producing a portrait on canvas, there is direct contact with the art object using a brush and paint. It involves the emotional state of an artist, even if it is much about the model who is sitting in a studio for portrait painting. In this case an artist takes a relatively more time to express the personality of a model and needs to transform that

³⁰ Some of the critiques of essentialism are that the concept denies the relational aspects and historical influences in constructs of identity formations, social values and norms (Gregory et.al., 2009: 210).

³¹ See the works of a female British photographer, who photographed the royal court of Ethiopia; Pankhurst (1996)

³² For more see info@paolaviesi.com

knowledge into a canvas. For Micheal Tsegaye, this visual language has equipped him to develop an aesthetic quality while picturing documentary photography. In terms of representational practices realist paintings and documentary photography have similar characteristics. Tsegaye makes distinctions between painted portraits from that of photographic portraits.

*---When you do painting I am in a studio, am alone. Sometimes you may use a model when doing portraits. Second, painting is direct contact; it needs touching when you work. If I am painting you, for example, there is a lot expected from me even if there is something I take from you. There is a lot of the emotion of a painter. Photography is different. I prepare subjects and there is more that I take from you [subjects]. It needs intimacy, getting along because there is a lot I take from you-----
(Interview with Micheal Tsegaye, 23/06/ 2011)*

Tsegaye has gained benefits from changing his career from a painter to a photographer. As he noted, there is a clear difference between these two professions. Rather than transforming the emotions of subjects as in painting, photography as a medium takes more from the subject's emotions through gestures, framing and field of view. His documentary photographic works are, therefore, extensions of his acquired diploma in painting. There is a significant use of light in his works. As a middle class photographer, his independent works mainly deal with socially marginalized or vulnerable individuals.

Why does picturing people mainly focus on women? Both men and women artists like to picture other women because of the curves or beauty associated with women's body. Most of photographers who have lived in Ethiopia for many years and have lived and worked as photographers have access to the cultural, environmental and historical background of the society they photograph. Artists may also use photographs in order to transform subjects into other mediums such as drawings and paintings.

For the majority of artists based in Addis Ababa, the final visual art could be regarded as a mixed media. First they make the photographic images of their subjects as a visual aid, and then they transform the same subjects into a painting. In relation to the inter-ocular of photography and painting in subject formations, Bekele Mekonnen noted that:

*Representation is still transforming art through technological medium. ---
-The discourse of representation is the same whether it is in ceramics, painting, sculpture, graphics-----in 3- D or print media. The thinking is the same! In photography there are many stories that are not yet well explored in Africa. ----- A camera takes everything. So photography is not yet*

investigated fully in Africa. Bisrat Shibabaw was making a painting series in relation to photography. She was making Gurage's gestures. They are women. Photographs are talking gestures. Her works are in paintings (Interview with Bekele Mekonnen, Director of Art School, Sculptor and Installation artist, 9/08/ 2011).

Mekonnen is arguing about representation in different mediums. He further noted the inter-textualities of images in the paintings of Bisrat Shibabaw, a female painter, as an example. During fieldwork period Bisrat Shibabaw's works were displayed at Asni gallery. In these paintings two Gurage women are sitting straight on a chair, wearing their costumes of green clothes covering their heads and with both of their hands in their laps. As Mekonnen noted these are gestures of *Gurage* women. Such works speak back to some of the works that I discussed in chapter 4 specifically to figure 4 (pg. 83). Such works contest stereotypical representations by contextualizing the social values and the cultural contexts of subjects that were erased in the Italian postcards. Women artists such as Bisrat Shibabaw and Aida Muluneh confront the desire and fantasies of others by incorporating the social and cultural contexts of the people within the image.

Most of the photographers share similar identities with those communities that they capture in their works. They position themselves within the locality, a specified visualization of such moments of contact zones. They contest gender portrayals by critically composing existing social norms and systems.

Despite attempts to display photographic narratives, there are limited essays or scholarly works on photographic representations of people and places. Up to now, there is no individual artist or an Ethiopian photographer who has developed an independent photographic project about a certain topic by contextualizing existing historical images made by others. Contesting narratives of gender are yet to be seen in exhibition venues. Muluneh still sees the importance of enhancing the participation of empowered women, or those who have come out of their shells to better explore the underlining realities of unspoken gender issues through Desta for Africa project. In her personal accounts about her mother documenting her published works, she claims that women are more inclined to collect visual materials.

As an acting director of Addis Foto Fest, Aida Muluneh is not negative about the works of foreign photographers who have come from abroad and lived and stayed in Ethiopia to visually document its people. She asks "do we need other people to tell our stories?" One

question that she posed in different photographic forums is that Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Due to this the camera lens has been directed towards exposing poverty. Ethiopia needs to brand itself through imaging the cultural and natural resources. Even if it's about pressing social issues, reworking Ethiopia's imagery may minimize the exploitative nature of imaging emergency situations such as food aid distribution. As a tool, photography can be helpful because it can be adapted to different forms including art. In all those processes, its applications in the NGO setting are expanding with the involvement of local photographers (See chapter 5). However, in museum and gallery spaces, there is limited works of 'concept exhibition' using works of independent Ethiopian photographers.

Most contemporary artists in Addis Ababa would consider themselves as the first generation that has to organize outlets for photographic discourses in Ethiopia (Geta Mekonnen, 2011). These artists argue that studio works, and wedding photography have wider market in the photography industry within Ethiopia. However, the majority of those photographers are yet to bring about thematically organised photographic projects.

Anyone can be a photographer. It's a tool and it's the same tool that everybody uses. You can disseminate via internet, you can disseminate using newspaper, or else you can print a postcard. Breaking news, for instance, is using people's iPhones' shootings not because they are professional but they were there when that event happens (Interview with Aida Muluneh, 24/08/2011).

Even though there is a distinction between woman's eye and a man's eye when they attempt to speak with marginalised women in the work force, there is no clear line between the two, since both have used aura and dignity for appropriate representation of their subjects (see section 6.3).

Chapter Conclusion

Chapter six is an exploration of independent works that are relatively freer in composition when compared with commissioned works. There is limited knowledge about the way Africans and specifically Ethiopians produce and frame their own people or the landscape. This chapter explores this by carefully looking at the photographers' intent in alternative means of circulations such as exhibitions.

This chapter mainly addresses the agency of photographers in picturing their own people. In this chapter I have argued that unlike photojournalism independent projects of Ethiopian photographers prefer to focus on alternative narratives. The independent projects of

Ethiopians differ in thematic choice from the ones that are made based on the demands of development NGOs or the mainstream media. Rather than visual events organised by national institutions and international NGOs, the photo-essays as independent projects are encounters of photographers with people and the landscape of Ethiopia. With the exception of Micheal Tsegaye, who has composed images of marginalised groups such as sex workers, Antonio Fiorente and Aida Muluneh produced non-commissioned photo-essays that are thematically organised as 'Ethiopia'. In the practice of picturing by independent photographers, images of landscapes are used interchangeably with people's imagery to imagine Ethiopia and Ethiopians.

As discussed in the previous chapter Micheal Tsegaye's work demonstrates the solidarity of sex workers rather than their sexuality. Micheal Tsegaye's work is acknowledged for visualising the invisibles of the everyday lives of sex workers. It proposes the idea that sex work among these groups of women is inherently linked to poverty. The poor living conditions of the women are further characterised by picturing the living conditions where a room is inhabited by 15 sex workers. As I have argued, his work is not free from global market demands and audiences who encourage him to create more images of sex workers.

In contrast, Antonio Fiorente's work and Aida Muluneh's independent projects are thematically organised as 'Ethiopia' covering work portraits, leisure, identity and landscapes. Their works speak back to dominant stereotypical representation of Ethiopia as a land of poverty. The photo-essays use images of landscapes to represent people and vice-versa. Since the photo-essays are made in relation to how Ethiopia's people were pictured historically, the themes of Fiorente and Muluneh's works are counter narratives of poverty and famine. The photo-essays thus portray Ethiopia as a beautiful landscape rich in resources. The beauty of people and landscape supersede the contents of photo-essays. They are able to include the cultural and social contexts within the image with special reference to the beauty of Ethiopia and its people.

Thematically speaking, there is diverse interest among artists in picturing the female subject. Fiorente's photographs reflect his fascination with rural beauty, rural aesthetics, and leisure. In some of her photographs, Muluneh juxtaposes historical picture postcards and posters with images of actual women to question global market demand and tourism that could influence representations in some remote parts of Ethiopia. All of the images are

romanticised representations of Ethiopia and its people. The image compositions of women and girls are to break silences and to visualise the invisibles of the everyday. They break silences about common beliefs and attitudes in Ethiopia, particularly about gender based job stratification and the exploitation of the work force. In identity issues, Islam and the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian are easily captured in images as main elements in shaping Ethiopia's identity.

The chapter also explores the specificity of the photographic medium and the way it captures the emotions and feelings of the subjects than photographers' original assumptions. The chapter demonstrated this by using Micheal Tsegaye's articulations of the medium in comparison with painting. The chapter has further outlined how the exhibition space is used to contest dominant representations of Ethiopian women and girls. It has argued that reconstructing Ethiopia's images and rebranding a nation's image are two of the most distinct preoccupations of curatorial works both in Addis Ababa and in other exhibition venues. Some of the exhibitions that took place in Addis Ababa have contextualised historical images of Ethiopia by looking at how women were composed as same as other Africans without highlighting regional diversities in Ethiopia. Since 1999, curatorial practices in Ethiopia have narrated stories about the portraits of the rich by exploring who had access to high quality studio pictures. After a survey of photographic exhibitions in Ethiopia, the research has identified that there is lack of thematic narratives in using photography in exhibition spaces. Since photography and video could appeal to the larger public, photographic exhibitions that can argue about concepts and social issues can further enhance and recreate photographic discourse in Addis Ababa. Photographic discourse that took place elsewhere using the works of Ethiopians are extension of what has already happened in Addis Ababa.

Chapter Seven

7. Some Notes on Picturing Children

Before writing the conclusions, this chapter discusses a prologue to historical representational practices in picturing children. The original intent of the thesis has to focus on the representations of women and girls only. However, in order to provide an introductory section for further research, I have incorporated historical representations of children. The materials used for this section includes the earliest picture postcards of boys and girls made by the Italians. It includes other comparative analysis of newspaper publications within the Ethiopian Press in order to comment on the contents of archives.



Figure 83: *Africa Orientale- Ragazze Abissine*, Postcard of Italians, n.d: Curtsy of IES Collection

In the first section of chapter four, I discussed orientalist depictions of Abyssinian women and girls by the Fascist Italians. I argued that those picture postcards are colonial

fantasies rather than appropriate representations of Ethiopians. The first three postcards give us access to how boys were captured in relation to the ideologies of the Italians. Figure 83 provides no context to specific locations where these two boys had lived. From the site of figure 83, a reader can identify that a boy is made to sit on the floor while the other one is framed by putting his elbow on the head of the other one. The two boys appear with exactly same costumes. The picture does not provide the surrounding context that would have allowed a reader to have access to the architectural or civilisations of their environment (see chapter 4, pg. 90-96).

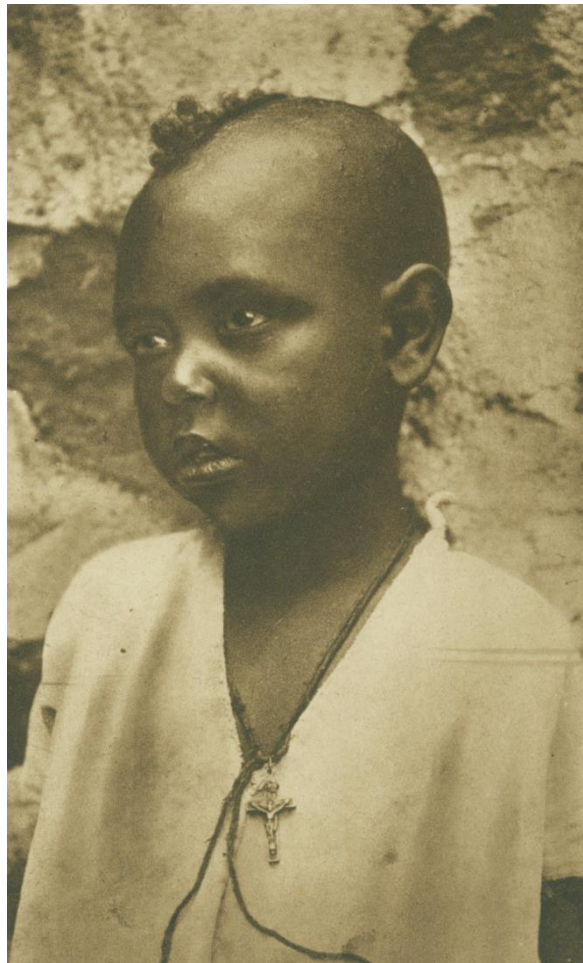


Figure 84: *Africa Orientale, Piccolo Cristiano, n.d.*, Curtesy of IES Collection

In a similar way, ‘Piccolo Cristiano’ (figure 84) postcard is framed as a Christian boy as if he is pleading to God. The boy has a cross hanging in his neck on a black thread. This symbolically signifies that the boy must have been born from a Christian family. He is posed as a lone child with sad looking eyes. In the contemporary world, critiques of colonial perspectives ask if there is a space untouched by the colonial narratives about a place using

symbols and metaphors (Rajan, 1993). The earliest visual encounters of foreign photography in Ethiopia, specially produced under Mussolini's regime, provide us with visual histories that had little connections with that of real communities of the time. Even in some cases (figure 85) where children are pictured in outside settings, there is a lack of other narratives except sadness. Within the frame, a glimpse of a concrete stone building is vivid as backdrop. By deliberately excluding it from the frame, viewers are denied visual access to the architectural glories of ancient civilisation.



Figure 85: *Africa Orientale; Scugnizzi Eeritrei*, n.d., Curtsy of IES Collection

Children's images were used to symbolise poverty. Since The First World War pictures of sad looking children were used in European practices of picturing war and disaster as they assumed that audiences would sympathise with them. In the international media images of Ethiopian girls are "doubly pathologised as unchildlike and as unfeminine" (Burman, 1994: 244). Such institutions can bury narratives about the capabilities of children in urban and rural setting. Even at the national level, the EPA archives contain better visualisations of children. As discussed in chapter 4, published materials omit visual narratives of children, since the focus is on leaders and important political figures.

As an alternative to the dominant productions of pictures of leaders in the Ethiopian Press Agency, selected few photographs of children from the archives of the Press can tell us about the different activities of girls and boys. If we consider the texts and photographic

portraits that have appeared in *The Ethiopian Herald*, social issues cover children as victims of child labour. More positive imagery about children appears in the sport pages of the newspapers but they are insignificant in terms of coverage and news items. In the *Society* page, de-contextualised adoptions of western oriented quality of life often fix the world of children dominantly as adults and sufferers. Despite the fact that children usually perform in different occasions, press power structures deliberately suppress the activities of girls. Circus Ethiopia, for instance, has a long history of children's participation in official ceremonies since 1990s.



Figure 86: Circus Ethiopia, Unpublished Material, Addis Ababa, 09/10/97 © EPA

The above figure shows this exclusion from published newspaper. Again since the news coverage is about inaugural ceremonies or official government programmes, children's active participations in organised events is neglected. Reviewing the use of performances in different parts of Africa, Neiderstadt (2009) has explored the use of Circus Ethiopia in order to bring about social and behavioural changes, particularly about HIV/AIDS. Despite the fact that children and youth are part of events that the government organises to celebrate national cultures and to enact the equality of various ethnically organised cultures through performances, press agency excludes the agency of children in different inaugural ceremonies.

The economic and political dimensions of Circus Ethiopia in performing combinations of martial arts, gymnastics and traditional dances are neglected from image

productions. Emphasis is given to officials who exercise authority. While the state uses Circus Ethiopia as children's participations in the public sphere, the underlining functions of such performing acts in promoting state narratives on the equality of different cultures are not acknowledged in media narratives. Even though they are important contemporary performers through which state narratives about cultural diversities and national identities are enacted, the power structure that selects supreme government officials as symbols of unity omit children and youth participations in building and performing the core of state policy.

The archive of Ethiopian Press Agency, however, offers wider coverage of everyday citizens. These transformations of visual forms have no ethical considerations. Unlike charity organisations, there is no consent form in using images of children. Similar to that of development agendas, images of women living in semi-urban areas are still about the opening up of schools and children attending classes. In recent publications of The Ethiopian Herald, dominant image productions are thus either children getting access to basic education or access to clean water. As discussed in chapter 4 (pg.106), these are similar stories as they are reports of the development agendas of the government of Ethiopia national and international and aid organisations. Those productions of news items are, therefore, in relation to media that support news releases, the news of development activities, and reflections of Ethiopia's millennium goal of poverty reduction.



Figure 87: Girls Singing New Year's Song, Amhara Region, 12/09/95 ©EPA

As opposed to posed pictures, group pictures of young girls show as girls activities before Ethiopian New Year's Eve which is on 11/12 September. Figure 87 was captured when a staff journalist of EPA was following a government official in the Amhara region. It shows rural aesthetics of girls. At New Year there are a number of children gather together to sing a traditional song of the new flower particularly. Locating children's activities in specific locations, therefore, provides us with insights into their diverse activities.

In Ethiopia development activities promote gender participation, equality, and micro-financing. Archival photographs are resources for further research on gender relations between men and women, leaders and the everyday, children and the youth and the everyday lives of rural, urban and semi-urban areas. In such a way they provide different narratives that are intelligible to specific localities.

The figure below is produced to illustrate child labour in rural areas without contextualising the concept of childhood in Ethiopia. The image archives of the EPA are fragments of everyday lives that are influenced by development photo-journalism. This is so because the photographic productions lack essays that could narrate stories in more elaborate ways. Since photojournalism does not entail everyday activities of people, we are stranded with inefficient productions. However, some of the productions indicate the everyday of the youth in rural areas while at the same time giving us impressions of temporality, if we juxtapose images of the everyday women and youth with those of leaders and officials.



Figure 88: A child performing plough agriculture, Amhara Region, 3/10/2002 Unpublished Material © EPA

The photographic encounters are temporal, unintended images. Most of them are products when photographers are out in field trips. The original intentions are following important national and international dignitaries while they are visiting important development sites in remote areas. Most of the photographs from the archives of the EPA are accounts of specific time and place despite the fact that the EPA is disinterested in publishing those images. An over emphasis on the narratives of child labour, for instance, denies children's participation in farming. In such a way, figure 88 presents a wide angle image that provides completely unaware work portrait of a boy practicing plough agriculture in the vicinity.

Significant changes took place in picturing individuals from the beginning of the 2008 within the practice of EPA. Male leaders continue to dominate front page pictures. One of government's millennium poverty reduction goals is to provide access to primary school for all children. In state owned newspapers, pictures in a classroom setting begun to appear more frequently to narrate the increase in number of children with access to primary education. On child labour, for instance, there seems to be a difference in depicting children living in rural areas as opposed to those who live in urban areas. Children's images and news articles changed in terms of news coverage about education. Happy children's attending schools are

depicted as laughing with hand waves. The news item is about the increase in the number of children attending primary school in Oromia region (ENA, 2008b).

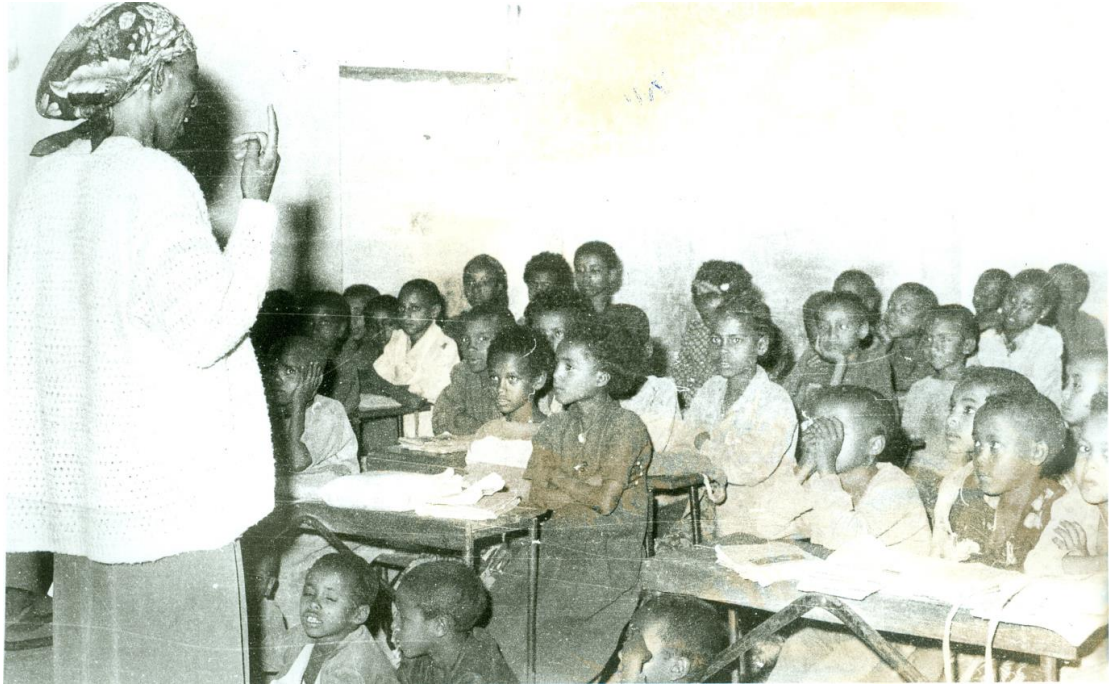


Figure 89: Children in a classroom, Amhara region, 29/08/98 © EPA

Male and female students are put together in a classroom setting. Three or four students are sitting sharing one desk. A woman seems to be teaching them. The viewer is denied an opportunity to see the facial expression of the teacher. From her style of dress a viewer who knows the semi urban dress codes of teachers would immediately connect the figure with that of urban areas outside of Addis Ababa. The hand gesture signifies that the woman is speaking to students. Blackboards are deliberately excluded from the content of the photographic image. We do not have access to the voice of a teacher or the subject matter of a topic. Students are pictured in such a way that some are paying attention to the teaching learning process. Especially those who sit at front desk seem to be attending the class with enthusiasm, while those who sit at the back are looking to different directions. Some of them who are placed at the centre of a camera angle or composition are looking directly into the camera lens. There are even those who sit on the floor due to lack of enough desk space. From the picture, therefore, we can see the overpopulated spaces of children in a classroom setting. The image was taken in 1998, in the Amhara region. There is no place identification of the archive. The picture is captioned as ‘children learning in school’. Recently practical problems of gender gaps among primary school attendees have been improved by minimizing

the gap between the number of boys and girls as part of the millennium development goal of education (Action Aid Ethiopia, 2012).



Figure 90: Young girls attending sex education, Southern Region, 29/12/2000 ©EPA

In repetitive representations, children are often portrayed while attending lessons. Some of the news items about the education sector are accompanied by positive imagery of children who are sought to spend more time in school than working in farmland. They are also portrayed in sport activities such as football and basketball. On child labour, for instance, there seems to be a difference in depicting children living in rural areas as opposed to those who live in urban areas. Posed in a rural setting, a photograph of two boys is juxtaposed with an urban household. The rural children are portrayed washing clothes, while the urban extreme depicts 4 girls relaxing, sitting on a couch and reading some papers. The picture is captioned as “Traditionally Ethiopian Parents deprive a lot of opportunities their children deserve for lack of awareness as to the implications of their actions” (ENA, 2008c).

In contrast to such government led narratives, independent photographers tell other stories. For instance, one of Fiorente’s fascinations is picturing children in a playground (2003). In a country where children are historically pictured and presented as young adults who are burdened with caring for themselves, his works offer the world of children and youth in sport. Pictured in what was called “C meda”, the photograph captures the boys

playing football in central Addis Ababa in a muddy playground next to Addis Ababa stadium. This work was displayed in different venues and galleries curated by Leo Lefort.



Figure 91: Source: *Antoniofiorente.com* (2009), Photo by Antonio Fiorente

What do we learn from the above photographs? The picture postcards are the earliest encounters of foreign photographers, who began to construct sad looking children with no family care what so ever. Since the Italians were perpetuating the narrative of Ethiopia as savage and backward, children were pictured to circulate the idea that in Abyssinia children are left alone to raise themselves. This is done by excluding their support structures in a family or community level. At the national level, ever since access to primary school became one of government's millennium poverty reduction goals, many children's classroom settings began to appear more frequently in EPA publications. Dominant productions of images of children made by the Ethiopian Press Agency, and across different medium such as paintings or documentary photographs, have inter-visual characters in what they cover about rural landscapes. Across mediums rural landscapes are romanticized for possessing an organic culture of Ethiopia, or an authentic culture of Ethiopia. General image productions by the national institutions resonate with those concepts that shaped by public media and the currency value attached to the photography in terms of obtaining funds. From paintings about ethnic cultures, to portraits of women who fetch water, these repeatedly circulated images can

have a double impact. There are some omissions and inclusions in image productions. This thesis recommends further research into children's representations by looking at the works of existing independent photographers and other emerging photographers.

Most of the image productions of EPA seem to be devoid of contextualizing the rural landscape in specific time. Farmer parents often prefer to have at least 6/7 children to fill labour intensive works of plough agriculture. Specifically fetching water is girls' work, despite the fact that government propagates such role stratifications as exploitative child labour. The majority of images of children largely focus on children attending school as success stories of government initiatives, and young girls participating in fetching tap water as these are state narratives in achieving the government's millennium goal. An over-emphasis on rural women burdened with daily lives portrays everyday women as victims of harmful traditions, even though education in different parts of Ethiopia has altered the impacts of those harmful traditions. In some of the pictures women are portrayed in more positive ways, such as women who occupy chairs appearing as speakers on behalf of the rest of the society. Often they are portrayed as exercising certain levels of authority. This chapter can serve as a starting point for future scholars to explore further the representations of the everyday activities of children. There is a lack of material on young people's agency in Ethiopia both in textual and photographic forms.

Chapter Eight

8. Prospects of the Historical and Contemporary Photographic Representations of Female Bodies: Conclusions

This research is a reflection of the main research question of the thesis which is an enquiry to the contest of representation of female bodies in colonial adverts, tourism adverts, print media, NGOs and exhibition?! It compares historical and contemporary photographic representations of female bodies by taking the works of Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian photographers as case study materials. The introduction has situated the research questions in relation to existing literature that has already explored stereotypical representations of Ethiopia for appeal purposes. It has argued that images of female bodies that are repeatedly used for fundraising appeals homogenise capable individuals as recipients of aid without agency. The issue of representations demands a move from only contextualising stereotypes to an exploration of multiple narratives, including the poetics of representations. In this research, I have argued that there are more complex relations in picturing human subjects than inanimate things. From a photographer's and institutions' point of view, picturing landscapes, animals or still life can be easier since they pose fewer ethical considerations than human beings. Despite such ethical issues, the spaces of representations are increasingly becoming global, where photographs of people and places are used alternatively as modes of representation.

The research has focused on the influences of historical representations of female bodies on contemporary representations. This is relevant because most of the photographic images of Ethiopian people are composed and distributed through translocal and transnational relations, particularly about development and development aid, including relief works. Feminist notions of inequality, materiality and performativity and drama are major concepts that this thesis uses to identify how women and girls were historically objectified in the photographic representational practices. The relationship of the historical representation and contemporary representation shows the material objectivity of the female body. This is visible in male dominated job of picture postcards of Ethiopia. Otherness and sameness are blurred in tourism adverts. To tackle this, Wright (1996), Jones (2001) and Amoamo (2011) have stressed the feminist perspectives that enable elites to speak about other everyday

women. In the same fashion this research has incorporated the voices of elite photographers in order to explore contestations of the visual representations of female bodies.

As stated in chapter two, the theoretical framing ranges from feminism to postcolonial thoughts and intersections of feminist geographies. Feminist notions of gender embodiment in seeking a third space for accurate representations of women and girls demand a move from the concept of a visual field (Campbell, 2007) only to the agency of institutions and agency of freelance photographers. Like exhibition spaces, the photographic image can be a unique space of representation, by which independent as well as NGO commissioned works can yield ethically appropriate visualisations of human conditions. These better visualisations are vivid in picture compositions. As discussed in chapters five and six, awareness of global photographic discourses on iconic images, accumulated knowledge of seeing and the grammar of visual languages matter the way freelance photographers contest gender portrayals in picturing food aid and people who are most at risk of STDs.

One of the contributions of this research is in addressing the NGO practice of picturing interventions of food insecurity by collaborating with local photographers. Findings show that the works of Ethiopian freelance photographers contest the way female bodies are composed in photographic images. Unlike ‘parachute photojournalists’, freelance photographers based in Ethiopia are able to subvert stereotypes or over sensationalised images. Over the past 15 years, scholarly writings have focused on contextualising and de-contextualising colonial photography and post-colonial photography. Most importantly after the 1984 famine images (See Chapter 2), many of the discussions have been about the positive versus negative imagery of NGOs’ emergency relief works. Even in the discourse of ‘global poverty’, Dogra (2012) argues that the representation of the global North is in relation to the way it sees itself against the global South. The representation of humanitarian activities should be about the ‘joining’ of the ‘self’ and ‘other’ representations rather than of ‘othering’. The specificities of documentary photography as a medium of representation (Duve, 2010; Solomon-Gideau, 2010), photography as visual material, and feminist contentions of gender embodiment are relevant interpretive approaches that this research has adopted to explore representational practices through an exploration of the relations of the photographer with that of the photographed (see Hayes, 2007).

Feminist idea of gender embodiment and spatial representations are blurred in the practice of picturing in Ethiopia. The narrative of spatial organisation in different places of Ethiopia is gendered performance that is linked to the cultural landscape of Ethiopia.

8.1. Methodological Implication

Methodologically, beyond the photography as contact zones between the photographer and the photographed (Pinney, 2003), the research has emphasised the importance of looking behind the scenes to address a key question: to whom an image is made? The contests of representations require analysis of how institutional demands are negotiated among freelance photographers, editors, and communication officers. From the photographers' intent, this research has argued that it is possible to compose new forms of visual language other than iconic images of mother and children. Rather than concepts of vulnerability, the styles of individual photographers can meticulously visualise vulnerability and drought in such a way that integrates the cultural, environmental and social contexts within the photographic image.

A focus on the photographers' intent also yields ideas for policy makers as to how local communities should be pictured for development interventions. Whether it is participatory photographs, or works solely composed by the photographers, employing anthropological methods such as participant observation or doing ethnography during pre-photographic times can yield better representations and visualisations of a community (see photo-essays of freelance photographers, and extracts of their interviews in chapter 5 and 6). Perhaps Fiorente's commentary sums up best practice in a community. 'If you have acceptance then you are free! Everybody will be much more supportive' (Interview with Antonio Fiorente, 01/07/2011).

Methodologically the project has incorporated the voices of contemporary photographers, academics, curators and social workers. The overall methodological approach, with its focus on contemporary works, compliments the limits of accessing detailed empirical data about historical archival materials. The contents of documentary photography share similar themes with other medium. Some of the works of photographers have inter-ocular characters with other historical art such as paintings, and sculpture (see pg.212; pg.34).

I have not taken the photographs back to the subjects in order to incorporate the voices of the represented in the thesis. As I have stated earlier *audiencing* is not part of the analysis mainly because others have conducted this technique in Ethiopia (see Clark, 2009). Findings from scholarly works written after the photographs were taken back to interview the individuals in the picture, that is *audiencing*, stress that drought vulnerable individuals were pleased that they were photographed and were able to get assistance afterwards (Clark, 2009). I have found such responses problematic because these individuals or the represented may not be aware of the long term effects of images including the constructs of poverty. The material objectivity of a photograph can be interpreted beyond the representation of an individual. It includes the symbolism behind it in portraying a country and people over long time. Postcolonial feminism and an awareness of iconography have to do with education and consciousness (see Lavretis, 1990). Rose (1997:315) articulates that a feminist researcher posits herself in a careful position of objective reasoning to fill the research gap rather than having a ‘surveyor’ and ‘surveyed’ dichotomy between the researcher and the researched (Wells, 1997). Hence, ‘otherness’ and ‘sameness’ are negotiated in the power of knowledge.

The modernist version of tackling stereotypes by producing only alternative narratives, for example, by shooting middle class people to counter the narratives of poverty is not adopted among Ethiopian photographers. Most of the well-established Ethiopian photographers are still picturing everyday people, including economically disadvantaged women in both commissioned and independent works. Most of these images are both about poverty and strength. Some of the practitioners who work in composing development aid in Ethiopia contest the way photographs of vulnerable women and girls are portrayed. Its findings emanate from the importance of exploring images of female bodies involved with food relief and at risk of HIV/AIDS. This topic is relevant because iconic famine images of Ethiopian women and girls are what global audiences remember about Ethiopia. This thesis has argued that Ethiopian photographers are reworking images of drought and relief works, as shown in photo-essays of the 2011 Horn of Africa drought situations. Some Ethiopian freelance photographers develop their own styles and concepts through which the dominant means of representation through the agency of international NGOs and mainstream media can be contested, particularly in alternative means of circulations such as exhibitions.

Such alternative means of circulations create dialogue among independent artists and photographers. The representational practices to some extent have responded to historical photographic encounters of the West with the non-West communities. Most of their

independent works speak back to the way Ethiopian people have been pictured as barbaric, backward, and poverty ridden inhabitants of barren wastelands.

The significance of this research lies in its reflections on the relationships of development aid to images of everyday Ethiopian people, and branding a nation's image by all possible means. These two issues need to encapsulate the representations of women and girls as individuals, and how a nation's memory, identity and everyday lives are constructed through icons, symbols or images of individuals. Building Ethiopia's images in ways that could tell diverse untold stories and visualising invisibles of the everyday could change Ethiopia's image globally.

Photographic images are problematic because meanings, metaphors, and symbols are attached to them rather than the original visual event at which a photographer captures a certain moment (McEwan, 2009). Some of the key lessons from this project range from the analysis of photo-essays of relief works about AIDS, drought and malnutrition to independent projects themed as 'Ethiopia'. Charity organisations still use photographic images of women and girls for humanitarian appeals. Photographers are aware of emerging practices of picturing humans rather than 'parachute photography'. But this does not mean that they are ignorant about how their works can be cropped, manipulated and used by institutions that commission them. As will be discussed in section 8.2, exploring processes of image making is relevant to reflecting on development aid imagery. Development aid imagery ranges from drought and famine relief works to HIV/AIDS relief works. Since notions of progress and development employ picture postcards as well as photo-essays, looking back to historical practices of picturing are essential to reflect on contemporary, translocal and transnational practices of picturing development and development aid.

Though the introduction of photography to the royal families in Ethiopia started not as a 'colonizing camera', but as a friendly knowledge exchange, the coming in of foreign photographers had a similar colonial gaze as the rest of Africa, specifically when they picture other everyday people of Ethiopia. As will be discussed in the following section, such practices of picturing should be rechecked since contemporary ways of creating photo narratives are not entirely free from how the everyday people of Ethiopia have been historically pictured as savages.

8.2. Looking Back to Historical Representations & Its Relationship on Contemporary Ways of Seeing

This project has focused on translocal practices of picturing female bodies, taking both the diachronic and synchronic approach of tracing representational practices through history to reflect on contemporary photographic practices. Chapter four analyses the earliest dominant means of circulations as picture postcards. The main focus of the study is about everyday women, since dominant representational practices about Ethiopian women or Ethiopia were made either by exoticising some groups who live near the Omo valley, or famine images of mother and children since 1970s. The earliest pictures that portrayed Abyssinian women were produced during the Italian occupation period of Ethiopia, 1936 – 1941. The Fascist Italian government had commissioned photographers. Some of these commissioned works were retouched as picture postcards. These picture postcards were used as currency for propaganda purposes to persuade its audience (see chapter 4). These rare collections of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies enable us to look back at how knowledge about Abyssinian women began to be constructed.

The Italian fascist government has circulated pictures often depicting over-sexualised poses of northern Abyssinian women while dehumanizing other women from the Southern regions, particularly those living near the Omo valley. By the end of 19th century, the European coinage of Abyssinians as barbarians was further exacerbated as they manoeuvred images of Africans for conquest and colonial aspirations. By the 1930s Abyssinian women were pictured to illustrate and inform about Fascist Italian colonial ideologies. Fascist ideology was to teach barbaric and savage Ethiopians, rather than exploiting the culture and resources of Ethiopia through Fascism. Coming back to Rajan's question about a space that is not contaminated by the colonial ideology, findings of this research show that the constructs of place are far more complex, and the ways of seeing can be manipulative, and relational. Despite the fact that Ethiopia was not colonized by the Italians, picture postcards propagated through such a system have portrayed the fantasies of western travellers and photographers with their gaze mainly focusing on bigger sized and sexually appealing breasts. Women and girls were passive victims of forceful and subjective voyeurism.

Orientalist depictions of women symbolise the fixture of beauty to a young age. Taffese commented that most of the work of art about Ethiopia is 'inverted---European

version of Perseus and Andromeda' created based on Greek mythology (2004). Mulugeta Taffese's expression summarises the European practice of picturing by which posing, intertextuality and inter-ocularity of the Renaissance Christian art and Ethiopia's image become visible. Orientalist depictions of Ethiopian women, therefore, show the power that relates place and people in a space of representations. Like people from the rest of Africa, Ethiopia too was exposed to dominant practices of picturing racial types, customs and values with little emphasis on the dignity of the subjects. The Ethiopian case is, therefore, a classic example of the Italian and many other western fantasies of dominancy in the absence of direct political domination over Ethiopia. Such narratives were made by particularly gazing upon women and girls who were often regarded as passive and powerless members of societies. The research has explored how the 1930s picture postcards made by the Italians have inculcated othering that composed female bodies as if Ethiopians were available for sexual fantasies of the Italian settlers.

At the national level, perhaps more than the written texts, pictures of female bodies of Ethiopians dominate postcards of ETC and state owned newspaper publications as tourism adverts. Unlike pictures of traditional societies, postcard images of women from the northern Ethiopia are symbols of beauty and unity. They are constructed as national emblems. Even Ethiopia is symbolically feminised and often referred to in folklore and classical paintings as 'Mother Ethiopia'. Imagery of the southern women in tourism adverts as thirteen months of sunshine celebrate diversity. The narratives expose the richness of Ethiopian culture that is comprised of over 80 different languages with specific customs and norms. These constructs, however, silence the historical 'othering' of peripheral women in Ethiopia. This research, therefore, may contribute by exposing lessons learned from charity's practices of picturing everyday people. Dignity and ethical issues in picturing subjects have become a major concern of international NGOs. In a similar fashion tourism office in Ethiopia can develop ethically appropriate photo guidelines, picture policies and consent forms in picturing traditional societies.

Rather than commodifying their images in tourism adverts, the Ethiopian Press Agency and Ministry of Culture should diversify the narratives of traditional society as active participants in changing cultural transformations. In order to achieve equal opportunities to brand people's image, and by extension Ethiopia's image, we need to create awareness of 'othering' in self-representation perpetuated in state narratives. Since the 1960s, the ETC's postcards and posters of Southern people have never been constructed as representatives of

the Ethiopian community. Even in festivals in major town or city avenues, tourism has shifted from just using posters and postcards to half nude live body performances of some of the Southern women. The ETC, as well as some editorial of The Ethiopian Herald daily newspaper use photographs of half nude images of these women. Such picture compositions have similar contents to the historical images with which western photographers have objectified female bodies of Ethiopians. None of the Ethiopian institutions has problematized this historical lineage of picture compositions. In this sense the representational practice or the state narrative blurs the distinctions between othering and self-representation.

Contemporary productions of these compositions still exploit traditional society's custom and values so as to attract foreign travellers. Commodification of authentic photographic images was often silenced within the Ministry of Culture. Some of these picture postcards have also adopted national geographic pictures with their intent on exoticising and objectifying female bodies captured in ethnographic sites. Surprisingly picture postcards of the ETC published under the logo of 'Thirteen Months of Sunshine' are still reprinted. By resituating picture postcards in relation to historical images, the thesis provides some insights on the relation of self and other representations. In Churchill Road, Addis Ababa, where there are many tourist shops, one can observe that these picture postcards are available in the street of Addis Ababa. Without tracing change among people living in peripheries, repetitive circulations of those postcards could perpetuate the narratives that these people are static and unchanging³³. They could create a false impression that ultimately portrays de-contextualised imagery of some of the Southern women as if they are untouched by technological, environmental and human transformations. In various constructs, both for local photographers and foreign photographers, performed, and 'staged authenticity' of these people as static other are omitted from written texts, captions and state narratives.

Problematizing such imagery may help the national tourism office to develop well-crafted, ethically appropriate guidelines in picturing women as bearers of customs and traditional values. Consideration of ethical issues in tourism developments may deter organisers from allowing performances of de-contextualized bodies through posters and postcards or live female bodies. Contemporary translocal and transnational practices of picturing or representations of women and girls reflect the history of photography in Ethiopia. Whether it is postcards produced for tourism purposes, or photos produced for other

³³ This research analyses only picture postcards published by the Ethiopian Tourism Commission. Interested individuals could further explore picture postcards published by independent artists, including photographers.

development aid activities, composing the photographic image of these subjects have links with historical photographic encounters.

In relation to tourism imagery and branding a nation, I have already identified areas such as the research design of “Promoting Natural and Cultural Heritage of Ethiopia”, which is European Union initiated project. Some aspects of the project design are related to the image of Ethiopia made for tourist consumption in the form of picture postcards and posters. Chapter four has articulated a gender analysis of the relations of historical ‘othering’ with that of ‘self’ representations at the national level. A summary of gender issues that I forwarded to this heritage project proposal assist implementations of gender mainstreaming policy of Ethiopia’s constitution in all heritage aspects (see Appendix 5 for a summary of this contribution).

The other institutional agency that this thesis explores is the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA). Initiated by the global response for development, Ethiopia’s development policy also collaborates with international development aid organisations. Women in authority and other everyday women are analysed in the gendered portrayal analysis of The Ethiopian Herald daily newspaper. Compared with photos published in the early 1990s, there is a lack of powerful photojournalistic work since the EPA mostly uses portraits of government officials. Most of the time women who occupy posts in different government offices appear in what is called soft news, such as women’s health issues and child rights, while men are pictured as speakers holding decision-making and other political positions. The EPA could work on enhancing capacity building in creating awareness about censorship and unnecessary fear among editorial boards. Even if the news is about everyday women, published materials from Ethiopian News Agency omit photographs of everyday women. Men officials appear as authoritative and speakers on behalf of the rest of the society. Increasing portrayals of women in parliament and some political posts seem promising, but they are still not portrayed as authoritative in leadership. The development journalism (see chapter 4) of the EPA emphasises on news items of change and improvements of rural development. In this imagery the current government portrays itself as agents of change on the living standards of the local community particularly those inhabiting the rural landscape.

Those marginalized women are rarely represented in the photojournalism practices of the EPA. In recent photo publications a portrait of female owners of farmlands is overly publicised to feed into government’s appeal to win the hearts of the majority agrarian people

following its adoption of an agriculture-led economy. Some women farmers are pictured as role models. Other than photographs of very few individuals, government officials are often portrayed as mediators and agents of change. There is no need to deny that Ethiopia is going through different development transformations, particularly through the business activities of local and foreign investors. Picturing such development activities published in *The Ethiopian Herald* often constructs the government and its officials as agents of change. Most of the time, they portray them cutting ribbons during inaugural ceremonies. Everyday people are rarely featured in such development activities. Contemporary development agendas, such as picturing women as they fetch potable water, dominate the images commissioned by NGOs and state owned organisations.

These images are meant to meet the demands of international donors made through such policies such as the UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of supplying clean water to all people by 2015. Visual narratives in commercial galleries and photojournalism about everyday rural women and girls are that they are burdened with day to day activities in rural settings. They show women and girls as they fetch water from afar. In the imagery most of these women are portrayed fetching water from newly constructed water pipes without showing their diverse roles in the household and public spheres, or even the journey that they might take to access water. Such narratives may expose what the system robs communal properties such as clean, natural, cold spring water sources before the coming of bottled water. Other activities of these people, such as secular and religious community gatherings or leisure activities are missing from the picturesque of rural landscape.

In the case of young girls and boys, adoptions of western centric assumptions about childhood means images still portray these rural young boys and girls as victims of domestic violence, including abduction, rape and child labour. Girls and boys living in urban centres are often portrayed as people who live in luxury. The photojournalistic narratives, therefore, fail to tease out the luxury and poverty experienced by both rural and urban inhabitants. This is to say that urban lives are usually imagined as people living in luxury. News items about children largely focus on rights of children. Their roles in a family, as well as their day to day activities, are absent from our dominant representations. The image world influences the way society sees women and girls. What society knows about real people is highly influenced by the image world since documentary photography due to high degree of resemblance has the power to blur these distinct worlds. Even at the national level there are grand visual narratives about everyday women. Since media portrayals of people forge a single narrative, a

deconstruction of such images still demands a further study as most travel and ethnographic photo books and catalogues remain least explored in most of scholarly works in Ethiopia.

There is a distinction about the image world and the real world. The image world dealing with social documentary is a bi-product of top-down development activities in tackling slow on-set emergency aid imagery. The use of photographs along with written texts by associations and institutions can alter the original photographic encounters or photo-essays of specific events, unless a reader carefully articulates the photographic image before it goes through processes for publications. Chapter five has argued that exploring different visual experiences, such as the photographer's original encounters and editorial choices, are important ways of tracing the change in meanings of images. In order to do justice to some of the photo-essays, I have compared published images with some of archival materials to investigate the agency of photographers, the image itself and the power of institutions that commissioned them.

8.3. Reflections on Development Aid Imagery of Women and Girls

There is confusion between actual objects and humans and images of things and humans. This has affected the way women and girls from the developing world are perceived among the public. In the Ethiopian case, those who are engaged in empowering third world women such as social workers in international humanitarian organisations tend to argue that a discourse on development aid imagery of female bodies is less important because it may hamper efforts to expose social problems. They argue that exposing such social issues is more relevant than other ethical considerations and knowledge productions. The repetitive circulations of iconic images as symbols and metaphors neglect long term negative implications on Ethiopia. With the exception of a few scholarly works that critique the photographic image of development aid in Ethiopia (see chapter five of this thesis), there are limited discussions on the contest of representations through development and aid imagery.

Charity organisations are collaborating with locally based Ethiopian freelance photographers instead of hiring foreign photographers. Such a move has positive implications for good practice because it provides a better way of reflecting the voices of the community, including mothers, guardians or families in picturing children. It involves knowing the cultural and socio economic contexts of their own subjects as well as the physical and cultural landscapes before creating photo stories.

As I have argued in chapter five, Ethiopian photographers have captured food aid distributions as well as drought situations in the Horn of Africa. These photographers have managed to rework the photographic images of drought against those that capture a mother breast feeding a child, and a lone malnourished child. Photo-essays made by Khuraam Mahsood for Save the Children have similar conceptual arguments in avoiding negative imagery of children. Despite the fact that his photo-essays composed different activities of children and women on arrival at Dolo Ado Refugee Centre, the editor who is based in the United Kingdom, published iconic images of children. In conclusion the publicity of such imagery is hardly free from the currency values of the photographic images of children, specifically those perpetuated by international charity organisations. In this chapter I have also argued that some NGOs such as Save the Children have developed their own iconography of a fly-faced/ fly-eyed child, and a malnourished child with a medical instrument on her/his arms as representations of starving children preferred by picture editors.

Most of the respondents among communication officers based in Save the Children, GIZ, and World Vision stress that they commission Ethiopian freelance photographers when they need to visually explore social problems, such as the effects of drought, famine, and deadly diseases. It is a tradition to send professional photographers to accompany officials or actors on field visits to help fundraise for charity organisations. There is no need to provoke a geocentric view that claims that since photographers are of African and Ethiopian origin they have 'better' or more accurate forms of representation. These photographers have international reputations. Calling them African photographers, which is a geocentric view, casts away their international or global experiences. Contestations over representation by the photographer are individualistic and depend largely on accumulated knowledge and previous exposure to dominant practices of picturing Ethiopians. While these aspects may play a role, individual styles in the way they compose female subjects go beyond nationalist perspectives.

For most of the practitioners, collaborating with German led development agencies are far better practices of picturing, because the main focus of the photographic image is on images narrating transformations through opening up of new industries and companies run jointly by Ethiopia and Germany. In the case of emergency food aid works initiated by a German institute, picture editors do not want to publicise logos that indicate any German branded food and cooking oil. These practices involve some of ethical considerations as well as photographic narratives with more focus on development interventions, such as new urban constructions and interventions to alter drought situations rather than disaster and relief works. The German development agencies, Agro Action and GIZ, have learnt better ways of

representation, with more focus on pictures that portray interventions rather than manipulative images of the poor. Ethiopian photographers negate minimalist compositions, such as a stretched hand or close-up pictures of a lone child, as well as cropped photo that would otherwise offer wider environmental contexts (refer figure 1, pg.40 for minimalist compositions). They rather incorporate the environmental and social contexts within the image.

Pictures that lack contexts within the content of an image are often used to obtain fund/ grants. In the case of commissioned works, therefore, what matters most are the intertextualities of a charity organisation's constructs, and photo edits rather than just the original photographic encounter. Unlike previous aid imagery, some of the pictures indicate a reworking of drought imagery by creating alternative visualizations of climate change. For example, instead of capturing close-up images of carcasses, Yemane Gebre-Medhin juxtaposes carcasses with images of other healthy looking cattle and camels, and the shepherd within the image (see figure 32). Similarly Micheal Tsegaye captures a male farmer pulling out a corn seed that was sown two years ago (see figure 33). The visual language is, thus, becoming too individualistic that symbolises different aspects of drought, malnutrition, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, rather than just the feminisation of such landscape. Through collaborative efforts, picturing drought has moved from personifying its impacts through mother and child images, to incorporating how they are affected by environmental catastrophes. Imaging people with urgent social needs has inter-ocular characters with accumulated knowledge of the visual art. Representing their own people, these photographers compose images outside of the usual conventions of picturing relief works. Images of development activities construct men as active participants while women are constructed as passive in those activities.

For Ethiopian photographers the international humanitarian organisation's work can be more challenging because they are forced to go along with the demands of these NGOs who tell them to create photo stories based on their needs. Their works that picture local communities positively may not find their way onto these institutions' websites since editors control the selection of images. In most cases they address the visual economy and the demands of their audiences because the editorial boards and website designers of big charity organisations, such as The Red Cross and Crescent Society, Save the Children and World Vision are located in cities such as London, Washington DC and New York.

Historical visual encounters also play a significant role in the way development aid imagery has been pictured and circulated. Whether it is charity organisations or news

agencies, images of female bodies that appeal to audiences have greater commercial implications than an issue of appropriate representations. They may help in exposing hidden problems of society since there might be shame attached to making those issues public to a wider audience via mainstream media and social media. International charity organisations collaborate with international news agencies to expose emergency situations.

Charity organisations produce photo-essays about poor women living in Ethiopia or in most of 'third world' countries. These are usually pictured during visits of important dignitaries such as film actors and officials. Their main focus has been in picturing aid distributions for the most affected people where they capture women and girls as they get primary medical aid and food aid. Charity organisations have also developed a strategy to take back photographs to beneficiaries so that the subjects may comment on how they are portrayed. With the exception of emergency relief works, subjects have also signed consent agreements about future use of such imagery. Visual literacy levels of most of the beneficiaries are, however, too low to make a critical view about their own photo narratives. For instance, majority of them may not connect these photographs with iconography of poverty. These subjects aim to obtain aid and free supplies rather than thinking about the long term effects of repetitive dependency narratives.

In the case of the 2011, Horn of Africa drought situations, two constructs emerged from photo-essays that explored those who had received primary aid before the impacts of climate change hit their properties hard. In the first set of photo-essays by Yemane-Gebre-Medhin, the capabilities of women and girls are excluded. They portray them not as doers of any act but as peaceful recipients of food aid. They are often pictured as those who fall on the mercy of these charity organisations. In contrast men are captured as active participants often collaborating with NGOs to overcome society's basic needs. Some social workers have identified that these people travel long distances to reach aid centres, camps or sites to receive free food and health services. Most of the photo-essays that get circulated via these institutions do not show how those children become malnourished.

This is why we need to problematize repetitive photographs of Ethiopian women as helpless mothers stretching their hands for food, and children as half-naked and malnourished little bodies. As some have already pointed out, such imagery has neglected the long term consequences of repetitive circulations. In the second set of photo-essays made by Micheal Tsegaye, female headed households are posed depicting their activities in relation to how they have used development aid. But commissioned photo stories produce narratives

dominantly in relation to staged pictures of development aid by excluding the diverse activities and roles that these women and girls may play in day to day activities.

Technically, most charity organisations focus largely on obtaining a powerful image of a mother or a child image in order to show malnutrition, drought, and famine. Even during visits to some charity organisations, communication officers focus on obtaining persuasive photographs that may appeal to a donor or a guardian who may live outside Ethiopia. There is usually fear among social workers and communication officers to verbally express problems of picturing the vulnerable. Interviewing well-informed individuals, such as the head of communication officers, showed that they are more critical about the long term consequences of iconic images of children and women in need of food aid.

International NGOs use the media to publicise development activities. Such collaborations also focus the camera angle on women and girls because they assume that they are most affected individuals. Photo productions remain incomplete. Whether it is about food distribution or assessing drought situations, the photo-essays treated in chapter five are the results of specific events that charity organisations have created as development aid activity or interventions. There seems to be exclusion of any aspects of lives of these people, except those events initiated by charity organisations. The whole scenario of development aid imagery is set around food distributions and potable water supply. In the case of Save the Children, it is about a malnourished child receiving medical help. Some of the good practices include the inclusion of names, and stories about those who appear in publications to supplement articles and newsletters.

The other social issue that charity organisations work on is mitigating sexually transmitted disease among ‘risk groups’, including sex workers. Save the children cooperates with most of the locally based charity organisations in enhancing sex education. It has used a participatory photography project for sex education among most active communities such as sex workers and daily labourers. Used for peer education purposes participatory photographs were produced in collaboration with social workers, directors, photographers, and sex workers and daily labourers as performers of staged visual events. Most of the ‘words’ or ‘phrases’ that accompany these photo texts are results of TransAction department of Save the Children. The photographic productions about sex workers, their boyfriends, families and their clients offer a larger picture in the lives of commercial sex workers. They were originally based on true story collections. Due to this the visual aid materials offer effective representations of sex workers’ everyday lives. In some of the pictures (chapter 5), these

women are captured as loyal to their partners while they negotiate and persuade clients to practice safe sex (condom use). In contrast their boyfriends are constructed as cheaters in pictures that capture how they try to persuade other girls for sexual relations. Generally picture postcards show sex workers in home setting as care givers and at their work place as they negotiate with clients.

Charity organisations use the image of poor people and People Living with HIV/AIDS as means to obtain funds and grants. Images commissioned by Save the Children perpetuate the narrative that without the support of charity organisations, poor women and children who are most affected in slow on-set emergencies such as drought, famine and HIV/AIDS may face difficulties to maintain their daily lives. When they want to show success stories, they employ ‘parachute photographers’ who are usually hired from western based institutions. These photographers know the demands of NGOs because photographic images of persons are viewed in terms of currency values. Such photo-essays compose women, boys and girls with happy and pleasant faces to construct the idea that development aid has brought about change at the ground level. In the case of independent participatory project, Eric Gottesman’s photo-essay about Selam/ Meron that was taken over a decade, offers a better image. His works are a strong critique of the failures of mitigating long term consequences of HIV/AIDS on orphans.

Such claims are far removed from the everyday lives of poor women living in different parts of Ethiopia. From ethnography to media, still images take us back to the classic dichotomy of ‘self’ and ‘other’ representations. Commodification of some images in tourism industry, as well as development journalism, goes beyond the interest of the local as they are primarily determined by translocal development agendas. I have also argued that representational practices are mutually constitutive to the global image world rather than local activities and visual experiences. These photo-essays have multiple functions if they are commissioned by development agencies. Institutions usually commission visual events that signify their agency. Major differences that arise from these photographic practices are that community’s success stories are visualized in more positive images, which, in retrospect, would give positive impressions to all development aid activities.

8.4. Independent Works, Contestations, and Selectivity

Critical contestations on representations can be explored by looking at photographs that explore every day photographic encounters through independent projects. In chapter seven, I

argued that the use of exhibition spaces is important where contestations over social narratives, photographers' intent, and aesthetics come to play roles in visualizing gender issues. The transformation of some gallery and museum spaces have created a dialogue over accumulated visual experiences in the way Ethiopian photographers see their own people in relation to dominant practices of picturing. They are aware of tourist gazes, and travellers as well as works of 'parachute photographers' who have limited knowledge about Ethiopians.

There are a number of visual narratives that are silenced through overly circulated development aid imagery. Charity organisations' commissioned photo-essays and independent projects of photographers have distinct thematic choices by incorporating aura, the dignity of subjects and natural resources. Aida Muluneh's photo-essay and Antonio Fiorente's recent exhibition are separately presented to audiences as 'Ethiopia'. A few independent photo-essays cover the everyday lives of women living in the margins outside of development aid activities. From agrarian communities to commercial sex workers, they develop a humanist approach to compose images that show the social values of different groups of women rather than a focus on sexualities. Various rural and urban pictures of women at work, leisure and other everyday activities are constructed in exhibitions titled as 'Ethiopia'. In contrast, commercial sex workers are photographed as separate others excluded from symbols of national identities. Comparatively speaking, sex workers have attracted the gaze of men photographers as typical urban features.

Sex workers dominate productions of both commissioned as well as the independent works of Antonio Fiorente's, Mango Productions' and Micheal Tsegaye's photographic works. In his 'Working Girls Series', Tsegaye explored the daily lives of sexworkers where he recast a tarnished housing conditions with well-dressed bodies. These representations may not provide their image in totality. Micheal Tsegaye's work on sex workers have focused on picturing the poorest of the poor sex workers. His works are exemplary since they conjure the idea that the root cause of sex work for these women is poverty. Micheal Tsegaye has received requests from gallery audiences to exhibit more work on the invisibles of the everyday of commercial sex workers. Micheal Tsegaye's work indicates intimate exchanges among sex workers. Such ways of observing partly came from the photographer's method that prioritises developing rapport before dramatizing the livelihood of sex workers. Some of the works have moved from just being local voices into including Diaspora voices.

In such photographic productions Ethiopian freelance photographer's representational practices are different since they know the cultural, environmental and historical contexts of these people. They are also conscious individuals who are aware of the demands of international galleries and exhibition spaces. From interviews, they have identified that no spaces of visual materials are untouched by the visual economy of picturing Third World people. This includes the gallery space. Specifically those representational practices that showcase social problems have global audiences. The recent work of these photographers also provides fluidity on how the landscape of Ethiopia is represented by its people and vice versa.

Ethiopian photographers use intensive light in picturing everyday women. Particularly, in black and white pictures, they capture images showing rays of light cast on the faces of different women to symbolise their capabilities irrespective of their social strata. Even in some of commissioned works of commercial sex workers, associations of shame and marginality on identities of commercial sex workers pertinent to Ethiopia's culture are disillusioned in the images. Careful readings of such images contradict the belief that sex workers are dangerous and contaminate others, especially after the outbreak of HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Ethiopian freelance photographers have focused on the subject of picturing beauty outside the studio space. Antonio Fiorente has focused on exploring rural aesthetics, including how traditional societies decorate their bodies. He has also explored changing cultures of traditional society. His explorations of different groups of people over long periods of time explain his long-time fascinations with the cultural and religious landscapes of Ethiopia. Filling the gap on work portraits, a few of freelance photographers work with marginalised women and girls. These activities may be captured as a tool to explore certain aspects of rural and urban diversities. Aida Muluneh's work recasts some of exotic images of everyday women in reconstructing the geographies of Africa and Ethiopia through juxtapositions of stereotyped posters with photographs of working women. Exploitative labour divisions often considered as 'women's work' are better visualized through works of Aida Muluneh.

Independent projects of the above photographers offer better representations since they capture everyday lives. By looking at the works of these photographers, we can conclude that their independent projects portray women as well as some children in their diverse activities

such as their livelihood, social ties, and leisure. The visual events that they create are much more directed by the situation than staged visual events of both national and international institutions. That is why these works have wider local audiences in exhibition spaces. As some photographers argue worldwide exhibition spaces offer easy access to images of suffering. For some Ethiopian photographers, photographs have become tools by which they explore other narratives about their own people. In so doing they contest stereotypes both within aid imagery as well as other themes about marginalized people, including commercial sex workers.

I have articulated images that blur local and the global representational practices. Most of the pictures I discussed in this thesis are results of transnational relations as they deal with development, and development aid imagery. These image productions reflect on the global visual economy, how the local is related to the global and impacts on the way women and men from Third World are represented. I have argued that there are some works that manifest different points of view from those commissioned by institutions. There are some spaces of negotiation for photographers in the way they frame and picture individuals, even in commissioned works, despite the fact that they do not take part in selection processes.

Independent projects of the above photographers have explored the social dynamics of women, boys and girls who live at the margins. In so doing they uncover a more diversified personification than the stereotypical images that often portray them as recipients of aid. Exhibiting independent works have become useful ways to reveal local narratives unknown to the outside world. They are about breaking silences and visualising the invisibles of the everyday. Our knowledge about Ethiopian everyday women is usually about house wives and stay at home mothers. Visualizing different role stratifications and their day to day roles in rural, urban, private and public spheres are beginning to be revealed in works initiated by Ethiopian freelance photographers. Their works contest practices of picturing everyday activities rather than just focusing on a visual event of institutions.

The gender portrayals at the global and national level are far more complex since they bring to light ideological, political and social fluidity between western notions and the way the non-west/ Ethiopians collaborate to contest on representing their own women and girls. It also sheds light on some of the representational practices of tourism that have adopted historical practices of picturing women.

8.5. Reflections for Further Research

Due to lack of sufficient dialogue between the Southern artists and art activists, there is limited knowledge about the way Africans are producing, or framing their own people or the landscape. This thesis has articulated the Ethiopian case by mainly looking at the works of five freelance photographers. There is still a gap in our knowledge of the photographic images of different groups of women in Ethiopia. For instance, this research has not explored how middle class women are pictured or represented. Since the scope of this study is limited to picturing women and girls living in the margins, it has not included images of other role models or images of urban proletariats or intellectuals. During fieldwork I have encountered a lack of women photographers who are making photo-essays, with the exception of some emerging women who are learning to master photography along with other art works. Another research issue could be an exploration of the agency of emerging women as subjects, that is, as photographers in representing other women and girls, who use this tool for different purposes. This research has used works of internationally acknowledged female and male Ethiopian photographers. Exploring the work of all emerging photographers is beyond the scope of the research as they were not participating in different international exhibition festivals and continental venues during the fieldwork period.

During fieldwork period in Addis Ababa, I have noticed that there are vast image archives clustered in academic institutes and other government offices. With the exception of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, most of these archival materials are used as recast to contextualise and deconstruct historical images. There is limited use of the exhibition space to create dialogue on gender silences and other silences of histories, particularly about people that live in the margins. This could interest future scholars who engage with inter-disciplinary concepts in the practices of picturing people and places.

Family albums and the social documentary practice of Ethiopians, particularly in studio spaces, could be another way of exploring alternative spaces of representations. These are important to understanding social documentary works that offer alternative narratives to Ethiopian audiences as well as to international audiences.

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Appendix 1: Extracts from *Addis Mela Le-Hiwot*, A teaching material designed for peer education among sex workers ©STC



