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ABSTRACT

THE CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN IN ETHIOPIA AS RELATED TO SOCIAL CHANGE

By

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The study focuses on the changing role of women in rural Ethiopia which is analysed using the functionalist approach to change of roles in the general context of social change. The subject is treated at two levels. One, at the collective level of the kinship unit which is also a specific functioning productive organization and the other, the role level where the individual who retains his membership in the kinship group also functions in the economic organization.

In the rural setting the kinship unit plays an important role both in the economic and family organization. Therefore, it is considered here as a point of entry for our analysis. Structural differentiation is observable at the two levels as a result of social change. On the collectivity level the kinship unit loses its function as an economic unit in the process of structural differentiation. The significance of the organization is

reduced as other values come into existence.

On the role level the individual's participation in varied and numerous roles becomes possible. There is a dilemma here which often leads to the problem of choice between incompatible roles. Some of the new roles acquired in the new setting following migration may lead to problems of adaptation, which deserves further research and remedial measures.

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AS RELATED TO SOCIAL CHANGE

By

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Significance

The study of the changing role of women in Ethiopia is a challenge for the simple reason that very little or no research has been done on this aspect of social life. Yet, there has been a growing proliferation of new roles and expectations on the part of women as a result of changing circumstances that have direct bearing on them.

Processes such as rural-urban migration, education and professional activities have affected the traditional roles of women. Technological advancements seem to have made an impact directly or indirectly on some aspects of women's life. This study therefore is an attempt to focus on the realities of social change in Ethiopia as it relates to the social condition of women as members of social units. Since some problems in adaptation are expected because of the expansion of role expectations, a gradual process of transition would seem desirable in order to reduce possible risks resulting from rapid change.

Source of Data

Two methods have been used in gathering data. Primarily, this research is a product of library resources. While there are certain anthropological materials available, they seem to provide limited information on the traditional role and status of women, and some of them suffer from problems with the interpretation of the traditional outlooks. On the contemporary condition of women, there is lack of data on the subject. For most of the information in this area, I had to depend either on the documentary publications of the United Nations or small sections of books dealing with other issues of a sociological nature.

The most important part of the work is a result of systematic observation of the changing role and status of women. This became possible when, as an African and a lecturer in sociology, I have lived in different parts of Ethiopia for the last ten years and had the opportunity to closely observe and study the roles and status of women. Therefore this study is a result of this field work combined with published sources mentioned above.

Theoretical Considerations

The concept of role is associated with the sociological analysis which links the function of the social order with the characteristics and behaviour of

the individuals who make it up. Role as a social entity provides the pattern for behaviour and attitudes, and a strategy for coping with recurrent types of situations. Role concerns us here as recognizably played by different individuals and as a systemic element supplying the basis for identity and placement of persons in society. Personal and social disorganization arise from failure of individuals to choose between incompatible roles.¹ For instance, this is evident in family disintegration due to the difficulty of choice between differing roles which are not compatible among migrant families in Ethiopia.

Linton identified roles as a segment of culture consisting of behaviour prescriptions or norms bearing one-to-one correspondence with the social status.² But the most relevant treatment of the concept for our purposes is the Parsonian approach to structural differentiation and change.³ According to Parsons two processes of differentiation of operative units occur in society where the process of change is going on. First we have the collective level between kinship units and units which perform primary productive functions in society. The latter mainly comprise specific function organizations. The second level is the role level where the individual person who retains his membership in a kinship unit also comes to perform a role in a productive organization for which he contributes his service.

According to the previous discussion the targets of our study are twofold. One, the collective level of kinship groups as primary productive systems in the Ethiopian village, and second, the role level where individuals, in this case women, perform roles of productive nature while retaining their kinship ties. These two levels are influenced by, or are related to, the social change in the society at large.

Access to international media, recent involvement in industry, rapid urbanization and varied political values lead to rising expectations.⁴ Through social system processes such as communication, decision making, boundary maintenance and systemic linkage, social changes are generated.⁵ Due to awareness, stresses are created that serve to push people from the countryside to the cities in Ethiopia in search of better opportunities. This can be taken as an excellent illustration of systemic linkage at work.

This situation just referred to is a movement from a farm with a subsistence setting to that with a more complex structure. For the Ethiopian woman this circumstance usually poses role problems. As the process of differentiation of operative units occur what happens is loss of functions by the kinship unit. The economic function of the family is transferred to other spheres. New patterns of organization of functions are dissociated from the kinship unit in form of work situations and the

employment collectivity. This condition has a tendency to generate conflict between the role of the individual as a member of a particular family and the role as a worker outside (as illustrated in the role of a woman as a wife and a bread earner). The recognition of status roles as they adjust to differentiation is also important.

The urban situation, unlike the village, does not permit extensive contributions and direct support of all family members. Therefore a substitution of new ways of accomodating needs that have been served by the kinship unit becomes essential. It is necessary to keep in mind the risk entailed in cutting loose of kinship ties without replacement. Migrants coming to the cities in Ethiopia expecting kinship obligations are generally faced with similar problems.

Parsons discusses balancing the legitimation of both the collectivity and role level in order that conflict of interest is contained within the pattern mutually contributing to higher-order system functioning. This in essence is harmony at a different level for the effective functioning of the system.

Parsons indicates that the process of differentiation must go hand in hand with the process of the reorganization of the normative culture of the system at the level of the operative units, norms and subsystem values. Thus, he recognizes the dynamics of equilibrium in relation to social change after a change-causing

disturbance. The concept of social change as an equilibrium is related to the concept of boundary maintenance, integration and solidarity. In social change, the individuals and groups within the established order are in the process of change. Any considerable change in culture necessarily involves change in the integration of social structure. As a result disequilibrium is created which is highly desirable as a state of society and a force of change.⁶

To Parsons, there is a relationship between values and structural arrangement in the process of social change. While structural factors institutionalize values, the structural arrangements on the other hand are legitimized by values. The theory can be appropriately applicable in conceptualization of differentiation and development of role structure, culture systems and institutional structures. Social change is accomplished in society through structural-functional differentiation to more specialized and higher level performance capacity. The emergence of integrative mechanisms which coordinate the differentiated social unit is essential.

Steps in a cyclic of differentiation are recommended by Parsons. One is deficit of input at the goal-attainment-boundary, which in our case focuses on economic goods and services leading to frustration of attaining goals or fulfilling expectations. The

second step concerns the boundary between one and another subsystems of the society such as boundary of the labour market and the ideological justification of the labour market's position in the familialistic society. Thirdly we have the balance between facilities--rewards and normative expectations. The balance is, according to Parsons, an indispensable condition leading to differentiation.

The adaptive problem is explained in terms of lack of differentiation in the productive unit, in our case the kinship structure of the traditional group. The lack and existence of support for the performance of function is discussed. He stresses legitimation in terms of justification of basic patterns of organization of social functions or by the institutionalized values of the system.

Finally, Parsons emphasizes three primary conditions of successful differentiation, namely, the opportunity factor, the way in which the two differentiated classes of units are related to each other and to society, and the more general complexes of institutionalized norms which apply to many collectivity structures. Thus, the role of the individual becomes more universalistic and qualification for the occupational role is judged on the basis of competence rather than the relevance of kinship membership. A condition quite contrary to this exists in cities and urban areas

of Ethiopia.

Given this perspective as theoretical frame of reference, an attempt will be made to analyse the changing role of women in Ethiopia with the hope of broadening our understanding of the traditional role, the processes of modernization, the contemporary situation, and some probable future trends.

The Population Structure

The population of Ethiopia is largely rural, ethnically heterogeneous, consisting of natives, Europeans, Americans, Asians and other international groups.⁷ The estimated population of 24,000,000 in 1967 is a young population about half of which is less than 20 years of age. The age structure exhibits features that are found typically in less developed areas.

We shall consider next, the age-sex distribution, household size and marital status in our discussion of population structure. These factors are important because they provide background information concerning the demographic structure which may help in our analysis of the changing status and roles of women in Ethiopia.

Age and Sex Distribution

The estimated population of Ethiopia includes a high proportion of the population (over 44 percent) in the age group from birth to 15 years of age. In the 15 to 59 age group there were 51 percent and the rest, 4 to 5 percent, 60 years of age and over. (See Figure 1).

There are structural differences between the rural and urban populations in Ethiopia. Almost 57 percent of urban dwellers are in the 15 to 59 age group compared to less than 51 percent in rural areas. There is a general similarity in age groupings between the overall population and the rural population which reflects the influence of the rural sector. The urban age groupings portray the migration of the economically active age categories to the towns and cities.

The population estimate of 1967 showed a higher proportion of males to females in the overall population with a ratio of about 102.8 males to 100 females. This is comparable with the usual almost equal ratio (between 95 and 100 males to 100 females as reported earlier in the Central Statistical Office). A marked difference existed in rural and urban ratios (see Figure 2). The 104.1 males to 100 females of the rural areas can be contrasted with the 90 males to 100 females in the urban areas. This condition is an unusual pattern for African countries where males usually outnumber females in towns.⁸

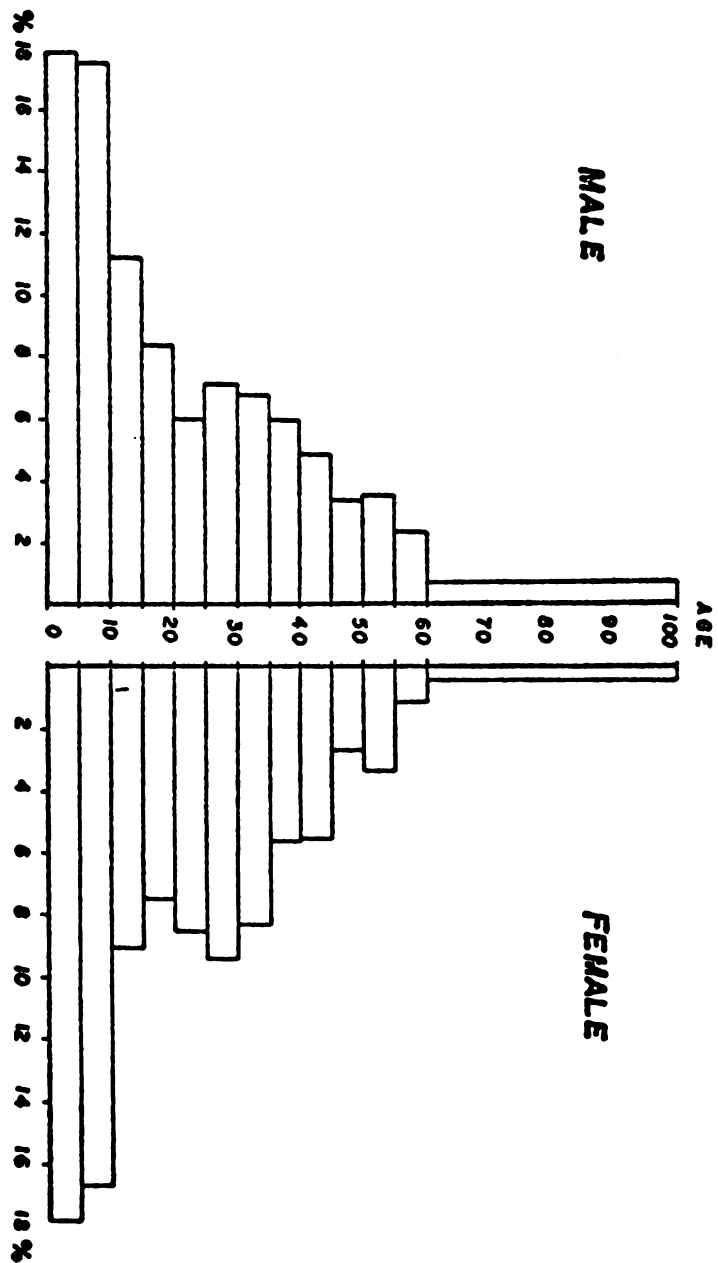


Figure 1: Population distribution in Ethiopia by age and sex. Source: Population of Ethiopia, Central Statistical Office. Statistical Bulletin, No. 6, 1971.

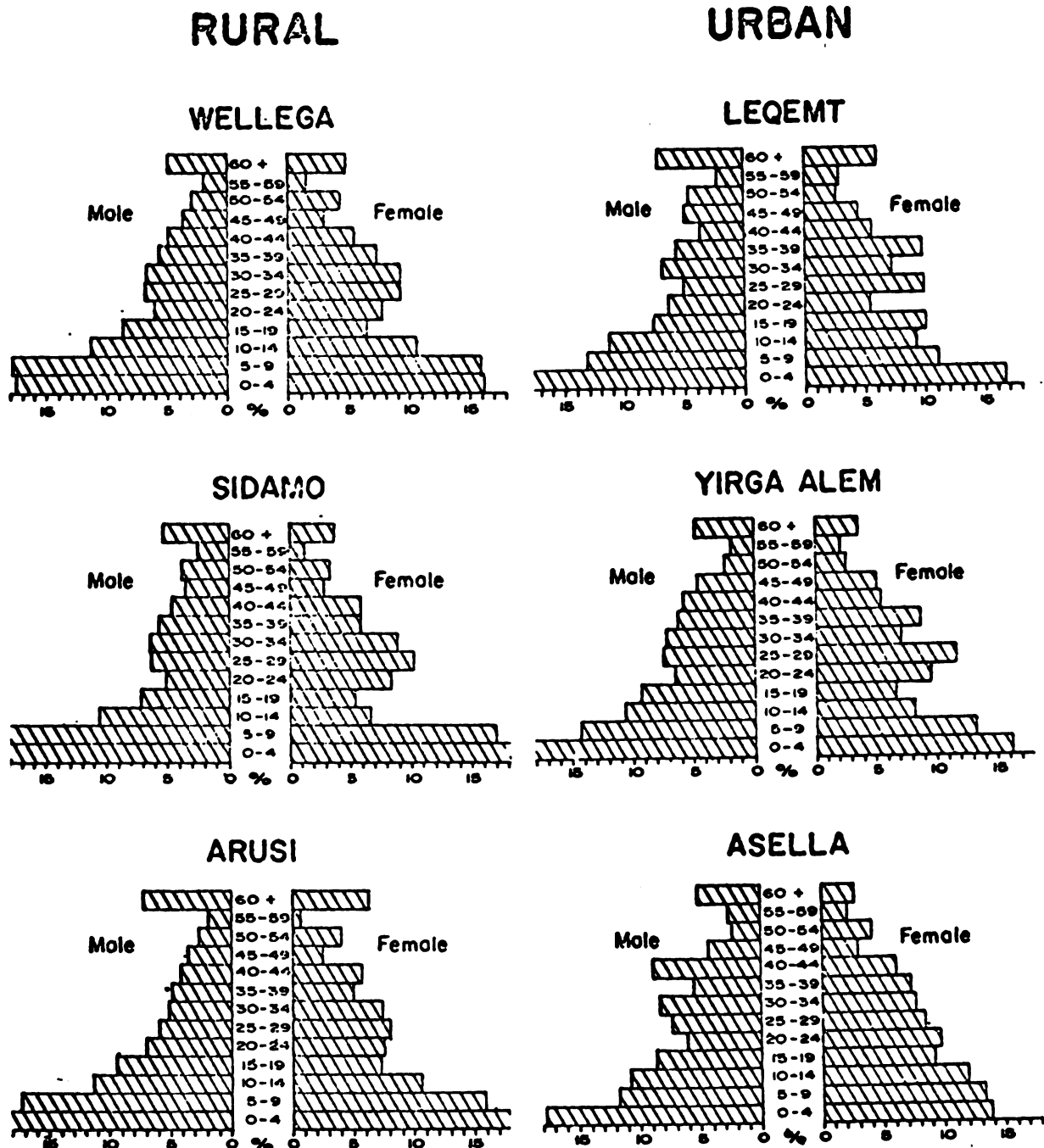


Figure 2: Rural-Urban population distribution in Ethiopia.
 Source: Mesfin Wolde Mariam, An Atlas of Ethiopia, Department of Geography, Haile Sellassie I University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1970.

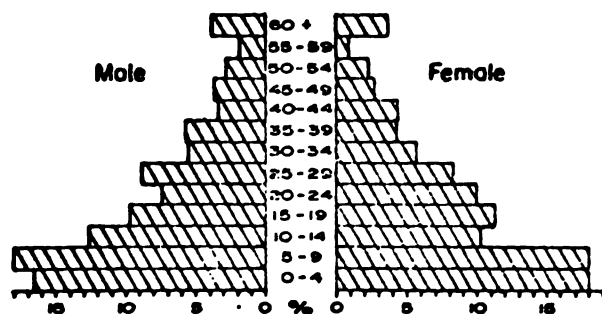
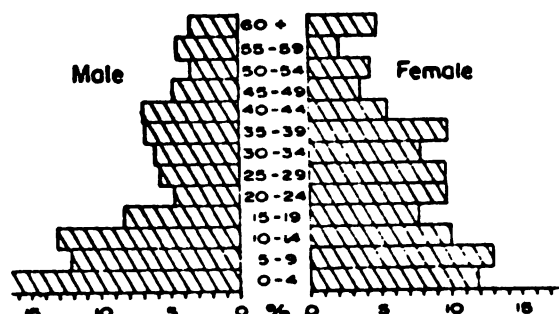
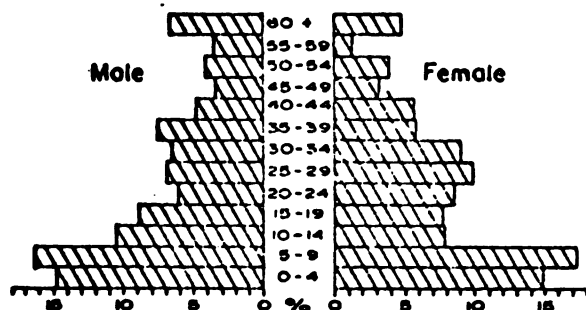
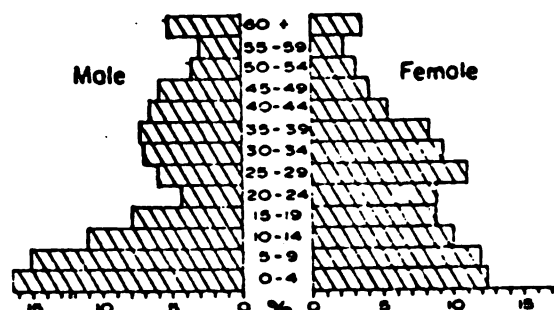
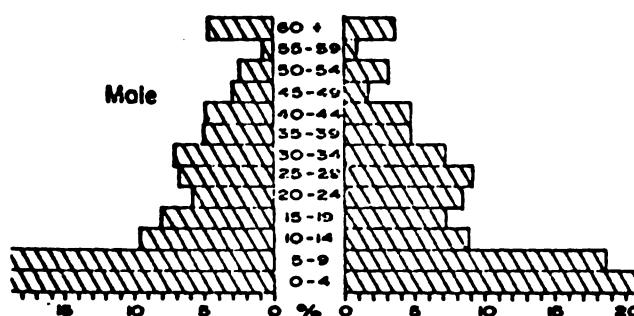
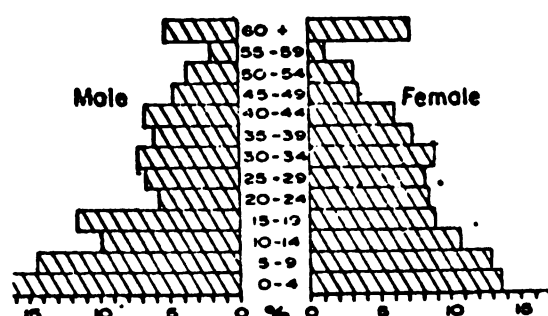
RURAL**URBAN****GOJJAM****DEBRE MARQOS****WELLO****DESE****HARERGHE****HARER**

Figure 2 continued.

Household Size

An important aspect of Africa's demographic structure with implications for social and economic development is the household which in many ways is an important social unit. Very often unrelated or related non-family members are found in African households and this partly accounts for the tendency of African households to be larger than those in the Western countries.

In Ethiopia the average size of household in 1967 in urban areas (3.6) is much lower than that of the rural area (4.6). There is a significant difference in average size of household between towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants and smaller towns. The figure 3.78 for the bigger towns is larger than 3.38 for the small ones.⁹ (Refer to Appendix B).

Marital Status

In the northern provinces of Ethiopia more girls are married at a much younger age than in the southern provinces. There is a progressive increase in the proportion of single girls as one moves from rural areas to small towns and large towns. While there seems to be a much higher percentage of married women in rural areas than in towns, the reverse holds true for divorced women and widows. The percentage of divorced women and widows is larger in small towns

than large towns. (For marital status in Ethiopia refer to Figures 3, 4, 5.)

The average age of first marriage for males is usually much higher than that for the females. The extent of the difference in age between males and females differs from area to area while what is generally acceptable among the majority is that a proportionally older man marries a younger woman.

The main objective here is to analyse the changes in women's roles as a result of structural differentiation. The data was gathered from published documents and from personal observation of changes of roles of women in different parts of rural Ethiopia. The introduction to the demographic structure enables us to gain a better understanding of the nature of Ethiopia's population composition especially as related to women and their roles.

With this background information, we shall deal in the next section with the traditional role of women in relation to kinship and family interaction and the traditional division of labour.

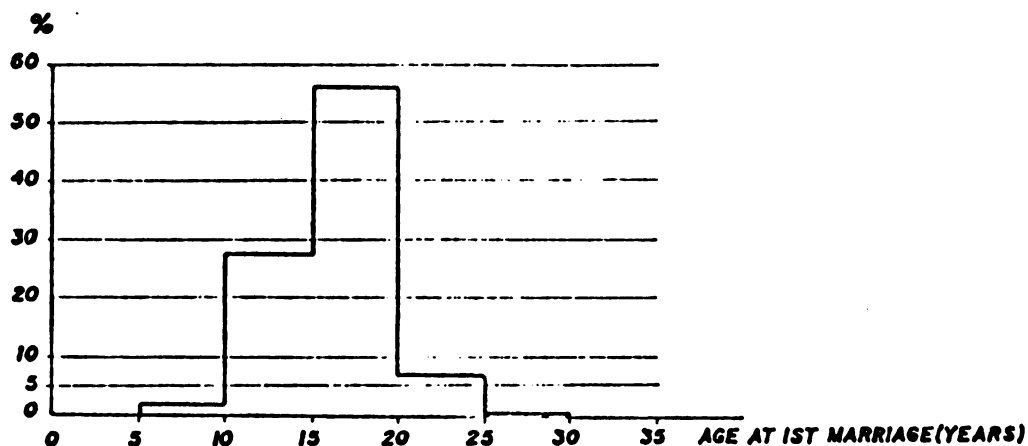


Figure 3: Age at first marriage, Women, 9 provinces, Rural.

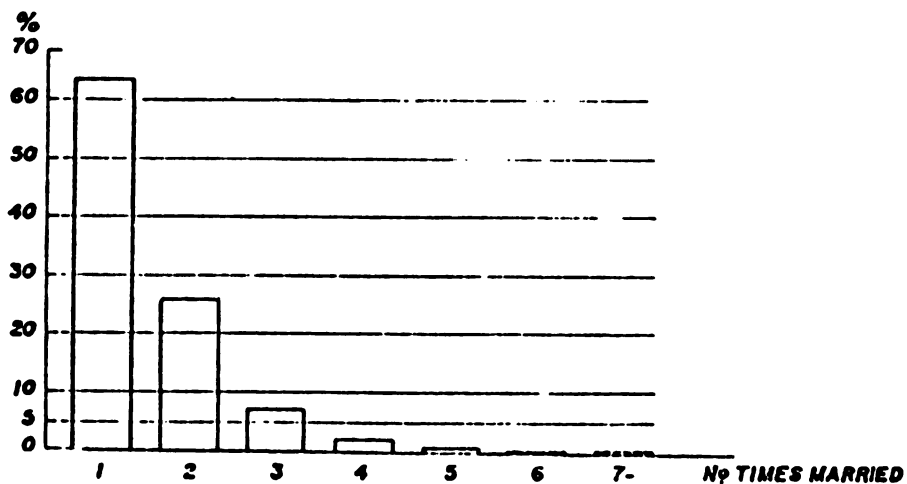


Figure 4: Married women by number of times married, 9 provinces, Rural.

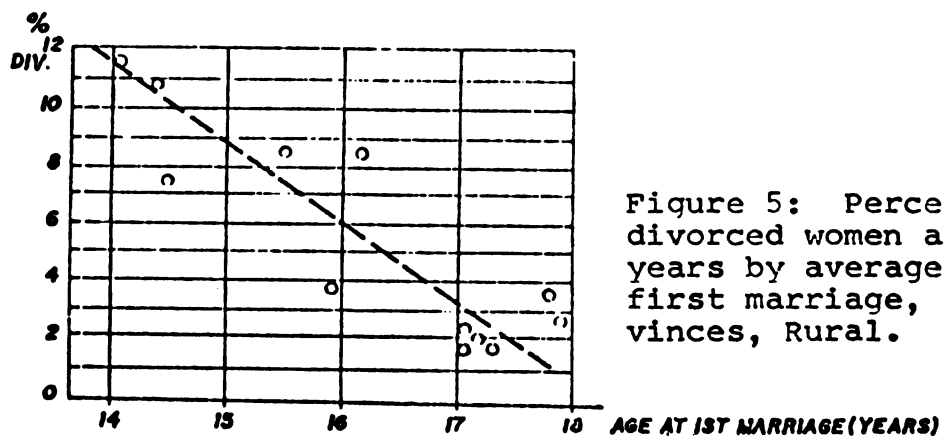


Figure 5: Percentage of divorced women above ten years by average age at first marriage, 12 provinces, Rural.

Source for Figures 3, 4 and 5: Central Statistical Office, Imperial Ethiopian Government. Stat. Bul. No. 6, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Nov. 1971.

SECTION II

THE TRADITIONAL ROLE AND STATUS OF WOMEN

Kinship System

The Importance of Kinship and Behaviour

Kinship is the formal organization of relationships for social purposes and is the basis from which human and political organizations emerge. Kinship functions to provide a standard of behaviour in human groups. It provides an easily understood system for regulating affairs which extend from the family through the whole group.¹⁰

Kinship itself is based on parenthood and this leads to the first and smallest, but at the same time, the most important of human groupings. An individual in Ethiopian society automatically becomes related to all those people whom his father and mother count as relatives. This includes the members related in ritual association or baptismal relationships among the Christian Ethiopians. It is vitally important that one knows how to behave properly to all these kinfolks.

Kinship in Ethiopia depends on three factors-- the extent to which people recognize relationship for

social purposes, the way in which relatives are classified and finally the nature of rights and duties of relatives.

The extent of relationship varies--it may include comparatively few people or a very large number. This relationship provides the tribe with groups of people who live and work together in such harmony as can be achieved by people on the basis of face to face interaction. Relatives are classified either by the descriptive system, which has a small number of more or less precise terms defining the steps of relationships; or by the classification system, in which people are not called individually by a relationship term, but groups are classified into categories and are called collectively by one term. Except in some parts of Ethiopia, the descriptive system is not used very much.

The Kinship Rules

The role of women in terms of kinship structure varies considerably throughout Ethiopia, from tribal group to tribal group, and in some instances from village to village as well as over time. Yet, there are certain characteristics which are common and are used as the basis for comparison. It is most logical to examine the role of women in the home for it is the basic unit around which the life of a traditional woman revolves. Even at birth the arrival of a son is a source of greater

joy than that of a daughter. Except for a few Kunama groups and the relatively minor segment of the Afar tribe, patriarchal authority controls the family.¹¹ The patrilineal rule of descent is the generally accepted rule of custom. The requirement of patrilocal residence coupled with the previously discussed regulations can be taken as a clear demonstration of the high status, authority and prestige of males in the kinship structure and relationship.

① Marriage

Mate selection by parents or relatives dominates the traditional form of marriage among most tribes. The Ethiopian court recognizes monogamous unions as an official one. Yet, polygynous marriage is also acceptable, depending on one's religion and tribal custom.¹² Three kinds of marriages exist in Ethiopia: civil, religious and traditional.

Marriage among the highland Christian Ethiopians is strictly monogamous and in this case the status of women is relatively high. There is greater equity in laws governing marriage and inheritance, and the participation of women in some aspects of public life is acceptable.¹³

Polygyny as a form of relationship in marriage in Ethiopia has some interesting features. It could either be sororate or levirate. Marriage is

traditionally legitimized only when the groom pays for the hand of a bride. While this marriage is managed in a form of payment (money, goods or cattle, service or exchange),¹⁴ the possible effects of bride price or bride wealth on a woman's well being are varied. Payment is believed to insure that the bride will be well treated and will assure a woman's dignity. Recently, however, bride wealth has become a commercial business transaction in many cases.¹⁵

② The Family

The extended family structure is characteristic of Ethiopia. There are two methods for constructing the extended family type. By generation the relationship of the family head can be extended to his grandchildren. Through marriage especially the polygynous type family extension can take place. Both extension methods could occur and may give the individual a large number of relatives. The extended is preferred and the simple family structure is found only as realities of living due to economic or other requirements produce it. Because of ethnic and religious diversity, law governing domestic matters is defined with reference to custom in the Ethiopian Civil law of 1960.¹⁶ Yet, as one moves away from the capital city or large towns, custom and its forces play the leading role in settling disputes.

In the family relationship, loyalty to one's kinsmen or tribe supercedes devotion to the spouse in early marriage. This trend may vary slightly in cases of the marriage of a child bride in Ethiopia, where the young girl grows attached to her husband's family.¹⁷ Gradually, mutual affection may develop toward each other. The mother and offspring are much closer than with the father who attempts to demonstrate an equalitarian attitude toward the children of different wives. Sibling relationships are characterized by intensive affection in young age and a gradual increase of rivalry as a result of devotion to one's mother in polygynous marriage.

One should not be surprised by the apparent lack of affection between spouses, because traditional marriages are arranged for producing children and in some cases for extending ones relatives. Having a large number of kinsmen is an asset next to acquiring land.

The Advantages of Polygyny

The hardship of custom has produced balancing factors which have given women security and authority. The system specifies a male provider for a large number of females and as a result no woman is left without a male supporter. As the system sometimes gave rank to the wives, each woman knew before marriage her

status in the household. The first wife was the head and the others took precedence according to the time they entered the marriage. Custom requires that a man provide each wife with a homestead and the means of livelihood in accordance with his wealth. The man is required by custom to spend equal time with each wife at regular intervals.¹⁸

The most significant advantage of polygyny is that it is a superior economic unit than is monogamy. The polygynous system provides an additional labour force, especially for the women. However, there are constant conflicts and strife among the co-wives which is taken for granted and is treated as a matter of fact.¹⁹ These disagreements generally never lead to serious consequences or to divorce in the traditional societies. First, for the simple reason, that a divorced woman is treated as an outcast, and second, because of the traditional attitude held by women themselves. They seldom regard themselves as exploited by men and seem to enjoy the advantages of companionship of co-wives, reap the benefits of work assistants, and the restriction placed on husbands as a result of this arrangement.²⁰

The Intrafamilial Division of Labour

The division of labour is an interesting facet of the family as an economic unit. The household duties

involve: milking; preparing and sewing of hides and cloth for clothing; cutting grass to feed the cattle; collecting and carrying home firewood and water; transportation of heavy loads; grinding of cereal; cooking and attending to children. These are by no means easy functions. The women keep the market going by walking sometimes for hours to keep an appointment.

The men perform the harder labour in the fields and do the heavy construction that requires physical strain. In the past, the men were warriors, fighting on the battle fields and traveling long distances for trade or hunting. There are of course exceptional cases when women participated in men's role in traditional Ethiopia.

The young children are made responsible for the cattle which they shepherd daily. Girls begin training in household management very early in life--
~~about ten years of age. In cases where the girl is~~
~~to be married early, at seven or nine, then the domestic~~
 training is given to her by her mother-in-law. The symbolic marriage at an early age is very common in traditional Ethiopian society.²¹ Very young girls become efficient housekeepers. One may not be far from the truth to assert that a youngster grows directly from childhood to adulthood. This assertion is specially true in the case of the female.

The behaviour expected of a woman is that

of obedience, of following the instructions given to her by her husband. The religious institutions--the Christian, the Moslem or local religious organizations--enforce this value of obedience. Yet as she grows older her role and status as an educator or socializer becomes very significant. At this stage, there seems to be a relationship of age and motherhood enabling the women to achieve a higher status.

With the exception of the Amhara women who have a slightly different role, women's role is more or less the same among the other tribes. Among the highland Amharas the status of women is much higher and they are allowed to participate in roles ordinarily not designated to females. Among the polygynous group generally found in the lowlands of Ethiopia, the activities of women are much more limited.

The prestige and influence of the traditional woman progressively increases as she grows old and particularly when she becomes a grandmother. As a carrier of culture and a socializing entity, the woman played a very significant role in the traditional structure. Yet, due to exposure to foreign values, new ideas, and as a result of rising expectation, women's roles have changed. New roles are added as a result of structural differentiation and new roles are being created. Value changes became inevitable to legitimize these roles. The impact of modernization on roles of rural women is discussed next.

SECTION III

CHANGES IN ROLES OF WOMEN

Changes in roles of women is felt in different spheres and in varied forms which are being analyzed here under population growth, urbanization and migration.

Population Growth

The treatment of population changes is condensed to the treatment of selected aspects that bear directly on the female population. Even though natural factors contribute immensely to changes in the population structure, modern technological means must be recognized as being a tool for enhancing change. Yet, the most important purpose is to focus on those social changes that affect the female population.

The critical element in the rapid growth of Ethiopia's population and, therefore, in the emergence of the present population structure, is the relationship between past and present levels of fertility and mortality. The fact is that fertility has been much

higher than mortality which in portions of Ethiopia has been declining rapidly. The wide gap created between the two variables has led to rapid population growth. The persistent situation of high fertility co-existing with declining mortality is an experience typical of developing countries today. Because developing countries have had the benefit of most of the recent advances in public health and medical technology, high birth rates have been accompanied by much lower death rates.²² Ethiopia's crude birth rate was estimated at about 43 per 1,000 in 1968, a rate that would place Ethiopia among the less developed countries. The annual growth rate of the total population for 1966 was estimated at 2.3 percent by the Central Statistics Office.²³ The International Demographic Statistics Center placed the rate of natural increase at 2.1 percent in 1968.²⁴

Urbanization

A large majority of the population of Ethiopia lives in rural areas and the rate of urbanization is not as extensive as in some other African countries. The reason for this may be comparative high fertility of the land which is conducive to agricultural endeavors and pastoral nomadism. The growth of small towns depends on local circumstances such as distance from the capital

city, industrial development or institutions constructed for the purpose of rural development.

The capital city, Addis Ababa, grew during the 1960's at a rate roughly three times that of the overall population. Asmara, the second city, grew twice as much as the overall rate. A 1961 census showed 443,728 inhabitants in Addis Ababa, and a census conducted in 1967 recorded a total of 664,190 residents. This shows an increase of 45 percent during the six years. Asmara's population increased during the 1962-68 period by 40,817, or about 30 percent.²⁵

Migration: Patterns and Processes

One of the most pressing problems currently confronting the majority of African countries is the increased intensity of the migration from the rural areas to the towns and cities, particularly to the capital cities.

Although at present Africa as a whole is one of the least urbanized areas of the world with probably just over 18 percent of the total population living in the urban areas, the towns are growing at a very rapid rate, generally faster than towns anywhere else. In a number of principal cities there has been an urban growth rate averaging 12 percent per year, while in a few of these cities the rate has reached as high

as 15 percent.²⁶

The pattern of migration in East Africa is based on the process of step-wise or graded migration. The first step taken is to a nearby small town, then to the next larger and finally to the capital city. This process can be evidenced in the Ethiopian case. Generally men precede women. The migrants are younger in age and those moving from medium or small sized towns to the capital city are positively selected. Specially young girls and boys follow this pattern while migrating in search of better education. They are disproportionally single compared with the population from which they migrate. On the average, migrants themselves engage in upward occupational mobility and initiate occupational mobility of the population of the area of destination through structural differentiation.

As a result of migration, various changes are brought about in Ethiopia. Migration as a process of social change has influenced the rural sector of the people to a great extent, specially the female population. In Ethiopia more females are found in proportion to males in the urban areas.

As more and more women leave the rural areas demographic imbalance is inevitable but what is more significant is the effect of migration on family life. The increase in women migrants is also related to marital

status. The proportion of divorced women is larger in cities and unmarried girls leave the countryside in search of better educational opportunities. From the evidence of the increase of women migrants in cities in proportion to men, one can visualize the desire on the part of women to escape from the restraint of tradition which is especially forceful in regard to women's conformity.

As the young, the most dynamic people leave the rural areas, some disintegration of traditional organization appears. Through the mechanism of the process of migration and culture contacts, changes in the values and norms are brought about. The rural areas become deprived particularly of the most important unit of its development--its manpower and human resources. Certain problems are apparent as a result of migration in Ethiopia. Among them are a decline in agricultural productivity, deserted homes, scattered population causing difficulty in organizing rural services, and demographic imbalance as a result of unequal distribution in age and sex.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council gave various reasons for the migration of women in Africa. Some of these reasons are: desire to flee the countryside, low income, lack of employment opportunities, urban comfort and rural discomfort, desire for education, lack of adequate social and cultural infrastructure,

search for marriage or following husbands, adventure, curiosity and desire for happiness.²⁷ A more varied group of causes of migration, that seem to be more inclusive, are the following: the desire to improve the family standard of living, the notion that urban life is more sophisticated and exciting, the hope of prestige derived from white collar jobs, the desire for facilities available only in towns such as water, power supply, medical services and mass entertainment.²⁸

Among the motives applicable particularly to girls are: escape from traditional restraint, higher bride price reducing the chances of marriage to one's generation, less hard work in urban areas (cities) and better pay and attraction of city life.²⁹ These basic motives can be reduced to two: desire for money and, related to it, higher social status.

It is most likely that some of these reasons can be applicable specifically to Ethiopia. Migrants in general come from the northern provinces and are mostly Christians. While there seems to be no correlation between migration and religious affiliation, exposure to new ideas and the awareness of the likelihood of existence of better opportunities seem to be a good motivation for migration. Migrants are also larger in number from areas having accessibility to communication media. It appears that most migrants search for family members or kinfolk with the hope

of asking for the help of their relatives.

✓ Educational and Occupational Changes

The traditional, religious education at home has gradually become replaced by modern schools and modern educational philosophy. The expectation that young girls are only to learn home management and child rearing no longer seems to be satisfactory.

Q. { As a result of communication, cultural contacts and awareness of the outside world, people's traditional expectations gradually gave way to new desires and attitudes.

The educational policy in Ethiopia encouraged the improvement of women's skill through the mechanism of modern education. Even though, the proportion of girls in school is smaller than boys, there is an apparent increase of girls going to formal educational establishments and higher institutions of learning. Since it plays a significant role in exposing a bulk of the population to greater awareness, the process of migration should be given due consideration here.

Q₂ { As people from varied backgrounds move to the towns, there is an ever growing complexity in the division of labour and functions as skills are being learned and opportunities for their use widens.³⁰

In the East African economy today, no sizeable

female wage-earning labour force has developed in the urban communities as has been true in West Africa. The number of women employed is small, both relatively and numerically. However, some outstanding women are doctors, lawyers, parliamentarians, educators, administrators, and businesswomen in Ethiopia.³¹ The presence of these women is a demonstration not only of the changes in the roles of women but also of their capacity to perform such functions. The mere existence of these highly-placed women serves to diminish prejudice.

So increasingly numbers of women in Ethiopia advance in education and politics and as contacts expand through rural-urban migration, the status of women as well as the authority and influence of a traditional agricultural society diminishes. The destruction of the role of the sexes in the division of labour affects even the modern situations and shapes attitudes towards work in the modern economy.³²

Change of Roles in the Family

Traditionally, the position and status of an African woman was definitely inferior to that of a man in spite of her doing a large portion of the hard work to support the family. Before marriage she was under the authority of the male head of the household. After marriage she was under the authority of her husband, and after his death in most cases she was under the

control of some other male of her deceased husband's family.

Unfortunately, in urban areas a woman often loses many of her traditional sources of status before she gains new ones. The "emancipated" townswoman may be relatively free of negative aspects of her traditional role; but she has also lost the positive ones. She is no longer economically productive, compared to her former productivity in agriculture. Any protection in marriage she may have derived from the intervention of kinfolk or of traditional laws and custom is usually much diminished in towns.)

With urbanization and increased freedom of thought and action, situations that make for marital instability have come both to rural and urban areas. While financial factors create a threat to polygyny, the desire for companionship, a fundamental value of modern marriage, has greatly affected the traditional process of match marriage or mate selection by parental choice.

Other factors seem to influence marital instability and the extended family structure. According to a survey made in Addis Ababa by the United Nations, the following variables contribute to marital instability. Men working in urban areas leave their wives in rural areas, a trend which seems to be common

in East Africa. The reason for this action seems to be low wages and a shortage of accommodations. Another reason is the fact that men obtain female companionship quite readily in the cities. Another important factor causing marital instability common among the educated Ethiopians is the resentment caused by interference on the part of relatives.³³

There appears to be a trend for men to divorce their wives after some years of marriage in order to marry a younger woman. This results in a difficult situation for women with limited educational and vocational opportunities. The children suffer more when homes are broken and the traditional relationship with kinsmen is changed due to economic and other causes limiting the support they could expect to obtain from their relatives. A survey in Addis Ababa in 1963 disclosed that 21.1 percent of the total child population (up to 15 years of age) had been exposed to family disorganization. Among migrant families, the rate of disintegration was reported to be 40.5 percent. On the whole, it is usually advantageous for women to remain in marriage unless they are compelled against their will, and where marital stability prevails in a society.

This indicates that the status of a married woman is much higher than an unmarried one. The relatives of an unmarried girl become disturbed if she passes

a few years beyond the marriagable age (which generally is from 12 to 15). This also means that a divorced woman is not desired very much for marriage, since there is an implication that there is something wrong with her. This trend is gradually disappearing among the few educated groups.

Role Change and Problems

The problems of the few educated women in the urban areas are relatively simpler than the ones the migrants are faced with. They have to obtain the approval of their husbands for employment. Also there seems to be a problem in the conflict between traditional methods of child rearing and the modern approach to child care and development. The working mother is faced with problems of babysitters and the scanty day care centers are not helping much.

The rural woman on the other hand faces numerous problems. As modern facilities become available, she loses that status which came from her traditional expertise. The lack of education often prevents her from gaining in status in her new situation. Her position may be affected favorably or unfavorably by her husband's changing conception of the role of women, and depending on the nature of the impact on him, of the new ideas acquired in the city. In the

urban setting, with its unsettled conditions of life and insufficient opportunities for employment, the problem of prostitution as well as the problem of loss of status arise.

Indeed it is likely that prostitution is connected with the economic system of any society; but to conclude from this fact that the factors are only economic or that it can be abolished by eliminating its economic causes, would be a mistake. Yet, the increase of the rate of prostitution in Nairobi and the perpetual multiplication of bars, hotels and nightclubs in Addis Ababa, in some instances filled with large numbers of prostitutes, is indeed alarming.

Davis distinguishes five inter-related facets in regard to prostitution. These include the causes for the existence of prostitution, the causes of its different forms, the causes of rates and amounts, the causes leading some women to prostitution and other women not to enter the profession, and the causes that push some women to become attached to prostitutes while others find it repulsive.³⁴ We shall be concerned here with his first point, the causes of the existence of prostitution. Davis points out that prostitution is caused not only by economic factors but also has some social and psychological roots such as competition, dominance, and submission. He assumes that the social effect is left uncontrolled in case of commercial sex.

He also believes the existence of positive and negative norms for institutional control of sex is essential.

Gachuki discusses the causes leading to prostitution. He links the institutional controls on sex to the economic factors causing women to enter this profession. Through prohibitive regulations of marriage, the unequal scale of unattractiveness, and the presence of economic and social inequality between classes and between males and females, females are led into prostitution.³⁵ While there is a great deal of truth in his hypothesis, the statement that marriage as a restrictive system causes prostitution may be an oversimplification.

Prostitution may not be as serious a problem as the other problems it could lead to such as promiscuity. Illegitimate children and communicable diseases can also be derived from such activities. The number of broken homes as a result of habitual visits to prostitute centers can also indicate the magnitude of the problem.

Unemployment is another major problem for women in the cities. Since the migrant woman's skill is limited, there are few avenues open to her. She may be employed in the factory, as a laborer in a large farm, or become a maid or cook.

SECTION IV

SUMMARY

This study has focused on the changing status and role of women in Ethionia during the early stages of modernization. More precisely, it concerns the traditional status and role of the village women as tradition breaks down and modifications of old patterns emerge. Of particular interest are the problems of women associated with the transition to urban life. The high rate of population growth in Ethiopia seems to be a consequence of improved public health and the introduction of medical technology. Coupled with the rapid population growth rate, urbanization through rural to urban migration has produced a new set of circumstances regarding roles and status affecting women. The process of urbanization exposes an increasingly large section of the population to new and different values. For the women, the process of migration and urban adjustment often produces a state in which old status roles have little applicability.

The urban areas of Ethionia have attracted a large number of women who are generally young. They

find themselves in an unfamiliar setting in which they have few if any skills to offer in the labour market. As a result of moving to urban centers they have abandoned their traditional role of agriculturalist, mother, wife and grandmother as well as the influence and status inherent in these roles in the village setting.

The role alternatives open to an illiterate migrant woman are few indeed--she may become a maid, a labourer in a factory, enter into prostitution. The latter is often an easy solution to the problem of gaining an income and attracts an increasingly large number of young women.

The role of women has been undergoing significant changes in rural areas of Ethiopia. These changes can be conceptualized at two levels, namely at the collectivity and the role levels. We consider the collectivity level as the kinship unit which simultaneously functions as the productive organization. The role is viewed as encompassing both the kinship and basic functional organization which are usually separate and distinct units. The importance of these two is that they are related to the forces and the nature of change in the total society.

The trend in the structural change of the family unit in Ethiopia is from the extended to the nuclear family. The change in the marriage form is from polygyny, a practice among the majority, to monogamy.

The functional dissociation of the kinship system from its role as an economically productive system, occurs because of the differentiation of structure in the urban areas. Reduction of the interdependency among kinship members leads to the diminishing influence of this organization in relation to economic organization interactions.

At the role level, the traditionally expected behaviour of women is changing rapidly in Ethiopia. As a result of rising expectations, a significant number of rural women are migrating to the cities. In the new settings a number of problems of an adaptive nature arise. Role incompatibility and the lack of choice between compatible roles lead to family disorganization. Women's lack of the required skills to handle jobs in the new environment, in addition to being frustrating, may lead to deviant behaviour such as prostitution and other practices which are non-existent in the traditional village.

Let us now turn our attention to the question of public policy as a means of intervening in order to delay what is viewed here as socially undesirable. Several possibilities, as they bear especially on the status of women in Ethiopia, will be discussed. Included as well are comments regarding the need for specific research. Some guideline directives here may serve as a process of intervention and may help us in

channeling the direction of social development.

While we wish to focus on selected policies affecting the condition of women, general societal conditions obviously directly affect them. One possible direction is the policy of improvement of the rural areas, so that the process of the mass exodus can be controlled. This can be made possible as a result of creating job opportunities in the rural areas by setting up, for example, establishments such as home industries where the village women can be of use, since this does not require more skill than what the local women can offer. Cooperative farms in the villages not only may offer new kinds of work opportunities but also can help village women get together to discuss some problems which may be solved at a group level.

✓ However, these types of job openings cannot be expected to stop migration, but they can definitely offer some variety of choice. One important tool for changing the role of women and broadening their perspective is through education. The vital role of non-formal education here comes into play. The mechanism of non-formal education can be manipulated at different levels of the population. The importance of mass education has been emphasized in the Ethiopian Educational Sector Review, which advocates both extension and non-formal education.

At the village level the change agents may

help in establishing programs for women such as family planning, programs of education in better nutrition, child care, hygiene and sanitation. Some orientation for the men in the types of changes anticipated for women may be of great value.

Resistance to some of these changes may be expected, especially at the village level. The greatest deterrence may usually be anticipated from the religious leaders. Therefore, it goes without saying that the change agent may have, first of all, to win the confidence and trust of this sector and this requires a great deal of patience and perseverance.

The other target to which non-formal education may be directed is the enclaves of the city where migrants settle. Education or training focused on this group may be comparatively easier than at the local (village) level. The reason may be the anxiety of the migrant to join the labour market and earn some kind of livelihood. Yet, to organize and develop the kinds of programs best suited to the people, some research in this area would be valuable. Questions as to where the migrants come from, why they leave their homes, why they settle where they do, and the nature of adjustment and adaptation problems in the city would be invaluable in planning any educational programs.

Another opportunity for a kind of program would be one oriented to settling newcomers in the city.

After providing them with some kind of training, the next likely problem is job hunting which opens yet another channel of setting up another kind of organization and program to aid in this area.

A significant portion of women migrants worthy of our attention are students who move to large cities in search of better educational opportunities and sometimes jobs. While individuals of this caliber have some academic training, they may not have practical skills that will enable them to cope with the types of jobs offered. Still others, who are continually dropping out of schools, are roaming the streets and deserve our urgent attention. In this case vocational training programs may serve to a great extent.

Last but not least we have to consider the younger children of migrant women who are needless to say dependent on their mothers. One can imagine the hardship of job hunting or finding one while the young child demands the attention of the mother. Some child care centers in which some of the women may serve can be doubly advantageous.

These are only suggested recommendations that may be considered as first-step guidelines. It is hoped that with further research in the area of migrant settlement and adaptation we may be rewarded with the basis for clearer proposals in line with migrant problems and their solutions. There is great

hope in the recently established Institute of Development Research of the University which may make this problem one of its research targets. Other agencies such as the branch of the Ministry of Education and that of the Ministry of National Community Development as well as the Ministry of Agriculture, it is hoped, will offer concrete research findings in this area.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

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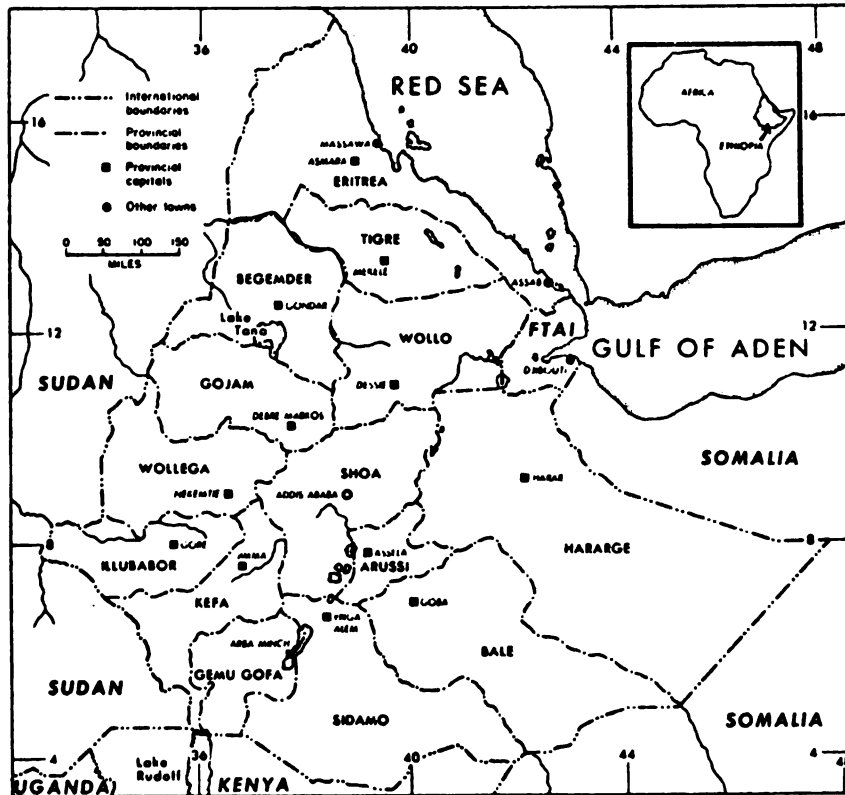
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
MAP IDENTIFYING ETHIOPIA

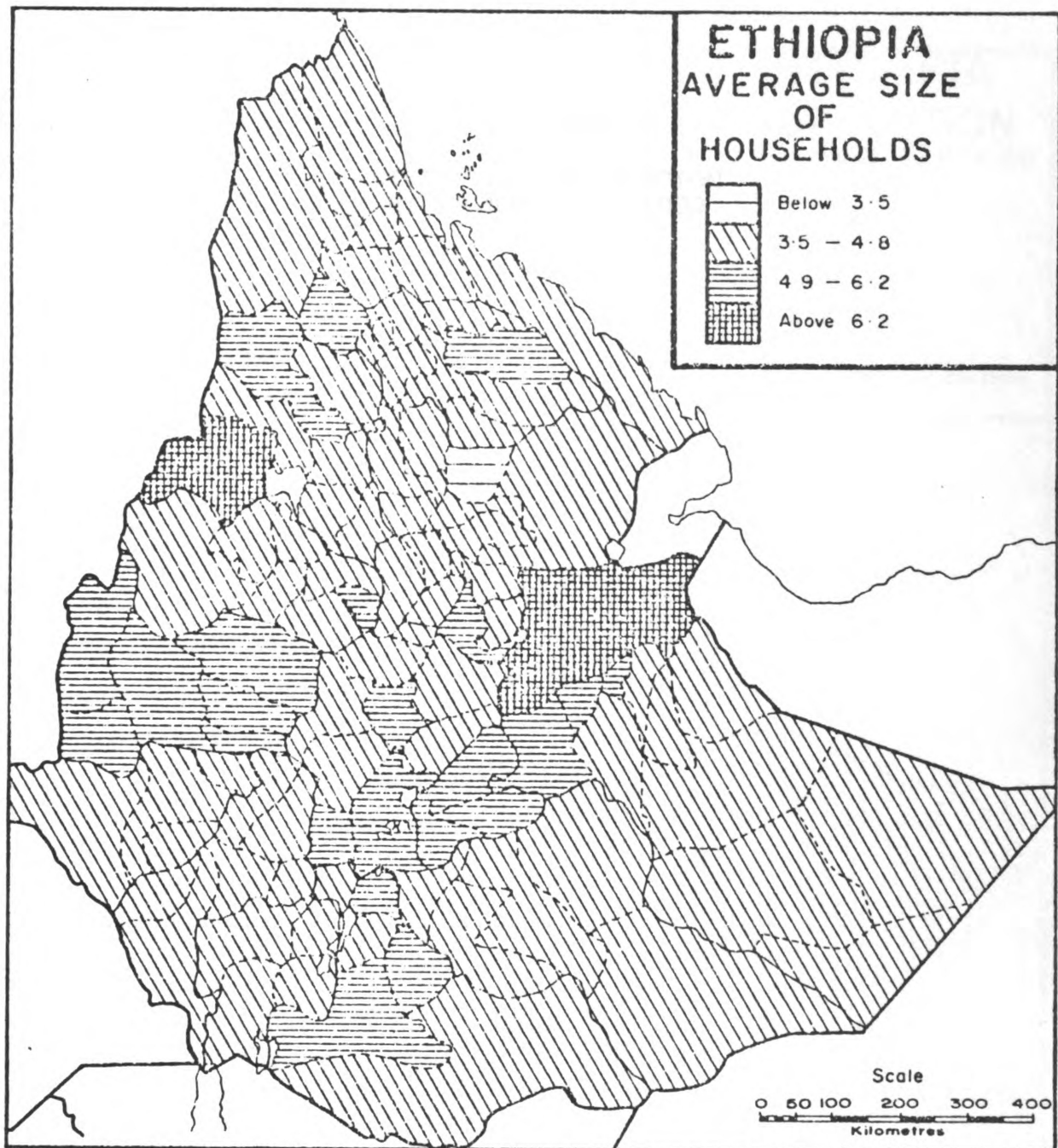


Map of Ethiopia showing the Administrative division of the Country.

The Empire of Ethiopia is divided into 14 Governorate Generals (Teqlay Gihzats) which are further divided into 99 Provinces or Awrajas. The Awrajas are further subdivided into Weredas which number about 144.

APPENDIX B

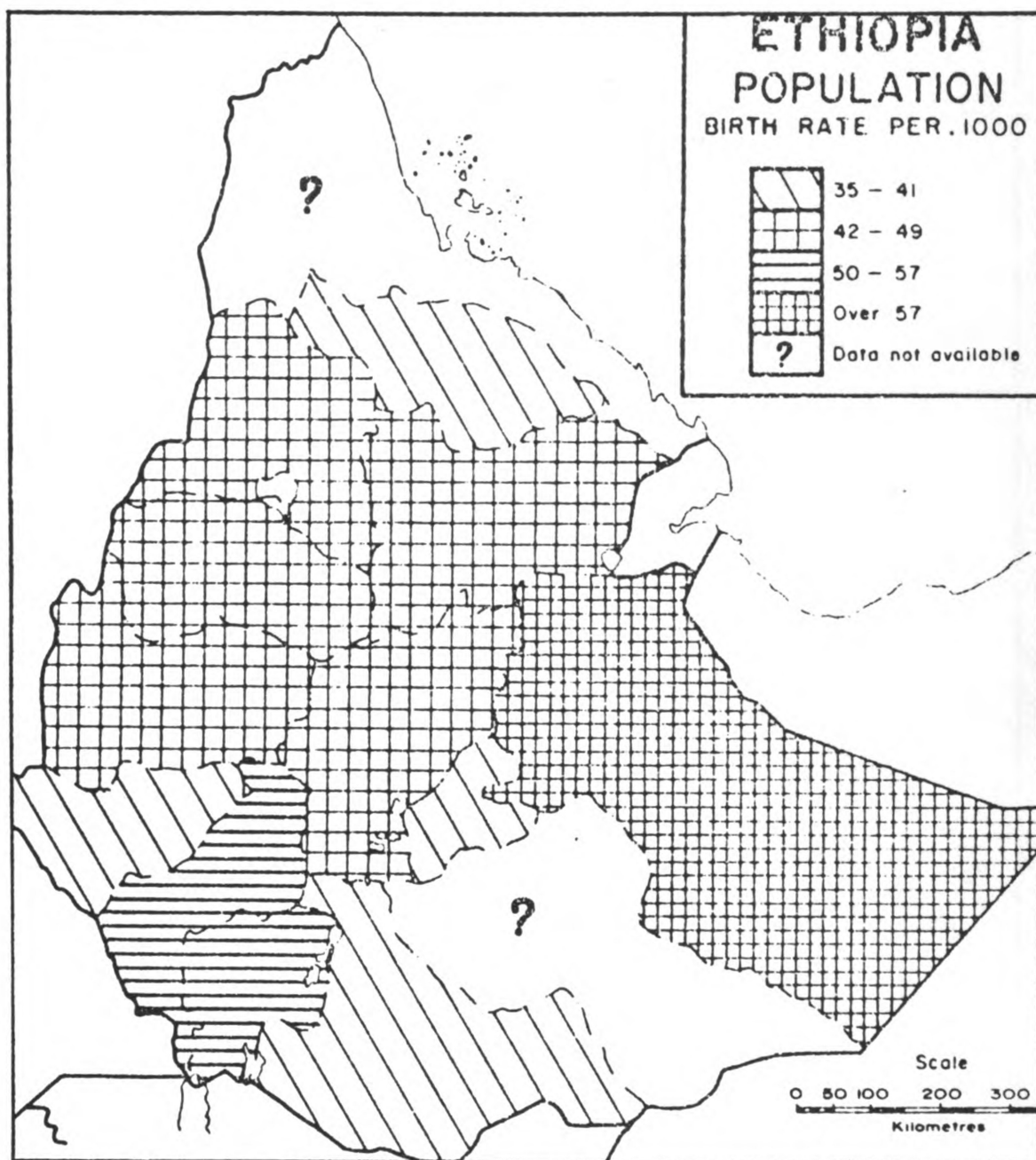
ETHIOPIA: AVERAGE SIZE OF HOUSEHOLDS



SOURCE: Mesfin Wolde Mariane, An Atlas of Ethiopia,
Haile Sellassie University, Department of
Geography, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1970.

APPENDIX C

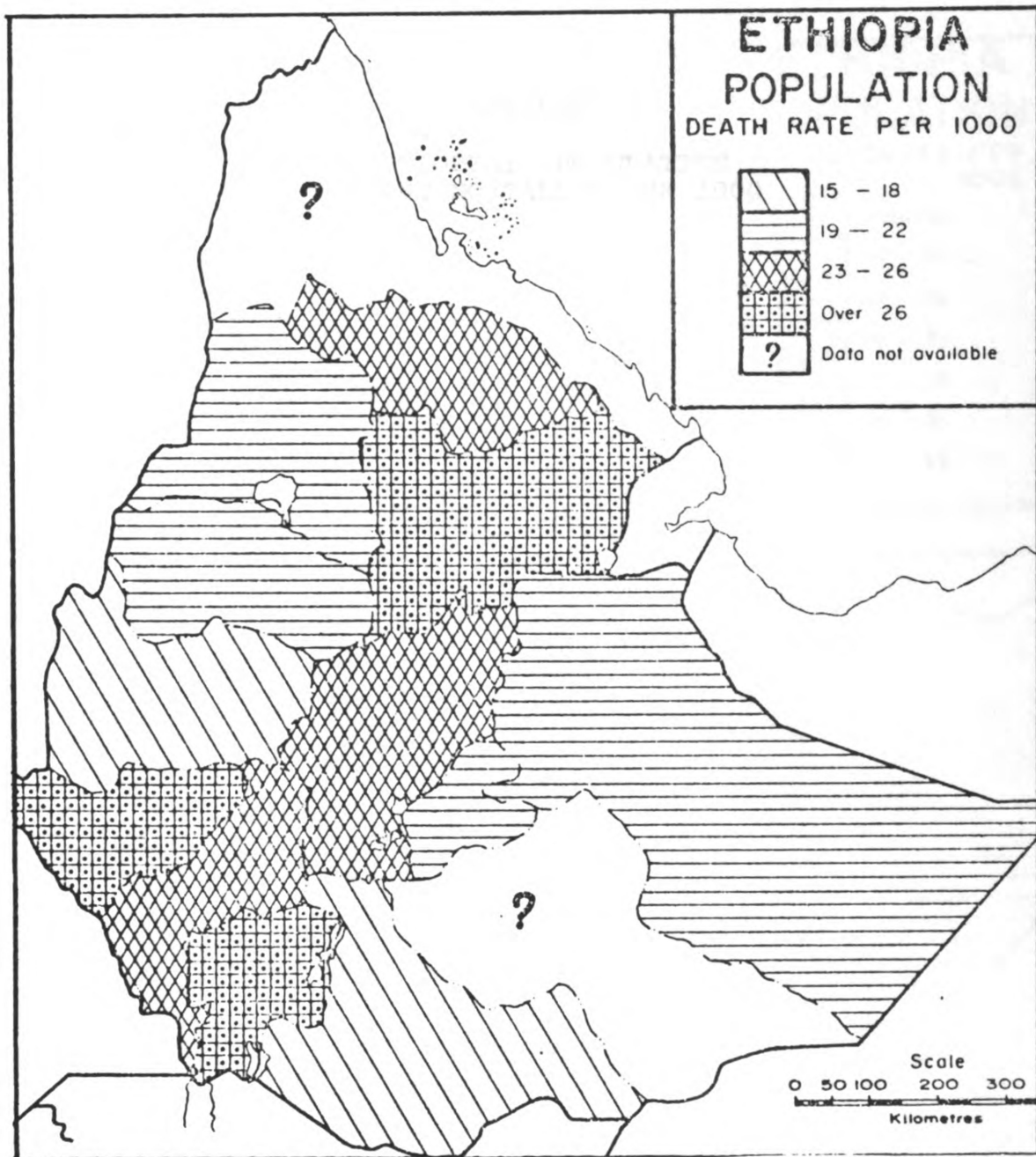
ETHIOPIA: POPULATION
BIRTH RATE PER 1000



SOURCE: Mesfin Wolde Mariane, An Atlas of Ethiopia, Haile Sellassie University, Department of Geography, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1970.

APPENDIX D

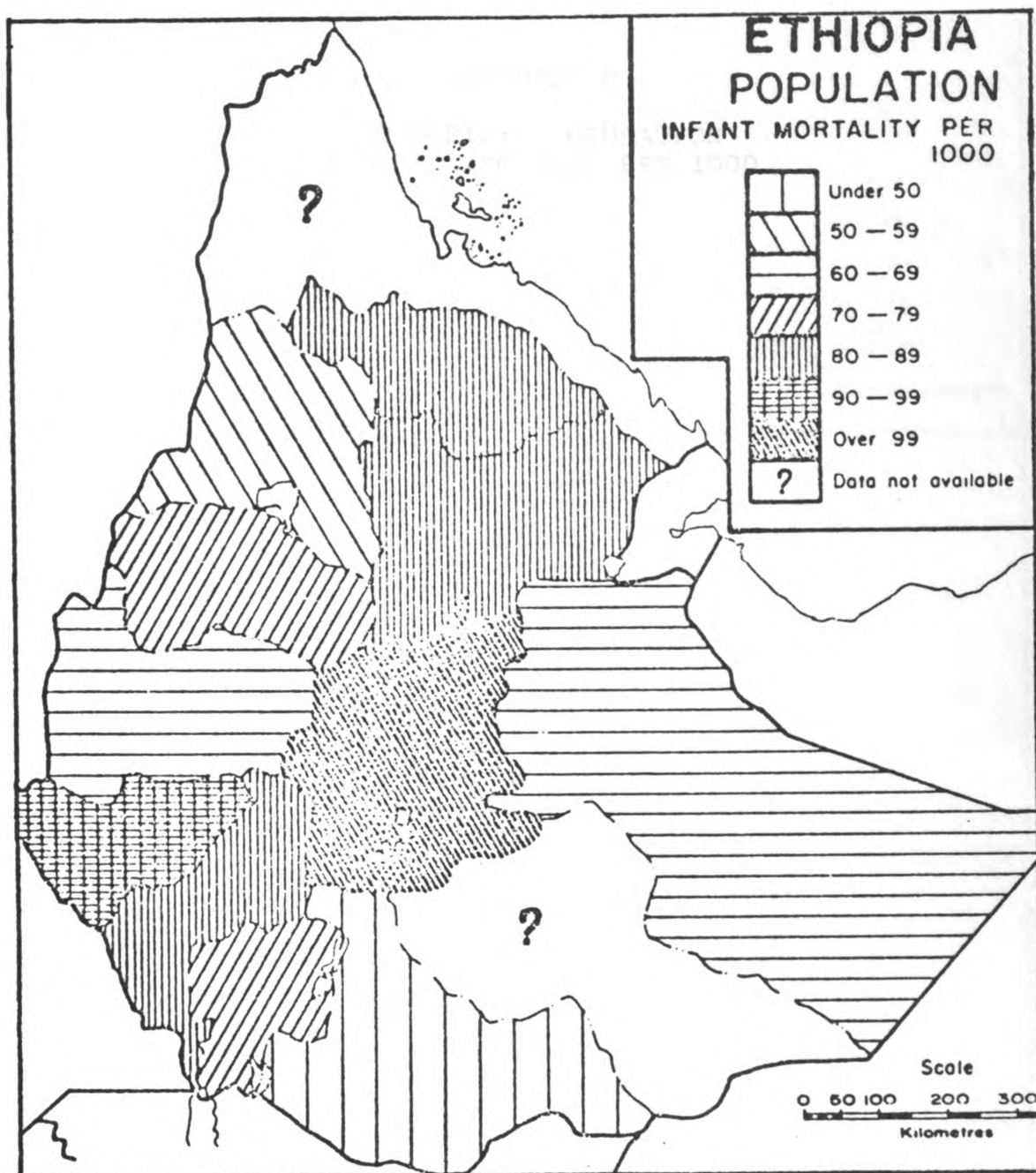
ETHIOPIA: POPULATION
DEATH RATE PER 1000



SOURCE: Mesfin Wolde Mariane, An Atlas of Ethiopia, Haile Sellassie University, Department of Geography, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1970.

APPENDIX E

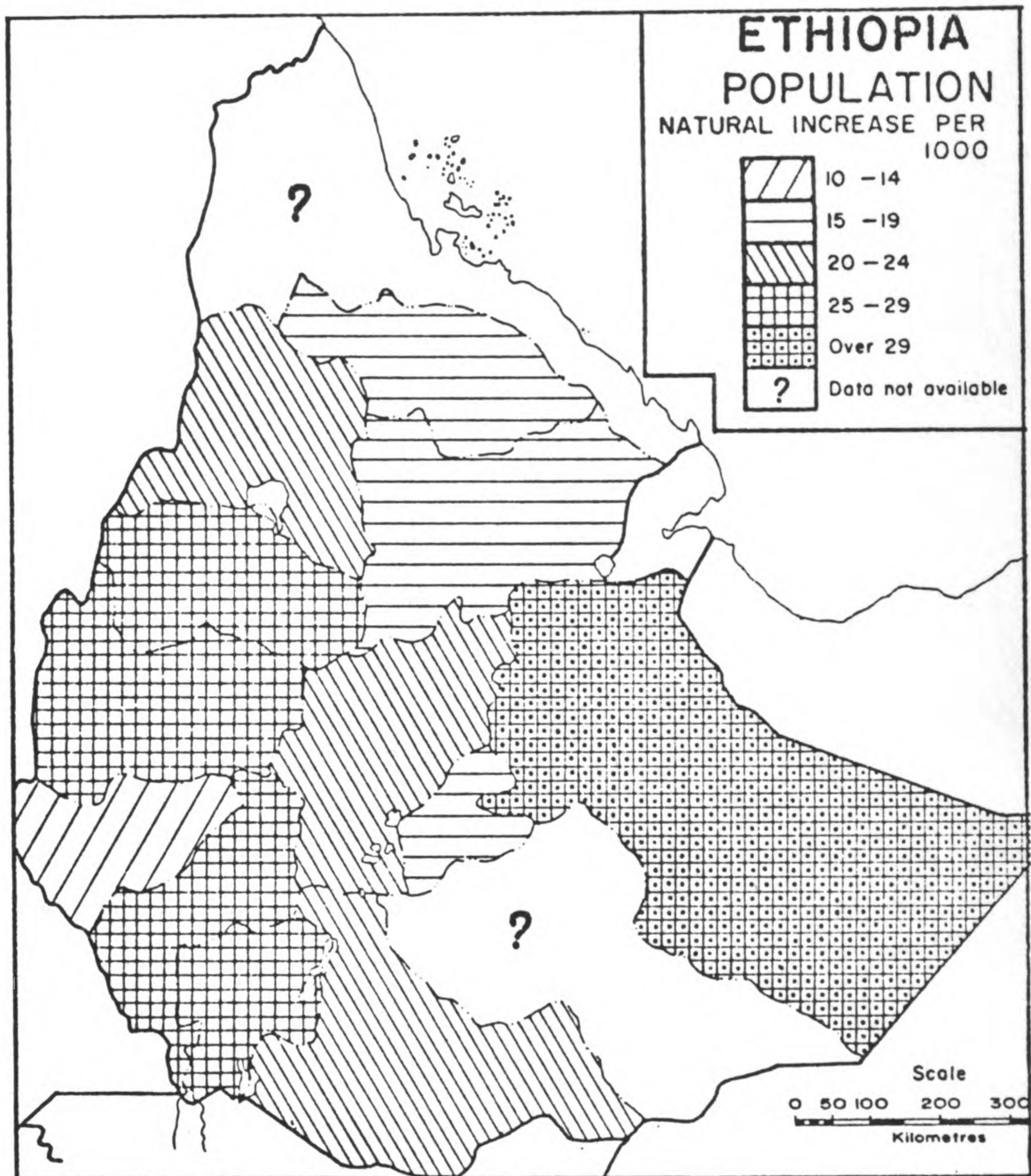
ETHIOPIA: POPULATION
INFANT MORTALITY PER 1000



SOURCE: Mesfin Wolde Mariane, An Atlas of Ethiopia, Haile Sellassie University, Department of Geography, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1970.

APPENDIX F

ETHIOPIA: POPULATION
NATURAL INCREASE PER 1000



SOURCE: Mesfin Wolde Mariane, An Atlas of Ethiopia, Haile Sellassie University, Department of Geography, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1970.

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