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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FAMILIES' EXPERIENCES WITH FOOD INSECURITY IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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THESIS

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Abstract

Ethiopia has shown considerable progress in alleviating the decades-long food insecurity problem, but still, in the context of urban areas such as Addis Ababa families continue to struggle to make ends meet. The overall purpose of this research is to explore families' lived experiences and coping mechanisms with food insecurity. Framed with the narrative-empowerment theoretical framework this ethnographic study outlines the findings of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion of 35 adults and children and observational notes. Participants were able to tell their perception, causes, and impacts of food insecurity in their families. They outlined the daily strategies they employ to obtain food or finance to cope with their nutritional needs. In reflecting on the findings, the study concluded that families' perception of food insecurity, causes of food insecurity, effects of food insecurity, and coping mechanisms have reciprocal relationships. Families employ both positive and negative copings to obtain food. Social work practice and policy recommendations and further research suggestions are included.

Key Words: Food Security/Insecurity, Family, Well-being, Coping Strategies, Physical Health, Mental Health, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Africa, Urban.

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To Ato. Mekonnen Bekele, Ato. Tesfaye Alemayehu, Wro. Meskerem Worku, and Ato. Tilaye Beyene thank you for connecting me to your communities and opening your offices and homes.

Dedications

A special dedication to my wife, Heather: There are no words I could use to describe how much I am grateful to you. You are my jewel and a blessing from the Lord.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"The eradication of hunger is not just an end in itself: It is a first step toward sustainable development and progress in general, for a hungry man is not a free man. He cannot focus on anything else but securing his next meal. " — Kofi Annan

1.1. Background

Food insecurity is a vital global issue that leaves almost one billion people with chronic hunger every day (WFP, 2017). Even if the prevalence of food insecurity has been gradually decreasing yearly since 2000, the 2017 United Nations Food and Agriculture report indicates that the number of undernourished people increased from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016 (FAO & UNICEF, 2017). In Africa alone, food insecurity has left 38 million people vulnerable to "imminent threat to their peace, security and stability" (p. 49). The irony with this chronic food problem is that there is enough food production to feed the world; however, a small portion of the world's population that have the resources and the means consume a notable portion of the food produced (Foley, 2011). Sub-Saharan Africa continues to maintain the highest prevalence of undernourishment with 22.7 percent, and East Africa scores the highest with 33.9 percent, an increase from 31.1 in 2016 (FAO & UNICEF, 2017).

According to the World Bank, Ethiopia has one of the fastest-growing economies in the world (as cited in Ibp, 2015). However, it is also the second most populous country in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 40% of its population and 30% of its children are undernourished (Awulachew et al., 2007 & Food Security Portal, 2012). Demand for food is profoundly affected by population growth. According to the World Bank report,

the population of Ethiopia has grown from 22,151,218 in 1960 to 99,390,750 in 2015. Ethiopia, formerly known as Abyssinia, is one of seven countries that make up two-thirds of the world's most undernourished population, along with Bangladesh, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Indonesia and Pakistan (FAO, 2010).

Ensuring food security is one of the most significant challenges Ethiopia faces today. In the last 50 years, Ethiopia has experienced multiple severe famines that provoked global reactions (De Waal, 1991). In the 1970s, during and after the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, the country suffered an extreme drought and famine (De Waal, 1991). In the midst of civil war in 1984, political instability brought on another extreme famine in Ethiopia that attracted the international community's intervention (Wardle, 2011). The famine occurred when the political instability was combined with drought in the area (Wardle, 2011). The country has been known for its reliance on food aid and emergency relief support in response to persistent food insecurity. The famines in the 70s and 80s were the result of persistent droughts that reduced the production of food, and there was not sufficient food aid to offset the losses (Dorosh & Rashid, 2013).

Ethiopia's food security, past, present, and future, relies on historical, geographic and societal factors. Ethiopia is the horn of Africa, with six neighbouring countries: Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia. In 1991, after the independence of Eritrea, Ethiopia became a landlocked country (Smidt & Abraham, 2005). Ethiopia covers 1.1 million square kilometers, and 65% of the land is arable, with 15% presently cultivated. The country can be sectioned into three zones, also known as "Three Ethiopias", based on the rainfall (Awulachew et al., 2010, p. 17). This can be seen in Figure 1. The Eastern third of the country is dry and semi-arid lowlands; the western

third of the country is rainfall-sufficient, and the northern and central parts are drought-prone highlands. The majority of the population live in the western third, northern and central parts of the country (Dorosh & Rashid, 2013).

Ethiopia's economic growth depends on the performance of the rainfed and irrigated agricultural sector (Hagos, et al., 2009). Abbink (2017) reports that, according to the Ethiopian government, the agricultural sector that employs 80 percent of the population accounts for 36% of the real GDP, followed by the service sector with 47% and manufacturing with 17%. Subsistence farming is a common practice that involves the production of grain and livestock (Siyoum, 2013). Despite having 3.7 million hectares of irrigable land in Ethiopia, only 5 to 6% of Ethiopian farmland is irrigated, leaving crop yields from small farms below regional averages and a declining agricultural productivity (Awulachew et al., 2007 & Bekele, 2001). In addition, other factors such as large family size, the small size of cultivated landholdings, poor soil fertility, and lack of use of fertilizers and improved seeds contribute to the ongoing national economic issues and food problems (Bogale, 2012).

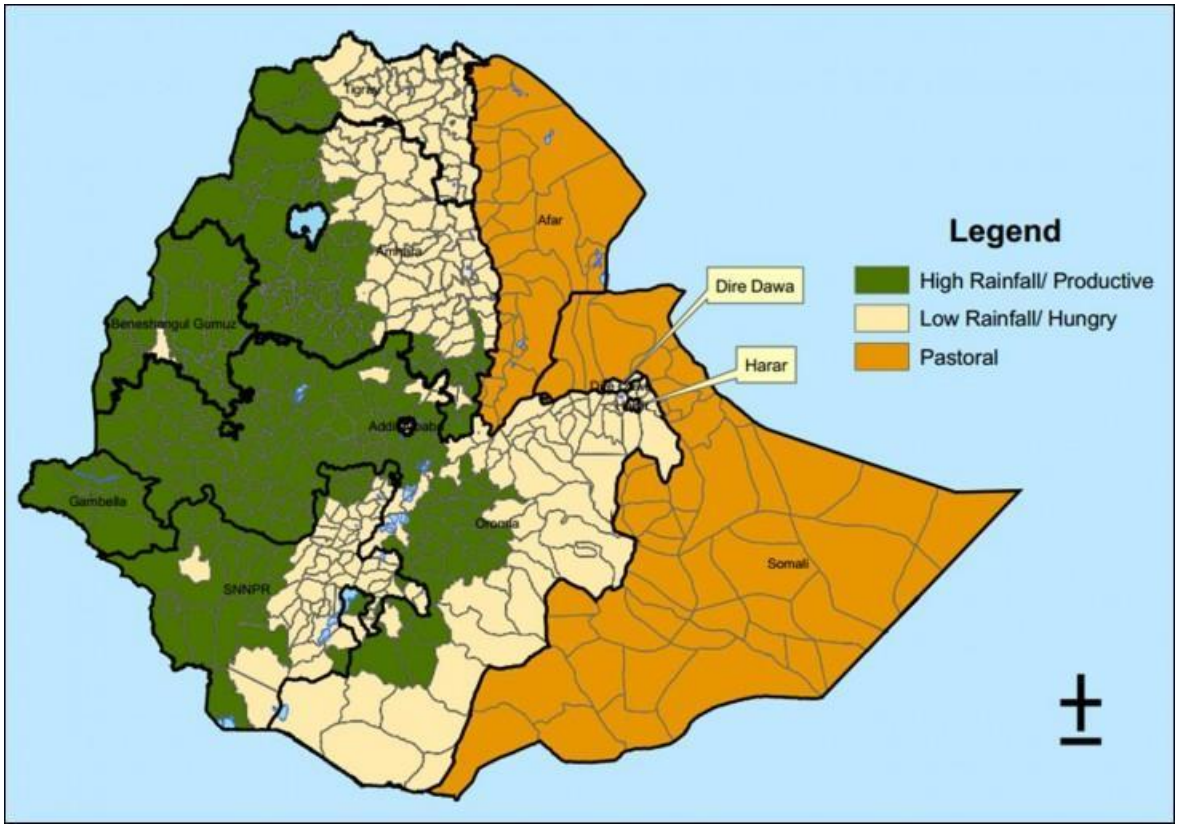
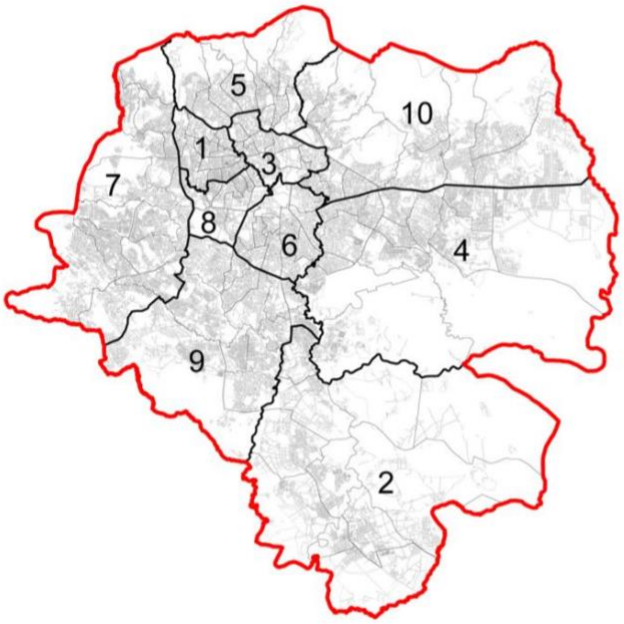


Figure 1: Three Ethiopias (USAID, n.d.)

According to World Bank data, in 2017, only 20% of the Ethiopian population lives in urban centers (The World Bank, 2017b). Urbanization in Ethiopia and the lack of dietary diversification; quality sanitation infrastructure and the high unemployment rate are highly correlated (Yohannes & Elias, 2017 & Shiferaw et al., 2014) and cause many challenges to the plans of governmental and non-government organizations to alleviate the problem. Historically, Ethiopia's problems with food security have heavily affected the rural parts of the country which, according to the World Bank, represent 80% of the population (Etana & Tolossa, 2017 & The World Bank, 2017b). The concentration of infrastructure, industries, and public facilities in the urban centers (Angélil & Hebel, 2016, Teklehaymanot, 2009) may have distracted city planners from the residents' daily struggle with food. This reality may have led to urban poverty and urban food problems

being neglected by researchers and policymakers (Tolossa, 2010). Ethiopis's 4% urbanization rate is relatively low when compared with other sub-Saharan countries, but urban areas in Ethiopia continue to have increased demand for food (Christiaensen & Alderman, 2004; Sisay & Edriss, 2012).

Addis Ababa is the capital city of Ethiopia and is often referred to as "the political capital of Africa" for its historical, diplomatic and political significance for the continent and for housing the headquarters of the UN Economic Commission to Africa and the African Union (Sisay & Edriss, 2012). Addis Ababa, meaning "new flower" in the Amharic language, is one of the fastest growing cities on the continent of Africa, with a population of about 3,040,740 (Birhane et al., 2014, p. 2). As shown in Figure 2, Addis Ababa is divided into ten sub-cities (kifle ketema) and 116 district (*wereda*) level administration offices (Abera, 2012).



1	Addis Ketema
2	Akaki Kality
3	Arada
4	Bole
5	Gulele
6	Kirkos
7	Kolfe-Keranio
8	Lideta
9	Nifassilk-Lafto
10	Yeka

Figure 2: Map of Addis Ababa and Sub-cities (Gulit Project, 2015)

In 1995, two cities in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, became federal-cities, and were given autonomy and functions similar to the other nine autonomous states in the country by the Federal Constitution (Habtu, 2003). Addis Ababa is divided into ten sub-cities, and in each sub-city, there are Kebele Administrative offices (In, 2016, 52). Addis Ababa's governmental structure reflects the "dual mandate as a federal capital (state function) as well as its autonomous municipal functions" (Spaliviero & Cheru, 2017). In 2015, the World Bank outlined both the state and municipal functions of Addis Ababa. Under the proclamation, as a state functions, the city is responsible for the expansion of education, health care and services, policing courts, and support to micro and small enterprises. Addis Ababa administration is also responsible for municipal functions such as housing, land supply and servicing, supply of water and electricity, road construction, reduction of poverty and more (as cited in Spaliviero & Cheru, 2017).

Similar to many urban centers in Africa, food insecurity in Addis Ababa is an everyday reality for many families. Addis Ababa consists of diverse communities that can be described to be "sprawling and impoverished neighbourhoods" (Tekola et al., 2009, p.3). According to the 2015 Central Statistics Agency's Poverty Level Assessment of Addis Ababa, the city houses numerous low-income adults, children and elderly people who are vulnerable and with "low adaptive capacity" for stress or shocks (as cited in Spaliviero & Cheru, 2017, p. 77). Poverty in Ethiopia's urban centers, including Addis Ababa, is one of the biggest challenges the country faces. According to Teklehaymanot (2009), migration, overcrowded living conditions, social fragmentation, crime and violence are some of the factors that exacerbate poverty in urban areas.

1.2 Social Location

My interest in the topic of food security and the city of Addis Ababa comes from my social location, mainly my history, faith, education, upbringing and professional experience in community development and working with families and children. I was born and raised in Addis Ababa in the community of Kolfe. I have first-hand experience with food insecurity and witnessed the effects of food insecurity on families within my community. I grew up in a city where poverty was visible at home, on the streets, in the marketplaces, in schools, and in workplaces. When I was growing up, the struggles of providing food for their children was an experience shared by many families in Addis Ababa. I saw children getting ill, being hospitalized, and even dying as a result of food insecurity and related health problems. Many of my peers, when I was a child, had to drop out of school because their parents could not keep them in school, and they had to travel throughout the city in search of food or work. Many parents left their children all day in the neighbourhood while they worked or begged for food. Reflecting on my previous work and volunteer experiences in Addis Ababa led me to believe that food insecurity is a complex problem and has a reciprocal relationship with other societal and health problems.

My history and my experiences in the city have brought me to the topic of food security. My siblings and I grew up with a brave single mother from when I was ten years old. I have first-hand experience of what it is like to live in a food insecure and economically poor family. My mother valued education and she dedicated her life to getting her children a good education. However, affording regular nutritious food was a consistent barrier that posed challenges to my family.

Despite my family's socioeconomic status, I was raised with the values of family and the responsibility and importance of helping others who are in need. When I was a high school student, I volunteered with an organization called Compassion International, which sponsors children in communities similar to mine. It was during my work with families and children in Addis Ababa that I started to learn more about the extent of food-related problems in my community.

In addition to growing up in a community where food insecurity was a daily reality for many families, my interest in conducting an academic study started after taking a course called "Food Security" with Dr. Paul Dorosh at the Evangelical Theological College in Addis Ababa. From the lectures, I became convinced that the problem of food insecurity does not only depend on the availability of food in the country or the market, but what resonated with me was that households' access to nutritious food and the removal of existing barriers are critical to food security. When I joined the social work field, I found my interest in families' experiences with food insecurity fit with social work values.

When I was studying for my Bachelor of Theology and Community Development degree, I, along with some of my peers, started an organization called the Beza Entoto Outreach, which supported more than 300 ostracized families and children living with HIV/AIDS. I worked as a project director and spent much of my time conducting home, school, and community visits. We designed programs that empowered families by developing income generation, health care and education programs. I worked closely with children who had lost their parents because of HIV. Despite the accessibility of health care, the prevalence of chronic hunger contributed to our clients' reduced well-

being. When the individuals that I worked with were unable to access adequate and nutritious food, they often lost their capacity to work and experienced adverse side-effects from the antiretroviral (ART) medication they took. Lack of nutrition often led to other infectious diseases and even death.

In 2015, my family and I started a project called iNSchool in Addis Ababa in partnership with a Canadian organization called DevXchange International. The program provides school meals, school supplies, and clothing to the most vulnerable children in the community. The mission of the project is to enhance students' motivation, engagement, and success by lowering the barriers that would keep them from attending school. We started the project with the philosophy that all children have the right to education. Education is a key factor in eradicating poverty. In partnership with a local school and community members, we identified that a lack of food and school supplies are the primary reasons why children drop out of school. Though I began my work with strong passion and a desire to give back to my community, I felt that I did not have an adequate understanding of the extent of families' experience with the subject. I decided to engage in this study because I wanted to answer some questions I had that could not be answered through numbers or statistical reports. I wanted to gain rich knowledge that could inform my future practice.

Conducting this research study has been an invaluable learning experience. The overall process has taught me the nature of research and the research process. I learned that undertaking qualitative research can be time consuming, frustrating, tedious and complex, yet satisfying and rewarding. Researching the topic of families' experience with food insecurity has helped me to gain ideas and examine my personal and professional

values while learning a new dimension of thinking for my future practice and professional development.

When I arrived in Addis Ababa, I was filled with excitement because it had been a while since I had visited the city. I started travelling to the different parts of the city to refamiliarize myself with them. I found the city had changed drastically, with many new buildings, light rail transit and endless, ongoing construction sites. The appearance of the city was entirely different and had improved from the time I lived in the city; it was no longer a city saturated with impoverished areas. I enjoyed travelling throughout the city for observations and to conduct interviews and focus group discussions. While admiring the rapid growth of the city, it was easy to witness the extreme form of poverty that still existed in all parts of the city. I could easily see the increased gap between the poor and the rich in the city. There were many houses and high- rise buildings with high security and, at the same time, many homeless individuals and families that lived in squatter settlements and decrepit mud houses.

My visit to Addis Ababa was also very emotional because of the level of poverty and economic suffering I witnessed in many families and individuals on the streets, in home visits, and in the marketplaces. Notable were my visits to the areas traditionally called Stadium, *Koshe* community and *Lomi Tera*. In the stadium area, I witnessed a large number of homeless children and adults who were begging on the street and running alongside cars. As a father, the most difficult thing to witness was children who would be the age of my children begging and helping their parents earn money. Only a few drivers took time to give a small amount of money or buy from them a small package of tissues, a lottery ticket, or any other goods they had to sell.

Observing the severity of poverty and people's persistence in trying to overcome their problems and the attitude of gratefulness for what they have was a humbling experience. My interactions and listening to the stories were not only a reminder of my past experiences but also helped me to recognize my current privileges. Listening to the narratives of the participants and experiencing the city's life created a strong desire to move back to Addis Ababa and work in the communities again.

Even if it contributed to negative ways of coping with food insecurity, many families were quick to use the resources they had at their disposal to relieve their immediate needs. I was very impressed with the creativity and determination families displayed to avoid hunger. I found the second-hand food market system to be a uniquely socially innovative and solution-focused, community-based initiative. As an outsider, it is easy to judge and consider their coping methods to be harmful and problematic; however, the system can have potential to bring forth a sustainable and community-focused strategy.

I recorded several essential reflections on the traits of the participants. I admired families' resiliency and strength to cope with adverse life situations. I was impressed by the level of sacrifice many parents make to provide for their families, the stories of mothers who walk hours to find employment and fathers who work 16 hours a day to pay for rent, food, and children's education while barely eating twice a day. I was humbled by the gratitude families displayed when they talked about incidents of acquiring enough food for their families. On many occasions, children play an important role in helping families become or attempt to become food secure. When most participants talked about living in a rental house, they were referring to renting a single room, mostly made of

straw, wood and mud, with no access to private washrooms. They often cook, eat, and sleep in the same room.

I uploaded all of my transcribed documents and diagrams and photographs on an online Dodoose program. Even as I officially started the coding and labelling process on the software, I began to put labels, ideas, highlights and potential categories on sticky notepads and posted them around my window and walls. These notes were beneficial in both the open and axial coding stages. Since I have a relatively large amount of data, during the open coding process, I had to compare my data and the labels I created regularly. Despite using constant comparative analysis, I ended up with 156 codes. However, throughout the coding process, I used memoing both on Dedoose and on paper to journal how the codes I created explained the process and meaning.

As in the translation and transcription process, reading through the transcripts in the coding stage brought similar emotional reactions and new thoughts. I used the Dedoose software and wrote memos on themes and sub-themes that were emerging from the data to capture my emotional reactions. Even if I noted the implications of food insecurity on mental health while I was collecting the data, it became more apparent while I was conducting a constant comparative analysis. I believe my work as a social service worker and social worker in the last six years in the mental health and addiction services created sensitivity to disclosed mental health symptoms and enabled me to capture participants' experiences.

I mainly struggled in condensing my themes to four as I had a vast amount of data and feared that I might not be able to capture the narratives. In this stage, I took a break from coding the data and started to have informal conversations about my topic, my

experiences in Addis Ababa, and themes that I identified with friends and family members. This helped me to gain new perspectives and understand the intertwining aspect of my themes as presented in Figure 12.

1.3. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore families' experiences with food insecurity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and to understand the ways they cope with it to offset the problem. The study aims to understand the relationship between families' food insecurity and well-being.

1.4. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized in five chapters. The first chapter provides a brief background of the area of study and my background and social location in the research. It also explains the purpose of this study. Chapter two reviews the literature sources I consulted to develop an understanding of the topic. I used the literature to examine my topic and how this study adds to the existing studies. Chapter three provides my philosophical and theoretical stance that guided the process of this research. It also describes the ethnographic methodology aligned with the theoretical framework and methods used to conduct the study. Chapter four presents the findings and discussion of the study thematically by providing answers to the overall questions presented in chapter one. Finally, chapter five provides a conclusion of the study, implications for practice, policy and future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Food insecurity is one of the most vital global issues, and the concern for many nations has been apparent for centuries. The 2017 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations report on the state of food insecurity and nutrition in the world reported that in 2016, stunted growth among the world's children had decreased from 29.5 percent to the 22.5 percent level than it was in 2005. However, if the current trend continues, the report still predicts that by 2025 there will be 130 million children with stunted growth (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2017). Morrow et al., (2017) lists widespread poverty, climatic shocks, economic shocks, and global food price spikes as the main reasons for the increased global food insecurity that influences children's healthy growth.

Writings about famine and food deficiency are available in many ancient manuscripts. However, the concept of food security evolved in the 20th century, and many definitions are used for various purposes. The process of establishing a standard definition for food security proves its complexity and necessity. Food security and food insecurity are complex terms to explain because they affect many dimensions of people's lives. Many definitions that are available agree that food security is not limited to the provision of an immediate "supply of protein and energy but also the sustainable supply of healthy diet that promotes well-being" (Martindale, 2014, p. 1).

In response to the 1970s world food crisis, at the 1974 World Food Conference, global leaders defined food security by focusing on the sufficiency of food supply and on

ensuring these supplies through the use of food reserves (Agbo & Nongugwa, 2017). Later in 1986, the World Bank in its World Development Report on poverty and hunger introduced the "distinction between chronic food insecurity and transitory food insecurity, which involved periods of intensified pressure caused by natural disasters, economic collapse, or conflict" (as cited in Pachauri et al., 2009, p. 474). The report also presented the FAO's definition of food security as "ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need" (Food And Agriculture Organization Of The United Nations, 2005, p. 27).

In 1996, the heads of states and governments at Rome's World Food Summit (WFS) formulated the most widely used definition of food security. "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, economic, and [social] access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 1996, p. 3). This definition integrates the physical and economic access, availability, utilization, and stability of food with respect to all people. For this thesis, I use the meaning put forward by the WFS in 1996.

Identifying the various types of food insecurity is crucial in exploring the dimensions of food security in order to create a strong foundation for designing appropriate interventions and to "address immediate needs; and to tackle the underlying structural causes of hunger" (Devereux, 2006a, p. 1). There are fundamental differences in how the duration and severity of food insecurity affect how we understand the dimensions of food insecurity and create responsive actions. Devereux (2000b) provides a clear identification and records of two types of food insecurity, chronic food insecurity and transient food insecurity.

The prevalence and effects of food insecurity are different on different groups of people for various reasons and in varying degree because not all families or individuals suffer inadequate food consumption for the same period of time (Devereux, 2006b). Chronic food insecurity occurs when persistent and long-term food shortage occurs, and individuals cannot find the minimum food consumption requirement. "Low economic status, political powerlessness or social exploitation and discrimination" can influence individuals' and groups' vulnerability to chronic food insecurity and their ability to become food secure in the short-term and long-term (Frankenberger, 2003, p. 23). Transient food insecurity happens when, at "frequent intervals," the need for food aid and food-related supports becomes essential to manage food insecurity and malnutrition (Guha-Khasnobis, 2007 p. 30). During disaster events, transient food insecurity can cause acute food problems (Habiba, et al., 2015); however, unlike chronic food insecurity, it does not lead to famine (Gunning, 1994, p. 121).

The dialogue around food security and insecurity is not merely about the discourse of famine, hunger, and malnutrition. As per the1996 WFS definition, food security needs to incorporate four dimensions: availability, access, utilization, and stability of food (Napoli, 2011). Shaw (2007) states that food security is compromised when the availability, access, and utilization of food become undermined by natural and unnatural factors. Some of these factors can include natural disasters as well as "war, civil strife, inappropriate national policies, inadequate development, adaptation, and adoption of agricultural and other research and technology, barriers to trade, environmental degradation, poverty, population growth, gender inequality; and poor health" (Shaw, 2007 p. 349).

Compared to in rural areas in Ethiopia, the topic of food insecurity is a scarcely studied topic in Addis Ababa. Similar to other African countries, the issue of food insecurity is considered to be an issue of rural population (Crush et al., 2012). Therefore, there has been limited research done in the areas of food insecurity and families' well-being in Addis Ababa. In this chapter, I have presented the dimensions of food insecurity based on the 1996 WFS definition of food insecurity. I have also explored the prevalence of food insecurity and determinants of food insecurity. After mentioning several points about coping mechanisms for food insecurity, I have added some current national responses to food insecurity in Ethiopia.

2.2. Dimensions of Food Security

2.2.1. Availability

The first dimension of food security derived from the 1996 WFS definition is based on people's ability to obtain food. The sufficiency of the food supply is one of the determining factors for the availability of food (Shaw, 2007 & Simon, 2012). The availability of food is determined by adding the locally produced food and imported food (including food aid) and deducting the net exported food (Simon, 2012). Ethiopia's history of food insecurity problems can be an example of availability as one of the dimensions of food insecurity. For example, Abafita & Kim (2013) characterized Ethiopia's persistent food insecurity issues as persistently low food availability. The incidence of food insecurity in Ethiopia is often explained with the availability of food in relation to the national or local consumption requirement; however, focusing solely on the overall domestic food availability distracts from the question of access by individual families (Devereux, 2006b).

Defining food security only with the consideration of the availability of food will likely create a view that raising food production will bring improved food security (Simon, 2012). Derara & Tolossa (2012) used the Food Availability Decline (FAD) model, that food availability does not necessarily guarantee or make families entitled to consume enough food. The mere availability of food does not reduce food insecurity among families; famine can still occur despite the high availability of food (Derara and Tolossa, 2012). For example, Watkins (2003) explained that famines in the North Wollo and Eastern Tigray parts of Ethiopia occurred while there was an availability of maize in a different part of the country.

2.2.2. Access

After availability, according to the 1996 WFS definition, the second dimension of food security is "physical and economic" access to a nutritious diet (FAO, 1996, p.3 & Shaw, 2007, p. 349). The definition clarifies that food security does not only depend on the availability of food, but people need to have access to "safe and nutritious" food (Simon, 2012 p. 8). Access to food can determine families' ability to "acquire an adequate amount of food regularly through a combination of purchases, barter, borrowings, food assistance or gifts" (WFP, 2009, p. 170). For instance, during the 1973 famine in Ethiopia, national food production increased, the availability increased at the same time; however, the factors that caused the famine in a certain part of the country included the issue of access. While food was available, "rising food prices, loss of employment and declining livestock prices" impacted families' access to food (Simon, 2012, p. 17).

Access to food is a "logistical dimension" that can improve incidents where part of a country has a surplus production and delivers food to another famine-stricken part of the nation with a provision of and access to transport infrastructure (Napoli, 2011). The economic aspect of access ensures that families have the financial ability to purchase or acquire amounts of food to meet their nutritional requirement (Simon, 2012). Abafita & Kim (2013) outline three essential factors that can improve access: the total income of the family, income distribution among members of the family, and food prices that will enhance access to ensure food security at a household level.

2.2.3. Utilization

The term utilization is the third element described in the 1996 WFS definition of food security. Utilization is referred to as "safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs" (FAO, 1996, p.3). The availability and access of food are measured in both micro (household level) and macro (global level); but utilization, according to Leroy et al., (2015), is "about the abilities of individuals to absorb and effectively use the nutrients ingested for normal body functions" (p. 169). According to Simon (2012), the utilization should include the selection, conservation, and absorption of nutrients. Food is a source of energy that can help people to carry out daily routine and function healthily. The utilization aspect of food security should include other food-related factors such as safe drinking water and sanitary facilities, awareness of food preparation, health care, and food storage (Napoli, 2011 & Barron et al., 2013). The availability of and access to food are not enough if the individual is not able to use the food because of illnesses and other non-food factors (Stamoulis & Zezza, 2003).

2.2.4. Stability

The stability aspect of food security is drawn from the phrase "at all times" from the 1996 WFS definition (FAO, 1996). Stability refers to the removal of the risk of food insecurity in every season and circumstance (Leroy, et al., 2015). Stability deals with the reduction of vulnerability to food insecurity due to external factors (Stamoulis & Zezza, 2003). External factors that lead to instability of food can be climate change, conflict, unemployment, disease, or other factors (Napoli, 2011). Consequently, if the stability aspect of food security is not established, vulnerability to food insecurity can increase and compromise the other three dimensions of food security. Lack of stability creates "transitory food insecurity," a temporary or short-term type of food shortage that occurs on a regular basis (Shiferaw, 2014, p. 274). Stability of food is a vital aspect of food security that brings relief to families by reducing the risk of losing access to food as a consequence and sudden shock (Barron et al., 2013).

2.3. Prevalence of Food Insecurity

Some regions of Ethiopia produce surplus food regularly, while others experience chronic food shortages (USAID, 2011). In the 2017, FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO reports of the state of food security and nutrition in the world, Ethiopia is mentioned as one of the countries with high sensitivity to rainfall variations that lead to food insecurity (FAO & UNICEF, 2017). The prevalence of food insecurity has left Ethiopia with a continual need for commercial and food aid imports to the country both in drought and non-drought seasons (Devereux, 2006a).

Urban areas such as Addis Ababa face the consequences of nationwide food shortages and a lack of access (Tolossa, 2010). The discourse on food insecurity in urban

areas in Ethiopia is “fundamentally different from questions of food [insecurity] within the rural and agricultural” areas (Sisay & Edriss, 2012 p. 8). Research by Birhane et al., (2014) has discovered that studying and addressing urban food problems is a relatively new effort compared to rural food problems. It is speculated that the minimal focus on conducting research on the urban food problems can be because 82% of the Ethiopia population live in the rural areas of the country (Aubert et al., 2018); and the rural residents historically have more persistent food-related problems in accessing a sufficient quantity and safe, nutritious food than urban dwellers (Marrow, et al., 2017). Maxwell (1999) argues that often the issues of food insecurity and malnutrition are not the priority or even a primary consideration of urban planners and managers (p. 4). The UNDP 2012 report asserts that the urban poor and the landless agricultural workers are the least empowered politically and economically.

Ethiopia is one of the most vulnerable countries for food insecurity for various reasons. Ethiopian agriculture is highly dependent on seasonal rain, and only six percent of agricultural land is irrigated (USAID, 2011); El Niño is one of the frequently mentioned natural events that lead to severe food production and food insecurity problems for years after the event. El Niño is a global weather event that occurs every four to twelve years “when cold water does not rise to the surface, causing unusual weather patterns” (Trefil et al., 2002, p. 514). This climate pattern causes an international food security crisis. In 2015, El Niño affected almost 60 million people around the globe, and 15.7 million of them were from East and Central Africa (WFP, 2016). Ethiopia is one the Sub Saharan countries that El Niño has affected greatly by reducing seasonal rainfall and moisture inflow from the west and increasing “moisture transport from Ethiopia”

(Gleixner et al., 2017, p. 1878). After following 2015's El Niño events, 10.2 million people, an equivalent of one-quarter of Ethiopia's districts (*weredas*), were officially classified as facing a nutrition crisis that led to 435,000 children needing treatment for severe or acute malnutrition (UNICEF, 2016). El Niño affects the rainfall during Ethiopia's prime growing season, Kiremt (boreal summer), leading to "economic migration from agribusiness sites to urban communities or cities, including Addis Ababa and the Gulf States" (UNICEF, 2018, 29).

Children in Ethiopia are the most vulnerable and affected part of Ethiopian society and Marrow et al., (2017), in a longitudinal study conducted in 2007, 2008, 2011 and 2014, confirmed that families with small children are "susceptible to food insecurity" (p.6). Even if Ethiopia has shown a confident stride towards improving rates of children's stunting, being underweight and wasting, there are still many children who suffer severe malnutrition. When a child grows up in an insecure food family, the lack of enough nutritious food limits the child's physical growth and cognitive development and increases the vulnerability to infectious and noncommunicable diseases. (Conceição, 2012) This reality makes food insecurity a serious public health concern in Ethiopia (Dorosh & Rashid, 2013).

Some research has found that stunted growth is one of the common risks for children in food insecure families. In 2016, according to the UNICEF, WHO, and World Bank Group joint report, approximately 22.9 percent of the world's children under five years of age were stunted (Hayashi, 2017). Similar to other sub-Saharan countries, infants from food insecure Ethiopian families will likely be stunted and "perpetuate the cycle of deprivation when [these] children, in turn, produce low-birthweight babies" (Conceição,

2012, p.2). In the 1990s, Christiaensen & Alderman's (2004) comparative study showed that Ethiopian families had a much higher incidence of having underweight and stunted children than the average of Sub-Saharan African countries. Humphries et al., (2015) also discusses food insecurity and poor childhood nutritional status as being associated with impaired growth and cognition, lower lifetime educational achievement and earnings, and lower birth weight in the next generation. Children who live in food insecure families do not have access to diverse diets compared with children in food secure families (Humphries et al., 2015). A study by Bernal et al., (2014) reporte that in Venezuela children between grades two and nine who grow up experiencing food insecurity will likely have their daily activities altered and experience a "higher prevalence of absenteeism and stunting than children who are food secure" (p. 1623).

2.4. Determinants of Food Security

Examining the determinants of food insecurity in families requires distinguishing the four levels of food security: global, national, household, and individual (Warr, 2014, pp. 521-522). The global level of food security focuses on the worldwide food supply and its sufficiency without outlining how food insecurity affects individuals. Similarly, the national food security level indicates the level of domestic food supply to meet a national need (Warr, 2014, p. 521). Both the national and global levels of food insecurity can be political (Fouilleux et al., 2017, p. 1665) and tend to "disregard the impact on vulnerable sectors and households." (Rayfuse & Weisfelt, 2012, p. 67).

Studying food security at the household level (as per this study at the family level) and individual level is in alignment with the 1996 WFS definition (Warr, 2014) that ensures the availability, access, utilization and stability of food to all people. The

individual level of food security ensures the distribution of food among members of the household and recognizes that the presence of food insecurity affects individuals differently (Warr, 2014). The global and national level of food security is concerned with a "macro, aggregated food availability;" however, the household and individual level focus on the "food sovereignty" for families and individuals to have access to food, "particularly by marginal groups" (Kimura, 2018, p. 190).

This study focuses on the experiences of households and individuals in Addis Ababa and their level of food security and recognizes some determining factors that contribute to an insecure food status. As the causes of food insecurity vary among areas, social groups or individuals (Fouilleux et al., 2017), the literature identifies several determining factors for food insecurity in both rural and urban areas similar to Addis Ababa.

2.4.1. Gender

Some literature shows that food insecurity is more prevalent in female-headed families (Gebre, 2012). For example, female-headed families make up 30% of the population of Addis Ababa, and out of that, only 26% are food secure, whereas 74% of the 70% male-headed families are food secure (Sisay & Edriss, 2012). Kimura (2018) argues that women assume the primary role in food production and preparation, and they also have a "central role in the allocation of food that impacts the nutritional status of family members (p. 6). Despite the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS), which focuses primarily on improving the nutritional status and well-being of mothers, children, and other vulnerable groups, women in Ethiopia have fewer years of schooling and heavier workloads than men (USAID, 2011). Ethiopia's 2011 to 2015 multi-year strategy has

indicated that the malnutrition rate among boys is higher than among girls in Addis Ababa, similar to other African countries (USAID, 2011).

Gender is an important factor in the type of work in which people engage and the resources they access. Even if women's participation in the labour force has a positive result in the process of national economic growth and food security, many women in Addis Ababa face gender-based constraints, limiting them from taking advantage of opportunities (McGuire, 2015). Tolossa's (2010) study in two selected communities in Addis Ababa indicates that women in Addis Ababa are more likely to engage in "informal activities" to earn money such as petty trading, selling food and drink, and collecting and bartering second-hand items (p. 190) The same study also indicates how "some of the desperate women" in the communities travel to a different neighbourhood and work as prostitutes (p. 187).

2.4.2. Age

Several studies agree that age has an important and positive influence on families' food insecurity status. Gebre (2012) states that children who live in households that have older family heads are more likely to be food insecure than the ones with younger family heads, and often families with older family heads have a large number of members, their resources are distributed among their members, and their income often comes from gifts or remittance. The positive and significant influence of age on family food insecurity is also consistent with the findings of Sisay & Edriss (2013). Humphries et al., (2015) provided a comparative study that confirms the maternal age was significantly higher in food insecure families in Ethiopia and India than in food secure families in Peru and Vietnam.

Stunting and wasting are two of the most severe results of childhood food insecurity that affect children's physical and cognitive growth and weaken their immune systems, leaving them at a higher risk for long-term developmental delays and even death (Hayashi, 2017). Historically, many studies around children's nutrition focus on addressing the conditions of infants and children under the age of five (Morrow et al., 2017). However, many recent studies have started to address the importance of nutritional security for children of all ages (Fram et al. 2015).

2.4.3. Education

Family heads and their capabilities play a significant role in shaping the fates of children in the household. All studies that have looked at education agree that literate families are less food insecure than illiterate families. Family heads with education will likely obtain employment, have a diversity of income, adopt technologies, and suffer from fewer health problems (Gebre, 2012). UNICEF's 2018 report on the long-term impact on children's well-being discussed the role of education and promotion of schools as a "convergence point" for nutritional security and the protection of children (UNICEF, 2018, p. 6).

Findings from Christiaensen & Alderman show the intersection of gender and education in ensuring childhood food security as "children in households with better-educated women are better nourished...providing primary education opportunities to at least one female adult per family would reduce the prevalence of stunting by 6%–12%" (Christiaensen & Alderman, 2004, p. 306). Similarly, the findings from Wolde, 2010, et al., also indicate that mothers who have completed primary education will be less likely to have stunted children than mothers with no formal education.

This research agrees with the theoretical discourse that educational empowerment reduces food problems. Darmon & Drewnowski (2008) find that children from low education level families tend to access less nutritionally dense food than those from educated families. While addressing food insecurity, Christiaensen & Alderman (2004) outline other benefits of education in families and communities; they state that education helps to transfer health knowledge to future and current parents; enhances the capability to diagnose and treat childhood health problems, increases receptivity and openness to modern medicine, and enhances the maternal diagnostic ability around children's growth and malnutrition-related illness.

2.5. Coping Mechanisms

Families in Addis Ababa cope with food insecurity and shortages by applying various coping strategies. Families utilize these coping strategies in the acquiring of food, in selecting what types of staples they use, and in the means of preparing and serving food. There is limited literature written identifying families' coping mechanisms with food insecurity in Addis Ababa. Most of the literature discovered was written over ten years ago.

2.5.1. Food production

In some parts of Addis Ababa, there are many families who practice urban agriculture to maintain their livelihood. Similar to many urban centers, Addis Ababa is dependent on urban agriculture production, but not enough attention is given to urban agriculture by the policymakers even though it supports over 51,000 families (Duressa, 2007). Urban food production is an integral part of income for urban farmers in Addis Ababa, contributing 60% of their total household income (Duressa, 2007). The 2015

Central Statistics Agency's Poverty Level Assessment of Addis Ababa states that 40 percent of vegetables produced in Addis Ababa come from farms that use irrigated water from highly polluted rivers and that leave many residents vulnerable to water-borne diseases (Spaliviero & Cheru, 2017).

2.5.2. Change of Food Items

When faced with food insecurity, some families change the type of food they consume. For example, Birhane et al., (2014) reported that families make changes to the type of grain they use for daily consumption from *teff* to wheat, sorghum, or maize, and as a result, families stop eating nutritious food such as vegetables, fruit and animal products, causing malnutrition and various illnesses. One of the reasons that families make changes in what they eat is a reflection of the different growing seasons as families rely on seasonal and cheaper food items: for example, green maize, potatoes, and cabbage (Tolossa, 2010).

When families are unable to purchase food consistently, they may decide to reduce the number of meals they eat per day (Humphries et al., 2015). Some families maintain the number of meals they eat but reduce the quantity of food served and replace traditional meals with simple foods such as Kolo (roasted barley grain) boiled potatoes and corn. Additionally, when families are unable to purchase ingredients and prepare food, they turn to purchase cheaper, pre-cooked food (Tolossa, 2010).

When families cannot purchase food items with their own money or resources, they resort to asking for support from others in their community. First, families ask for food support from relatives in rural areas (Sisay, 2012) or borrow food and money (Humphries et al.,

2015). In some cases, when families cannot provide food for their children, they send them to live with relatives both in the city and in another region until food shortages pass.

2.6. Responses to Food Insecurity in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian government, in partnership with non-governmental organizations such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Food for the Hungry (FH), the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) and World Vision (WV) and the USAID Office of Food for Peace (FFP), has developed and has been implementing a long-term strategy to intervene on the issue of chronic food insecurity (Anderson & Elisabeth, 2015). The core objectives of the various strategies aimed at enabling chronically food insecure communities to attain food security and improve the situation of those who are transient food insecure people. Transient food insecure people are currently experiencing food insecurity but have low vulnerability to ongoing food insecurity or they will become food secure in the near future (Bogale, 2012). The typical approaches to alleviate food insecurity in Ethiopia are through "food transfers" (distributing of food directly to the poor); by reducing the cost of food by increasing people's income; and by increasing local food production and consumption (Woldehanna, 2014, p. 5).

A resettlement program, as a food security strategy, was started in 2003 to ensure that the settlers attained food security in a short period by improving their access to land (Rahamato et al., 2013). This approach of dealing with a social problem in Ethiopia has been used by previous governments. However, this specific program has food security as an objective aimed at individuals and communities who want to relocate voluntarily from food insecure and vulnerable sites. One of the objectives of the program is to increase the use of the country's arable land and increase the country's "gross agricultural

production." The programs involve voluntary participation and aim to create employment and decrease the unemployment rate by relocating people to a fertile area of the country (Bahabelom, 2010, p. 15).

The second program is called the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). This program satisfies the need for a shift from a humanitarian response to a development-oriented approach in addressing the food insecurity. The PSNP began in 2005, supporting 4.8 million people in a selected part of the country (Woldehanna, 2014), and in 2009 the program supported 7.5 million people (Rahmato et al., 2013). The program is designed to bridge the income gap for chronically food insecure families by engaging them in community asset-building efforts (Woldehanna, 2014). In September 2017, the World Bank approved a grant of 600 million dollars to Ethiopia to ensure food security for 10.2 million people through an integrated Rural Productive and Safety Net Program (RPSNP), a program that is considered one of the largest in the world (World Bank, 2017a).

2.7. Conclusion

Much research has been conducted on the topic of food insecurity. Those specifically in urban Ethiopia settings are quantitative and look at food insecurity from a macro level. Assessments and measures of food insecurity in many studies employ quantitative measures and often do not include the stories and perceptions of families' experience with food insecurity. Exploring how a person experiences and feels and thinks about food insecurity provides a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Literature leaves an evident gap for a qualitative study that explores aspects of food and food-related experiences in the community. Although Addis Ababa is home for over

three million people, there are very few qualitative studies that explore the experiences of Addis Ababa's families with food insecurity.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHDOLGOY

3.1. Introduction

The content of the literature review showed that research related to poverty and food security in Ethiopia is saturated with quantitative studies. The literature provided specific objective, observable, and reliable numerical facts (Halmi, 1996) about the realities of food insecurity. To further explore what has been discussed in the literature, among many qualitative study methodologies (Lewis, 2015; Creswell, 1998; & Halmi, 1996), I chose an ethnographic methodology because it appropriately aligns with the research topic and questions I have in this research. The methodology also complements the social work practice that is in-depth, holistic and systematic (Haight et al., 2014).

In this chapter, after explaining the purpose of the study, research questions and my philosophical and theoretical underpinning for the study, I provide a discussion of the methodology and methods used in the study, participants' profiles, recruitment process, data collection, and data analysis. The chapter also includes the ethical considerations taken during data collection, analysis and dissemination. Lastly, the section explains how this study is related to the protection and promotion of human rights.

3.2. Research Questions

The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, it is to explore families' experiences with food insecurity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and then to understand the ways they cope with food insecurity to offset the consequences, beyond what has been identified in the literature. The literature examines many dimensions of food insecurity but also reveals a

need for a qualitative study. To answer the study questions, I outline four specific objectives:

- To understand the extent, nature and impact of food insecurity on families' well-being
- To outline families' mechanisms, strengths, and opportunities that will enable them to cope with food insecurity problems
- To explore families' judgments, attitudes, preferences, priorities, and perceptions beyond what has been discovered in quantitative studies.

These objectives were further detailed in focus group discussion and semi-structured interview questions (Appendix H and Appendix I).

3.3. Philosophical Stance

3.3.1. Epistemological framework

This study lies on the social constructionism epistemological interpretive framework that believes research participants construct and make sense of their realities (Hoffman, 1981) with the belief that "no two persons' realities will be the same, this does not necessarily mean that those who hold these views believe multiple realities exist" (Kim, 2001, p. 6). As this study allows participants to share experiences and knowledge to form "a shared reality," the social constructionist framework is used to describe and explain how participants come to describe themselves, their experiences, and the world in which they live (Gergen, 1985, p. 266).

3.3.2. Narrative-Empowerment Theory

The use of a theoretical framework in this study is critical in the process of selecting the topic, developing the research questions, reviewing literature, collecting

data, and analyzing and disseminating the data (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p.12). This study falls within the narrative-empowerment theory and approach to research. Similar to many other cultures, given how telling stories is an integral part of families and communities in Ethiopia, the narrative empowerment theory provides a platform for a contextualized approach to research. In the attempt to identify the areas and extent of food insecurity and ways that families cope with food insecurity, the narrative-empowerment theoretical approach provides a theoretical framework based on the communities' strength. The theoretical framework also aligns well with the purpose and significance of the study and allows the theory to reflect the research questions selected (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

Narratives are defined as "language of past-oriented social existence...with a present-oriented language of understanding" that helps to create meaning; therefore, the narrative-based research methodology is based on "the ways humans experience the world and how they make meaning out of their experience (Yang, 2011, p. 202). The empowerment aspect of the research theory helps to identify and focus on, as Perkins and Zimmerman state:

> ...identifying capabilities instead of cataloging risk factors and exploring environmental influences of social problems instead of blaming victims. Empowerment-oriented interventions enhance wellness while they also aim to ameliorate problems, provide opportunities for participants to develop knowledge and skills, and engage professionals as collaborators instead of authoritative experts. (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995, p. 570)

The narrative-empowerment theoretical framework is chosen for this research to explore families' experiences with food insecurity and to enhance existing and new interventions, both collaborative and empowerment-oriented.

The narrative empowerment theory shapes this study in two areas. First, the use of the narrative empowerment theory gives voice to the untold stories that have shaped people's ability to cope with their challenges. Societies often organize and maintain their realities through narratives (Coady & Lehmann, 2016, p. 377). Empowerment happens as communities and individuals "discover, or create and give voice to, a collective narrative that sustains their own personal life story in positive ways" (Rappaport, 1995, p. 796). Narratives in research help to only hear what the participants said instead of expressing the researchers' anticipation and biases.

When it comes to the topic of food insecurity, listening to participants' voices means the research will focus mainly on how and what the participants answer them to guide the findings. When it comes to the topic of food insecurity, listening to participants' voices means allowing the focus to be on how and what the participants answer to guide the findings instead of being guided by the research questions only. Yang (2011) quotes from the definition by Britzman of voice as

> meaning that resides in the individual and enables that individual to participate in a community…. The struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else. Finding the words, speaking for oneself, and feeling heard by others are all a part of this process…. Voice suggests relationships: the individual's relationship to the meaning of his/her experience

> and hence, to language, and the individual's relationship to the other since understanding is a social process. (as cited in Yang, 2011, p. 211)

This study seeks to identify the extent of the food security problems in the community and learn about the strategies that have helped families to resolve food-related problems. Most research conducted in Ethiopia on food insecurity is quantitative and does a minimal job on expounding the stories of the communities to create knowledge about areas and extent of the impact. Through the process of giving voice to the community's strength, this study intends to provide opportunities for new, empowering stories to emerge (Coady & Lehmann, 2016, p. 376) that tell not only "who [they] are, but who [they] have been, and who [they] can be" (Rappaport, 1995, p. 796). The process of narrative-empowerment theory encourages researchers to make "effort to surrender control and position of authority" to participants and their voice (Yang, 2011, p. 212).

Second, the narrative-empowerment theoretical framework creates opportunities for community collaboration in the process. According to Rappaport (1995), the narrative-empowerment approach to research leads to an "inclusive attitude as to what counts as data and to cross-disciplinary insights as well as citizen collaboration" (p. 801) The research participants' full involvement and collaboration is an essential factor in determining the effectiveness of the study. The researcher is expected to promote mutual respect and reflection by attending "to the indigenous expression of community approaches" to the problem (Rappaport, 1995, p. 805). The intentional involvement and collaboration of the researcher and the participants bring stories to create knowledge and

inform the findings of the study. In this study, intentional, ongoing community involvement and mutual respect are vital to address the objectives.

Social work practice is deeply concerned with vulnerable groups that have repeated experiences with food insecurity. The narrative-empowerment theory and the social constructivism frameworks are needed to generate new perspective about food insecurity in Addis Ababa in the field of social work and other community development fields.

3.4. Methodology

The majority of previous studies on food insecurity and families' well-being in Addis Ababa have left some gaps that require a qualitative study for further exploration. First, most of the literature reviewed was conducted using quantitative methods. This study uses a qualitative methodology for research. A qualitative study allows a more in-depth understanding and in-depth evaluations of quantitative research questions on food insecurity. The Amharic language was used in the data collection process. The qualitative research allowed me to set aside my own beliefs, perspectives, and predispositions to take all of the participants' perspectives as valuable and unique (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). The qualitative study also allowed me to get to know the participants personally and, as Taylor & Bogadan (1984) say, learn about their perception of "beauty, faith, suffering, frustration, and love whose essence is lost through other research approaches" (p. 7).

As a qualitative study, I used an ethnography methodology for conducting this research. An ethnography methodology was chosen because it is used to understand people's belief, motivation, behaviour, and experience by entering and creating daily interactions in their environment for a period (Haight et al., 2014). Ethnography enabled

this research to draw and make sense of the participants' realities in ways other methodologies may not be able to do and complement other previous qualitative and quantitative findings (Wilson & Chaddha, 2009). Ethnographic studies are valuable for collecting a broad range of data by using multiple methods (Creswell, 1998), including focus groups, interviews, and observations. Further, ethnography helped me to focus on the detailed and accurate description of participants' experiences and created a naturalistic and holistic understanding of the meanings of their experiences (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2009).

The ethnography methodology asks researchers to balance objectivity and subjectivity (Hegelund, 2005). To minimize the "distance or objective separateness" between myself and the participants (Creswell, 1998, p. 18), I included a reflection on the impact my background had on the research plan as well as the impact on the study setting (Engel & Schutt, 2012). An ethnographic approach was successful in this study because I can speak the language of the participants fluently and I spent enough time "to get to know the people, what they say about themselves, what they actually do, and what they value" (Engel & Schutt, 2012, p. 263).

The ethnography methodology fits with the narrative-empowerment framework as it primarily focuses on the information gathered from the phenomenon and identifies factors "that account for change and cause change in the studied situation" (Lützhöft, et al., 2010, p. 535). Narratives, life stories, and observations are an important part of methods that are used in ethnographic research. The methodology explains participants' lifestyle and helps to facilitate insights into their experiences and provides a "point of analysis in relation to social [work] and political practices." Further, participants'

narratives and the context where the narratives are produced can be understood, and meanings can be extracted (Ahmed, 2013, p. 235). The ethnographic study fits with the social constructionism as it "allows people to interact, form networks, become active...help individuals examine the conditions of their existence" (Creswell, 1998, p. 27).

Focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and observation were used as methods to collect data. The issue of trustworthiness was addressed in the study design stage, the data collection stage, and during the data interpretation stage. The questions were translated into the Amharic language before the interviews and focus group discussions. During the data collection stage, I used field journals to reflect my thoughts, feelings, behaviour and experiences and kept these journals throughout the research. I went back to the notes and the memos created during the coding process. During the focus group discussions and interviews, I reframed the questions using the context of participants' locations and expanded the questions when necessary.

This study was conducted within the purview of international social work practice and applying an ethnography study attempted to address the need for culturally sensitive interactions and cross-cultural conversations while working with marginalized participants and hearing the voices of the families (Haight et al., 2014).

3.5. Recruitment

I started communicating with the community gatekeepers while I was in Canada through phone calls and emails and we discussed the research process and the research objectives. The early stage of our discussions and reflections on the topic and questions helped with the translation of the appendices into the Amharic language. Communicating

with the gatekeepers also helped me to consider cultural, logistical, and practical aspects while I was preparing to travel and start contacting the participants. Since the Amharic terms for food security and insecurity are mainly used in academic, policy and community development circles, in addition to a direct translation (የምግብ ዋስትና አለመረጋገጥ) I included a contextual explanation of the term.

The recruitment for the semi-structured interview was conducted employing a snowball sampling method (Biernacki, & Waldorf, 1981). To minimize the gatekeeper bias (Oppong, 2012), I used four different community gatekeepers from diverse communities, and I also contacted participants directly and randomly in marketplaces and streets and at local events, explaining the objectives of the study. The diversity of the sampling was ensured through recruiting participants that represented the different parts of the city and by requesting diversity in gender, age, employment, and socio-economic background. Although I did not have criteria to determine participants' socio-economic class, the diversity of the socio-economic class is as reported by the participants during the initial interaction. After giving verbal agreements to participate in a semi-structured interview in the research, the participants were given an Amharic language copy of the Participant Consent Form for Semi-Structured Interview (Appendix A) that outlined the purpose, procedure, confidentiality and other necessary descriptions of the research and included an agreement to participate form to be signed. A few participants asked for the oral consent and I read the Amharic version of the Oral Consent Text for a Semi-Structured Interview (Appendix C) verbatim.

There were two focus groups comprised of adult men and women. Participants of the focus group discussions were recruited with the help of two community gatekeepers

from different communities. The community gatekeepers used only gender and age as a criterion to ask participants to join in the focus group discussions. Both focus groups with men and women were made up of participants that were diverse in educational background, employment status, and socioeconomic status. Before starting the focus group discussions, each participant was given and read an Amharic copy of the Participant Consent Form for Focus Group (Appendix B) that outlined the purpose, procedure, confidentiality and other necessary descriptions of the research and included an agreement to participate form to be signed. All participants also signed a Focus Group Members Confidentiality Agreement form (Appendix E). Before starting the group discussions, I read the Oral Consent Text for Focus Group (Appendix D) verbatim. There were any incentives or compensation given to participants. All participants consented to participate in the study voluntarily.

I have known the community gatekeepers for between five and twenty years. In addition to my previous knowledge of their status in the community and their work, I decided to contact them because of my belief that they would have an interest in the topic because of their work. I was very grateful for their support in making my data collection process more successful than I expected. I was pleased with the number of people who were willing to give their time and participate in both semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. I am grateful to my gatekeepers for arranging most of my interviews and focus group participants.

In addition to the community gatekeepers, the participants themselves connected me with other people who were interested in participating. I was also encouraged with consistent comments I received from participants, appreciating that I was taking on this

topic and that I was interested in their stories. All but three of the participants had never been interviewed or asked to fill out a survey for other research projects through a school or funding organization. The three participants who had participated in a research project previously stated that they had filled out surveys through organizations that work in food programs in Ethiopia. What they talked about was that this was the first time they participated in a study that asked them about their experiences and history with food. Their reflection on their previous research project affirmed that a qualitative study with a narrative-empowerment theoretical framework was appropriate and necessary.

I cancelled some interviews due to an illness I experienced and stopped the data collection for a few days. My visit to Addis Ababa was during the Ethiopian rainy season, which led to the disruption of several interviews due to loud noise of rain on the tin roof. There were more than five audio-recorded interviews that were discarded because they were not audible enough to transcribe. The rain also affected my interview with some children; therefore, I decided to provide them with pencil and paper and asked them to draw images that described their family's food insecurity and write a description of that drawing.

3.6. Participants' Profiles

The goal of the study was to gather diverse experiences with food insecurity from a diverse group of people, and for that reason, participants were from different parts of Addis Ababa and represented different genders, ages, and socioeconomic classes. Participants were also diverse in the length of time lived in the city. Thirty-four people participated in the study. Fourteen of the adult participants attended a focus group discussion, and the remaining twenty adults and children participated in semi-structured

interviews. There were two focus group discussions separated by gender, and there were seven participants in each group. The focus group discussion with women took two and a half hours, and the focus group with men took two hours. Five of the children who participated in the semi-structured interview were provided with a piece of paper to draw their experiences of food insecurity and their home life. All names of participants used in the findings are pseudonyms.

Table 1: Semi-Structured Interview Participants

Pseudonyms	Gender	Age Range	Location/Sub-city	Family Size	Education	Marital Status
Asma	F	30-40	Gullele	3	Grade 12	Married
Fikirte	F	20-30	Addis Ketema	6	Grade 12	Single
Endalkachew	M	40-50	Addis Ketema	4	Grade 4	Married
Selam	F	10-20	Nifas Silk-Lafto	5	Grade 9	Single
Temesgen	M	30-40	Nifas Silk-Lafto	6	University	Married
Muluken	M	50-60	Arada	8	Some college	Married
Mekuria	M	10-20	Yeka	2	12	Married
Sileshi	M	50-60	Gullele	9	12	Married
Fana	F	30-40	Bole	4	Some college	Married
Gebyanesh	F	30-40	Kolfe-Keranio	5	Grade 5	Married
Habtamu	M	10-20	Nifas Silk-Lafto	5	Grade 10	Single

Kasech	F	10-20	Kolfe-Keranio	3	Grade 8	Single
Mola	M	30-40	Lideta	3	Grade 10	Single
Samson	M	5-10	Kolfe-Keranio	3	Grade 2	Single
Amberbir	M	20-30	Arada	1	Grade 10	Single
Abera	M	40-50	Kolfe-Keranio	6	No formal education	Married
Markos	M	5-10	Lideta	3	Grade 2	Single
Bethlehem	F	5-10	Gullele	4	Grade 2	Single
Aynadis	F	5-10	Gullele	3	Grade 3	Single
Wesene	F	40-50	Kirkos	4	No formal education	Widow

Table 2: Focus Group Participants

Pseudonyms	**Gender**	**Age Range**	**Location/Sub-city**	**Family Size**	**Education**	**Marital Status**
Almaz	F	50-60	Kolfe-Keranio	6	Grade 4	Married
Haymanot	F	30-40	Kolfe-Keranio	4	University	Single
Tigist	F	40-50	Gullele	3	Grade 7	Widow
Askale	F	40-50	Kolfe-Keranio	3	Grade 12	Married
Webe	F	50-60	Gullele	5	Grade 4	Married
Mebrat	F	30-40	Kolfe-Keranio	4	Grade 10	Widow
Meron	F	30-40	Kolfe-Keranio	3	Grade 12	Single
Bereket	M	30-40	Kolfe-Keranio	4	Grade 8	Single
Moges	M	30-40	Gullele	1	University	Single

Misteru	M	30-40	Gullele	6	University	Single
Sintayehu	M	50-60	Nifas Silk-Lafto	4	Grade 10	Married
Negash	M	40-50	Kolfe-Keranio	6	Grade 12	Married
Murad	M	30-40	Kolfe-Keranio	6	Some college	Married
Goshu	M	50-60	Gullele	5	Grade 12	Married

3.7. Data Collection

This qualitative-ethnographic study involved three main ways of collecting data: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. I used a semi-structured interview method with questions that were designed to elicit the interviewees' ideas, history, experiences, and coping mechanisms related to food insecurity. I prepared predetermined questions and keywords to use as a guide for the interview. I asked the prepared interview questions in an open-ended manner. In many interviews, I combined questions or skipped questions when necessary, depending on how the participants presented the narratives or answered the questions. In some interviews, I asked only two or three of the questions, and the participants answered others' questions through a conversation. I chose the semi-structured interview method because it provided me with the opportunity to compare information between and among participants while at the same time focusing on understanding each individual's experience with food security (Tutty 1996).

During the data collection process, I felt confident in speaking to the group participants because I speak the same language and have similar experiences to those of some of the participants. I intentionally reminded myself to avoid appearing to be an expert on the topic but

rather to see my participants as experts on their experiences. The nature of the semi-structured interview allowed me to be flexible and add exploratory questions based on the responses of the participants. The challenge with the semi-structured interview was the creation of lengthy conversations and sometimes off-topic discussions. My understanding of the cultural way of creating conversation and my experience with group and individual counselling helped me to guide the conversation to keep it on topic using participants' own cues. However, some participants required more probing in the semi-structured interviews while some answered several questions at one time. Similarly, in the focus group discussion, I had participants who tended to be quiet unless asked to share specifically. I intentionally called on those participants and asked them to share their answers.

I asked for assent from children and consent from their parents or caregivers before interviews. The semi-structured interviews took 60 to 90 minutes per adult participant, and interviews with children took about 30 to 60 minutes. As part of the children's interviews, some children were asked to make drawings or artwork that represented their experience with food insecurity, and six children participated in a drawing activity. The children's artwork was scanned and was included in the data analysis.

Participants were invited to meet with me through two community gatekeepers who had a secure connection to several neighbourhoods. Participants were invited to participate in a focus group for a period of 60 to 120 minutes to answer questions about their understanding of, history of, and experiences with food insecurity. Participants were also asked to talk about the types of actions they took or were currently taking to cope with or alleviate food insecurity in their families.

As part of the ethnography methodology, I engaged in the observation of the participants and the communities to gain insight and a more comprehensive understanding of the community's experience with food and food security-related issues. The observations served to fill in the gaps in the semi-structured interviews. During the observations, I took notes regarding the details of life and the community's interactions in a food context. I used photography to capture some events and moments that were relevant to the study.

3.8. Data Analysis

The data analysis process started during the data collection period. I started looking at the data I transcribed and translated the data into English. Both the Amharic and English versions of the data include the exact transcription of the interviews, discussions, dialogue and documents. I started the translation and transcription of the data while I was in Ethiopia and the interviews were taking place and continued after I returned to Canada. This process was the most difficult, time-consuming, and tedious but enlightening process of this research because first, I started the transcription and translation of the first interviews with the Amharic language in separate steps, and I realized that this process was consuming many hours. Second, most of the interviews and focus group discussions went longer than I planned.

Amharic is my first language, and I had previous experience in translating writings into English; translating interviews for academic purposes was new territory. However, I was pleased and satisfied with the translation after receiving feedback from my editor, my mother-in-law, who is an English teacher and knows the Ethiopian culture and languages. After a few transcriptions in Amharic, I decided to combine both translations and transcriptions of the interviews in one stage and ended up with English documents. This process significantly shortened the time it would have taken. Starting with the interview process, the translation and

the transcription, I noted in my journal that the whole process was complicated and emotional. I heard heartbreaking stories that were filled with hardship and trauma. Even if I was happy with the amount of data I collected and the themes that were emerging, I was worried that I was leaving some participants vulnerable to a strong emotional reaction and was not doing anything about it as I would have if I were engaged in a clinical setting.

A grounded theory approach was used for data analysis. I chose the grounded theory approach because it complements research conducted with ethnography methodology by helping me making a connection between events and enabling comparative method starting from the beginning of the study and comparing data with emerging categories (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001). Grounded theory data analysis has an emphasis on the development of theory (Lawrence & Tar). In this study, I used a grounded theory-based three coding cycles of analysis (1) open coding (2) axial coding and (3) selective (theoretical) coding (Engel & Schutt, 2012).

In the first cycle, using open coding, I read through the transcript repeatedly and determined different categories that emerged from the data and used different models for creating the codes. First, I used descriptive coding to help identify and link comparable contents (Saldaña, 2015) and to describe the main topic of each excerpt. In the descriptive coding, I used a few phrases and words used in the literature. In some excerpts, I used an in vivo coding (Strauss, 1987) by using participants' exact translated words and the concept of the word they used. On many occasions, I used simultaneous coding (Saldaña, 2015) in which one excerpt contained multiple codes at the same time. Simultaneous coding helped to open the coding process to include labelling of concepts and developing categories based on their definitions and frequencies. As Saldaña defines them, codes are:

> "essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story that, when clustered together according to similarity and regularity (a pattern), they actively facilitate the development of categories and thus analysis of their connections." (Saldaña, 2015, P.8)

On many occasions, I wrote memos that were lengthier that helped to clarify my coding process. The memos were also beneficial to reflect on the overall coding process, the "code choice, how the process of inquiry is taking shape; the emergent pattern" (Saldaña, 2015, p. 41) and were an important way of "keeping records of analysis" (Lawrence & Tar, 2013, p. 33). While 165 codes were emerging, the open coding helped me to examine them by continually comparing the data to the categories to ensure consistency of the codes.

In the second cycle, axial coding and selective coding, (Khandkar, 2009) I combined the codes and data that appeared to be disjointed during the open coding process. The axial coding process helped me to explore the relationships of the codes and make connections between them. Saldaña (2015), explains that the axial coding cycle helps to "determine which [codes] in the research are the dominant ones and which are the less important ones … [and to] reorganize the data set: synonyms are crossed out, redundant codes are removed, and the best representative codes are selected" (p. 218). The ethnographic data included focus group discussion, interview transcripts, observation notes, diagrams, and photographs and the axial coding cycle was used to integrate the different types of data. The axial coding was used to develop the final theory. In the end, using the selective coding, I wrote how the sub-categories were aligned with the central categories to develop the theory.

3.9. Ethical Consideration

This research has been reviewed and approved by Wilfrid Laurier's Research Ethics Board. I completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving

Humans Course on Research Ethics. There was minimal risk to participants associated with this study. Participant Consent Form for Semi-Structured Interview (Appendix A), Participant Consent for Focus Group Form (Appendix B), and Focus Group Members Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix E) were translated into the Amharic language to give to all participants. Before they provided a signed consent, I reviewed the provided documents with the participants to ensure they understood all procedures, benefits and risks of the research. I also explained to the participants that they can withdraw their consent at anytime. The purpose of the research was explained to the participants before their participation. Children were asked to provide assent and parents or primary caregivers to provide consent before starting interviews with children. To ensure confidentiality, the participating family members' names were not to be mentioned during the data analysis. Pseudonyms are used to describe the excerpts in the findings sections.

3.10. Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

This study is based on people-centered concepts and puts human security at the center of the theoretical framework and analysis. This study will also consider how food insecurity threatens the well-being, security, dignity, and identity of families. Human rights and security can be explained in the understanding of various forms of insecurities, and this study addresses food insecurity as addressing a human right. According to United Nations human rights to food is defined as:

> "The right to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensure a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear." (as Cited in Chilton & Rose, 2009, p. 1204)

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions from the focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and observation notes. I have identified four broad themes out of 156 codes for families' experience with food insecurity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. First, I will provide the perception of food insecurity among the research participants. The next theme, the causes of food insecurity, will provide various factors that affect the city's residents. The third theme, characteristics of food insecurity in Addis Ababa, will discuss some of the features and effects of food insecurity among the participants. Last, I will outline families coping mechanisms for food insecurity. Under each theme, there are sub-themes presented using the context of the semi-structured interview, focus group discussion or observation notes followed by direct excerpts with brief descriptions. Discussions of the findings are presented to answer the research question presented in the earlier section.

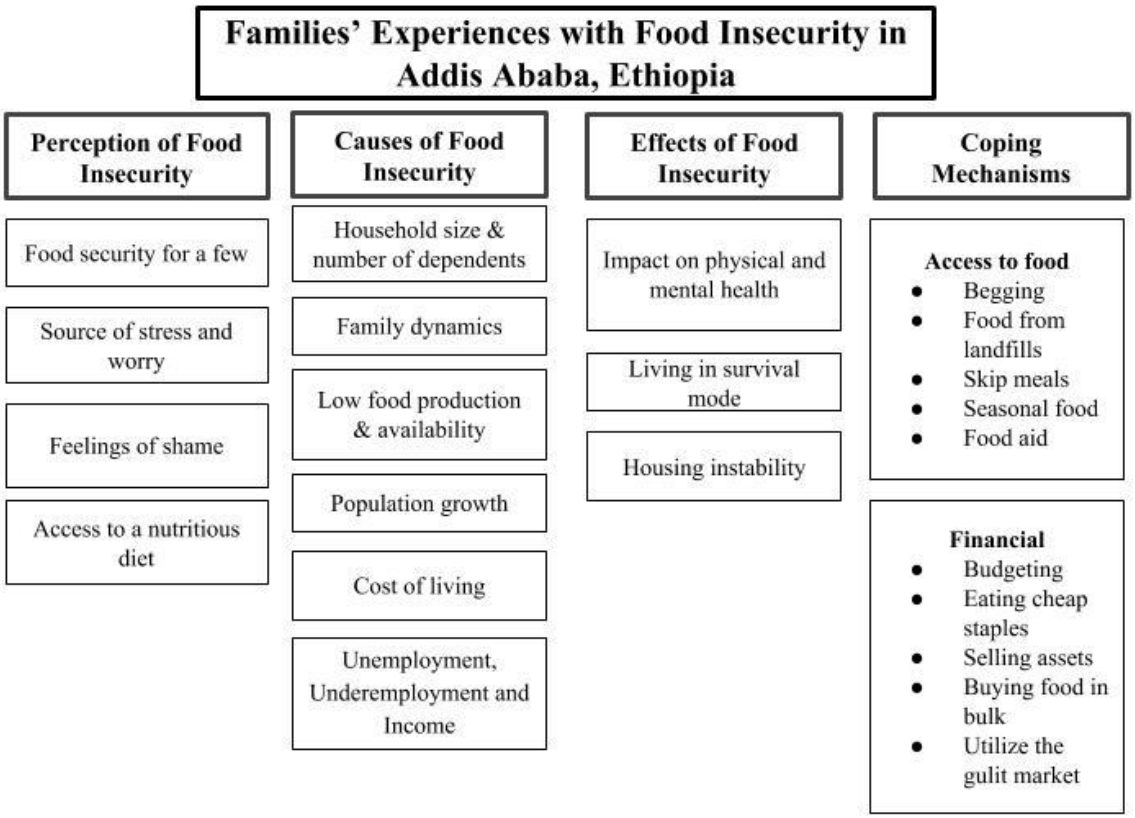


Figure 3: Summary of Themes and Subthemes of the Findings

4.2. Perception of Food Insecurity

The semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion began with a conversation about participants' understanding of the concept of food insecurity. I conducted both focus group discussions and interviews in the Amharic language. The Amharic term "food security" (የምግብ ዋስትና ማረጋገጥ) in Ethiopia is frequently used by politicians, policy-makers, educators, and civil servants; therefore, the majority of the participants requested a detailed explanation of the term, except participants who were civil servants and employees of non-governmental organizations. Many participants used terms such as hunger (ረሃብ), lack of food (የምግብ እጦት), and food deficiency (የምግብ ችግርተኛነት). This section presents excerpts from responses by participants on how they understand the term from their experiences and contexts. This chapter also presents a discussion section, interpreting the excerpts from the interviews and group discussions.

4.2.1. Food Security for a Few

Excerpts from the focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews show participants' understanding of food insecurity as a condition that affects them at an individual, family, community and national level. Many participants distanced their family's experience from having talked about food security. For example, for Fana, the term "food security" is a new concept. Fana related the term "food security" to her life and stated that:

> *Fana: Food insecurity can be the absence of enough food to eat for individuals or families. I don't remember a season in my life that I thought that I am food secured.*

In the focus group discussion with men, Bereket commented:

> *Bereket: How can I talk about food security while our experience is so difficult? Unless you are a wealthy business person [merchant] or you have land in the rural areas that use modern technology, I do not attempt to say there is food security anywhere in the whole country.*

Bereket questioned the presence of food security by reflecting on his own unpleasant experience and the belief that food security is for wealthy families.

Moges, in a focus group discussion, stated that food insecurity xx. He partly agreed with Bereket that food security might not be real in most families in Addis Ababa except for a few:

> *Moges: I highly doubt there is food security for the majority of the city's residents. In recent years the government employees are getting paid more than before. However, even people who work for the government cannot say they are food secure. Maybe a few business owners, people who own large farms, or people who have factories can state they are food secure. Unless you fit in these categories, you are not food secure.*

The argument that food security is for a few applies to Addis Ababa's dwellers despite their length of residency or the location where they live. For instance, Morrow et al., (2017) stated that food security and hunger are used as an essential way of "distinguishing between rich and poor" in Ethiopia (p. 3). Similarly, the findings of this study show that food is a mark of equality and inequality in society. Food security is a reality for many of the city's residents as is made evident by ethnographic observation and interviews; however, chronically food insecure families (Bogale, 2012) commonly have financial constraints that hinder them from accessing adequate and healthy food (Simon 2012). The inequality is not limited to food insecurity, and it affects families' health status, social status and ability to voice their concerns.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 25, food is a necessity for ensuring human rights. The article states that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control" (Council, 2004, p. 3). Guided by the narrative-empowerment theory, voicing families' perceptions, status, and experiences of food insecurity help to enforce that food is a fundamental human right by contributing to the development of national and local food policies and programs.

When asked about their understanding of food insecurity research participants identified three components that built up their perception of food insecurity: stress and worry, feelings of shame, and not being able to obtain balanced, nutritious food.

4.2.2. Source of Stress and Worry

The second explanation participants gave was that food insecurity is a source of stress and worry for families. When parents are unable to provide for their children adequately, they feel stressed and worry constantly about the wellbeing of their families. Murad, who is married and has four children, explained:

> *Murad: We can only say there is food security in our families when we permanently reach a condition in which we can provide for our families' nutritional needs with no worries and send our children to good schools with adequate food...I understand that to become food secure is to come to a position where we can adequately provide for our family without too many worries. It is also about when families can buy enough food items for today without worrying about their ability to do the same tomorrow. We can only say we are food secure when we can provide food for our family regularly and consistently. It is essential to have a continuity of provision, and there needs to be a reliable means of income to have a food secure family.*

Murad's understanding of food security is explained as an absence of one's constant worries over accessing enough food for one's family consistently and regardless of other conditions. The removal of the constant worries lies in the ability to access food predictably in all seasons. This finding is consistent with the stability dimension of the 1996 WFS definition of food security that states that food needs to be accessed "at all times". Families' vulnerability to food insecurity (Leroy, 2015) and high risk of chronic hunger put stress and worry on families and children.

As a director of a not-for-profit organization and with a lived experience with food insecurity, Temesgen narrated what he witnessed about families that his organization supports:

Temesgen: My organization works in alleviating food insecurity in this neighbourhood. I work in an organization that sponsors more than 650 families by providing food and other support on a regular basis. I understand how food is an important and valuable thing to have for the community I serve. Every day I witness how much people are suffering and go through stressful situations to find a meal...when I was a child and student in this community, I sat down in a classroom wondering if I would get food to eat when I got back home or if I would have to run to the landfill to find some food. I knew the date and time for when each hotel or the airport would dump their leftover food.

Worry and stress were part of Temesgen's story and the experiences of the people in his community. The experiences of worry and stress are some of the identified results of food insecurity in families. (Bernal et al., 2016, 180) The presence and the level of the stress and worries due to the experience of food insecurity distract children and adults from their daily activities or alter their preferred activities. Children become disengaged from educational activities and adults become less productive with their time. Food insecurity also fosters many negative psychological consequences in families.

4.2.3. Feelings of Shame

Secondly, participants explained food insecurity concerning their families' experiences of feelings of shame over their condition and when the shame hindered them from asking for help. In many cases, shame is a result of living in food-insecure families. On the other hand, shame creates a barrier that prevents individuals from requesting help from others. An excerpt from Muluken's interview shows how people chose to suffer instead of asking for help:

Muluken: People are not asking for help from others in the community. They instead go hungry and suffer rather than asking for support from their community, even from their

relatives who live in farming communities. Some parents do not even allow their children to play with other kids in the community because they are afraid that the other family will find out their food-related problems...They also do not want their children to experience the stigma because other children may tell them about what they ate at home.

Even if, when people undergo an extreme food insecurity and employ begging for food and money or ask relatives or neighbours for support as a coping mechanism, Muluken recognized the reality that the implications of asking for help leave families with feelings of shame and low self-esteem. Food insecurity creates stressful life circumstances affecting people's social and psychological status and creating feelings of humiliation and inferiority (Bernal et al., 2016). One of the commonly used Amharic term for beggar means 'my equal' (የኔ ሰው); however, the experience is ironically different from its meaning and filled with shame.

Even though they are living in dire conditions, some people choose not to ask for help from others. Meron also provided another reason why people hide their state of food insecurity and feel shame about it:

Meron: Many people go hungry every day in this city. They do not want to go out and beg for food; they instead get hungry but would rather die than ask for food on the street. They carry lots of shame that will keep them from asking for help or beg on the street. Sometimes they die because of hunger or illness. One of the reasons that these people do not tell others about their food problems is because in their past life they were well off or grew up in a family where their parents provided everything they needed. They are not familiar with asking for help, or no one expects them to be hungry because of their previous social class. We hear that they died or are sick because of undisclosed illnesses,

but I am sure lots of people die because they were not eating adequate food for a long time.

Food insecurity can happen to anyone regardless of a history of having wealth; however, as Meron explains, when problems set in some people isolate themselves from their community in fear of being judged and looked down on.

Some families eventually change their stance on asking for help when faced with health-related challenges. Take, for example, Selam's narrative of her family's condition:

Selam: Before her illness, my mother hated the idea of receiving food aid. She believes in working hard to provide for her children. She said, "God gave me arms and legs so I can work. I do not need to ask for help as long as I have my health." If it were not for her health problems and other issues, she would not have taken the food aid support...I do not take lunch with me to school because I compare the type of food I would bring for lunch with the other kids, and I feel ashamed to eat together with them. Most of my classmates know that I am from a low-income family and sometimes, some of my friends share their food with me.

Selam's mother turned to ask for support when faced with a condition that was outside of her control. As a scholarship student in a private school, Selam attends school with students from wealthy families, and she chose not to take "poor people's" food because of the feeling of shame over the type of food she would have taken.

The feeling of shame is a recurring emotional experience many participants shared during the interviews and focus group discussions. From these results it is clear that for families using strategies to alleviate their food insecurity, feelings of shame can result. On the other hand, some families would rather stay hungry than ask for help from others to avoid the feeling of shame

over their situation. A similar conclusion was reached by Bernal et al., (2016) that the feelings of shame in children were associated with their worries that others would know that they were without food (Bernal et al., 2016).

Shame also comes in other ways. First, participants shared their feelings of shame because of the lack of food in their household. For many parents, they experience shame and embarrassment because they are unable to adequately provide the necessary food to their families consistently when compared with some of their neighbours. For children, the feelings of shame come from their inability to take food to school or the need to skip lunches daily, and they fear that their peers will know that they do not eat lunch at school. Similar to the finding of a study in Costa Rica (Cowherd, 2012), for both parents and children in Addis Ababa, the feelings of shame and the experience of social stigma have strong correlations (p. 10). This finding from this study is also similar to the finding of Bernal et al., 2016 in a Caracas, Venezuela study of children's experience with food insecurity and their engagement and management strategies to alleviate their problems, which are met with feelings of shame because of the fear that others know that they do not have food.

Second, families' and individuals' feelings of shame and low self-esteem are generated from the types of activities they have to engage in to obtain food for the day. Many families join in a wide range of activities including begging for support from relatives; borrowing money for food from community *suks* (neighbourhood convenience stores); selling their assets; begging for food on the streets, in the marketplaces, and outside of churches; and accessing food from the city's landfill. In all cases, families experienced feelings of shame because of resorting to socially unacceptable means of obtaining food. For children, witnessing their parents struggling to acquire food and being mistreated by others in the process of acquiring money or food leave

them with feelings of shame and affect their self-esteem. In many cases, children witnessing their parents' experiences and engaging in similar activities as their parents to obtain food lead them to experience low self-esteem and feelings of shame.

4.2.4. Access to Nutritious Diet

Participants' ability to access a balanced, nutritious diet for their families shaped the perception they hold about food insecurity. For example, in the semi-structured interview, Mekuria talked about the connection between food insecurity and the absence of a balanced diet and the consequences on health:

> *Mekuria: I believe food insecurity is about the lack of a balanced diet in our homes. If we do not have access to a balanced diet, our body will not have the capacity to protect us from illnesses. Instead of buying meat products and eating only meat when we have money, I think it is crucial to eat a variety of foods such as vegetables and fruit to stay healthy. People should budget according to their income and ability.*

Similarly, Tigist stated:

> *Tigist: We can confidently say we know food security only when we can give our children a balanced diet and send them to school with adequate good food.*

Participants' perception of food security is highly related to their dietary behaviours. The term balanced-diet is an important factor in qualifying as food secure. Some participants reported that they ate three times a day; however, an excerpt from a high school student, Habtamu, shows that the reality of eating three times a day does not guarantee food security:

> *Habtamu: Even if I eat three times a day, I do not eat a balanced diet. Because we are poor and most of our food comes from food aid, we do not get balanced nutrition at our home... sometimes, I try to work after school and provide as much as I can.*

Additionally, Amberbir talked about his rare experience of food security when he can buy a variety of food:

> *Amberbir: There are times that I feel food secure and eat a balanced diet; it often occurs when I make good money, mostly during holiday seasons. I go to a restaurant and eat meat-based and vegetable-based meals. I love eating "beyeaynetu"* (a combination of vegetable dishes served with injera and commonly eaten during the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians' fasting season) - *it is my favourite. Even if I work in a vegetable market, I do not eat vegetables as much as I want to because it is not possible to prepare them. It is much more manageable to go to a restaurant and eat Shiro or Lentil Stew. I guess it would be considered a balanced diet if I started to eat vegetables regularly. I sometimes eat avocados, which does not require me to have access to a stove.*

Difficult financial states often affect families' ability to access nutritional food and ensure food security. Endalkachew talked about affordability as a factor in accessing nutritional food:

> *Endalkachew: We eat a balanced diet once in a while. Once in a while, we may buy oranges or bananas. However, we cannot afford to regularly purchase any fruit and vegetables. Especially since the price of food has increased drastically.*

The majority of participants that have identified themselves as poor and food insecure talked about the concept of food security only being experienced by rich people.

Access to a nutritious diet relates to utilization as a dimension of food security in the literature. It is clear that accessing a nutritionally balanced diet is a crucial aspect of food security and the excerpts indicate its importance to having a good life. This finding links food security and nutritional security to indicate that both quantity of food and quality of food are important factors (Laborde, 2016). The utilization of a nutritional diet lays a foundation for

healthy living for children and adults by preventing illnesses and enhancing their immunity (Gross et al., 2000). Participants described the utilization of their preferred food as part of their experience of past food security. This highlights the importance of making "sufficient culturally adapted food" available to the family to meet their "biological and social needs" (Gross et al., 2000, p. 5).

4.3. Causes of Food Insecurity

This section of the chapter presents the findings that research participants shared while discussing questions number two and three of the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The first questions asked participants what their experiences with food insecurity in their community are. The second question created a discussion about the determining factors that affect the well-being of their families and families in their community.

4.3.1. Household Size and Number of Dependents

Participants in both the semi-structured interview and the focus groups described the size of their households and the number of dependents living in their household as a primary cause of the food insecurity in Addis Ababa. Participants discussed the close relationship between their family size and the number of dependents in their household. A family member may find themselves living in a situation where they have to share housing with other relatives. Twenty-three-year-old Fikirte, who grew up with her grandmother, described her family's current nutritional condition as follows:

> *Fikirte: If it were only my grandmother and me living together, our condition would have been a little bit better and our income may have been just enough. However, two of my uncles, who are partially employed, still live with us, and one of them just brought a wife and a new baby to live with us. Six of us are now living in the same house.*

Fikirte identified the cause of her and her grandmother's food insecurity as being related to the number of people living in the house. This narrative exemplifies the reality of many women who carry unequal rights and obligations in families with limited access to resources, which ultimately leads to ongoing food-related concerns.

In addition to the number of dependents who live in the same home, other family members of relatives who do not live in the house or visit for a brief period can contribute to the food insecurity in the household. In many cases, it is not the household's income level or possession of assets but the size of the family and the number of dependents that determine the household food insecurity level. When children grow up and become independent they will be able to work and contribute to the household's expenses (Morrow et al.,) whereas, having young children in the house increases the family's vulnerability to food insecurity. Sileshi, in a semi-structured interview, shared his experience with hosting relatives that come from the countryside:

> *Sileshi: I have a better income than most of my relatives because of my rental properties, and my wife has a job. I have the responsibility to support many relatives and family that live in both Addis Ababa and the countryside. In my house, I have three of my children, and I have two of my brother's children living with us…. At least once a year, I also receive two or three relatives coming together from the countryside to visit, to find employment in the city, or for medical purposes. When they arrive, often, they stay with my family up to a month or two, and I feel I have an obligation to host them and provide for them for the duration of the visit. In addition to providing a room to stay and food to eat, I may have an obligation to support them financially to pay for their medication and transportation. These responsibilities affect our economy and the type and quality of food*

we eat regularly. Even if it is difficult, I thank God that I can be there for them for the times they need me.

Sileshi recognized that he is a high-income earner; however, he stated that his family's economic and nutritional status is affected by the additional responsibilities he has to support other relatives. In the focus group discussions, Sileshi stated that *Shiro* (chickpea flour stew) is one of the regular foods they cook at home because it is considered to be one of the "poor people's" foods and they can afford it easily. He appeared to be proud and grateful for his position of being able to help others.

The experience of food insecurity due to family size and dependents can affect the role of parents, in many cases mothers, when additional unexpected circumstances occur in the family such as caring for an ill person in the family. In a focus group discussion Almaz, a mother of four children who works as a cleaner, shared her experience of not accessing food regularly because her family's resources are allocated to care for her sick child. Similar to Sileshi's experience, Almaz raises her husband's younger siblings:

Almaz: There are many circumstances and occasions when I do not eat regularly. Some of us have multiple children and large families; I have a sick child at home that I take care of. To care for my child, I had to leave my job for a while, and that takes significant income from my family, and we still have to pay for transportation and medication. He is doing better now, but it is still very stressful. In addition to having my children, I have two of my husband's younger siblings living with us. I have to prepare food for them and take care of them.

Participants reported that when families with many dependents encounter adverse circumstances such as illness, their tendency to be food insecure increases. In families similar to

Almaz's, mothers often ended up skipping a meal or took the burden of leaving their employment and ended up providing care for the ill person. Health-related issues are a cause of food insecurity.

Some men participants described their experience with food insecurity by comparing their current relationship and family status to when they were single. Being married and having children contributes to considerable financial responsibilities and burdens. Endalkachew, who is married and a grade four graduate, in a semi-structured interview described his experience:

> *Endalkachew: Before I was married I had just left the military and was working at different jobs. While I was single and did not have children, it was a little bit easier because I only had to worry about myself. If there were no jobs in one city, I could quickly move to a different city and find employment…. Now I have two children and a wife to worry about. My income has not changed, but my responsibilities have grown.*

Moges, who is single and a university graduate, in a focus group discussion stated similar thoughts to Endalkachew's:

> *Moges: There is no food security in Addis Ababa - we live in a time when it is difficult to support one person let alone a family.*

Endalkachew indicated that food was more accessible to manage when he was single and did not have dependents; in contrast, Moges with a higher education and employment status shared his dissatisfaction with his current nutritional status despite being single and having no dependents.

Misteru's story represents how family size and dependents affect low-earner and lower educational status families' food insecurity status. Misteru, with a high income and stable

employment with a university degree, shared the consequence of large family size and dependents in his family's food insecurity:

> *Misteru: I have a regular means of income, but I do not consider my family is food secure. I am a salaried employee, but I also have a large family and other relatives that are dependent on me. Fulfilling their dietary needs with one person's salary is impossible. My income is not comparable to my expenses - I have more needs than the money I earn monthly. Therefore, I do not consider myself or my family to be food secure.*

The fact that Misteru is earning a high income does not guarantee him or his family a food secure life because he is expected to provide for a large number of family members and relatives. Children that live in a large family have also reported that they have shared a meal with siblings or family members frequently when there is not enough food for all family members.

The finding that household size is a factor in families' food security or insecurity is consistent with previous studies. For example, Aschale et al., (2012) states that large family size leaves families vulnerable to chronic food insecurity. In addition to the household size, the income distribution inside the household exacerbates families' food insecurity level (Abafitan & Kim, 2013).

4.3.2. Family Dynamics

Families' complex interactions and support system can play a significant role in ensuring food security. Focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews identified some family dynamics such as the absence of a parent or parents, ageing, response to family emergencies and managing celebratory occasions and holidays as contributing factors to or perpetuating food insecurity in families.

The absence of a parent or parents in a family affects the plausibility of ensuring food security. Prominently, the death of a parent can affect the socio-economic status of families rapidly. The 23-year-old Fikirte shared her story about how she started living with her grandparents:

> *Fikirte: My mother died when I was very young, and I never knew my father… after my mother passed away my stepfather abused me for a long time, I was hungry and did not know what to do... I decided to run away from home. Since then my grandmother took me in and raised me.*

Fikirte's narrative includes the experience of physical abuse including food deprivation. While living with her grandparents, Fikirte endured another loss that led both her and her grandmother to food insecurity:

> *Fikirte: After my grandfather passed away, my grandma suffered for a little while; she told me that she prayed for days because she did not have anywhere to go and she worried and was also sick at that time. One day a close relative came to visit, and she told him that she was struggling with food and he did not want to help us and said to her that we all have problems. She was devastated but continued to pray. One day someone from our community came to visit us, and she did not tell him about our problem, but in the middle of their conversation he took money out of his pocket and started counting. When he finished, he told her, "I do not know what you asked in your prayer, but God said to me in my dreams to give you this." There is always challenge in life, but there is also God's intervention with it.*

Fikirte's story depicts the immediate consequences of the loss of a family member through death. Among many other life circumstances, food insecurity was one of the results of

the death of her mother and grandfather. However, Fikirte's story is filled with hope, faith, and resiliency.

Kasech, a grade nine student who lives in a community located beside Addis Ababa's landfill, shared a similar experience as Fikirte living with her grandparents. After Kasech's parents' divorce, they sent her to live with her grandparents. The divorce of her parents left her with the reality of abandonment and hunger:

> *Kasech: When my parents were separated, there was no one to take care of my brother and me and, even if they were very weak and sick, our grandparents decided to raise us. It has been two years since my parents divorced and they are still unable to take care of my brother and me.*

Grandparents take the role of parenting of their grandchildren when family breakdowns or death occurs. Participants shared their experience of living with their grandparents for a short term or long term after the death of their parents or while their parent was in hospital. Other participants' stories include the role of grandparents taking care of their grandchildren when their child passed away because of HIV/AIDS.

In a focus group discussion with women participants, Haymanot, a government employee who works with women's and children's affairs in a local *wereda* (district), indicated that her department sees "a massive increase of divorce cases" and in most cases, children frequently are "prone to malnutrition and neglect" in the process. These experiences indicate that food insecurity brings threats to harmonious life in families. Along with other social factors, a divorced person is more "likely to be food insecure than their perspective counterparts" (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2015, p. 3). These findings are similar to a qualitative study among 98 households in Québec City that found that food insecurity disrupts families' dynamics. The

results on family dynamics are shown by "irritability; anger; parents less available because of increased time required to procure food, conversation gaps with children because parents are not able to face their incapacity to feed them adequately" (Hamelin et al., 1999, p. 5275).

4.3.3. Low Food Production

While discussing the rapid growth of population in Addis Ababa, participants stated the low production and availability of food as a common reason for the experience of food insecurity. In the focus group discussion with men, Moges explained how limited food production had become a source of food insecurity:

> *Moges: Limited food production in our community has become the primary source of the problem. When I go to the market, I do not always find what I need. It is not a given thing that we will find any food any day. Especially currently, the land has not been productive and not able to produce enough food. The fertility of the soil has drastically decreased.*

Negash agreed with Moges's comments and echoed their concern about how low production caused the increase in the price of food in the city, disproportionate to families' income:

> *Negash: The problem with food is caused by the limited supply we have in this city. Yes, we cannot afford most food in the market, but even for the ones we can afford we do not find them all the time. I think because of the problem with low food supply in the city the food price becomes very high. For example, if one person earns 5000 birr a month, today we pay 3000 birr for one quintal of teff.*

The insufficient food supply to the city's residents has a direct consequence on the price of food. The low food production is directly related to the availability dimension of food insecurity. Because of the complexity of food insecurity (Lize, 2017), the production of more

food and making it available to the city by itself does not make changes to the status of food insecurity; however, it is an essential aspect of food security.

Bereket commented on how the exportation of food could add to the low supply of food in the country:

> *Bereket: One of the challenges is that some quality products are exported to foreign countries instead of being sold in the local markets within the country. For example, if I want to buy coffee I expect that all grade one and two coffee beans are exported to other countries. What we have access to in the local market is a third-grade coffee.*

Foreign export contributes to the growing need for more food production in the city.

Food production in the area and the consistent availability of food is one of the critical determining factors for food security in the city. Numerous studies have discussed food production and availability as causes of food insecurity. This basic finding is consistent with the 1996 World Food Summit definition. The local production and the consistent availability of food (Simon, 2012) and then having a strategy for families to access any food from their local market (Devereux, 2006b) can alleviate food insecurity and related problems.

4.3.4. Population Growth

The population growth due to migration from the countryside and other neighbouring towns contributes to the higher demand for food in Addis Ababa. Participants both in focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews talked about how the city has become crowded due to migration, which has added to the higher need for food and to greater food insecurity. While explaining the role of food production in food insecurity, Murad, in the focus group discussion with men, indicated that the population growth also contributes to the widespread food problem in the city:

Murad: ...the rapid population growth is responsible for the increased food insecurity in the city. Especially in Addis Ababa the problem of food insecurity is prevalent because of the population growth and the reduced availability of food items.

Murad makes an association between population growth and food availability and how they contribute to their family's food insecurity.

Goshu added another connection between population growth and cost of living and how both factor in food insecurity:

Goshu: I also think that rapid migration of people to Addis Ababa from small towns from all over the country has contributed to the rise of the cost of living.

In both Murad's and Goshu's assessment, population growth works along with or perpetrates other determinants of food insecurity. In the women's focus group discussion, Askale talked about migration as a cause of food crisis in Addis Ababa. She provided some reasons for why people migrate to Addis Ababa:

Askale: These rural dwellers are leaving their farms and moving to urban areas for many reasons. Some come to Addis Ababa for social purposes such as to be with other family members or for health reasons; however, a significant number of the migrants are coming to this city for financial reasons. The migration causes food shortage and high unemployment situations for all the city's residents. After they move here, they try to engage in the same type of jobs as we were doing.

Other focus group participants and interviewees shared Askale's arguments regarding migration. Temesgen, a manager and a founder of a not-for-profit organization, explained the realities of the population his organization supports:

Temesgen: This area attracts more poor people from other parts of the country because of the low cost of living and the presence of the city's landfill. The living cost is cheaper in this part of the city compared to the rest of the city, and for that reason, this area attracts more poor people who are involved in begging endeavours. Throughout the year the number of people living in this community has increased. Individuals and families that could not find any means of income resort to the landfill as a source of food...The residents of this community are also isolated from the rest of the city because of their type of illness. For many years the residents of this community were isolated.

Temesgen's comments show that migrants to the city themselves experience severe food insecurity and depend for their livelihood on begging or accessing food from the landfill. Temesgen shared his personal experience growing up in this community where he accessed the landfill as a source of food throughout his childhood. According to Temesgen migration is a common contributor to the unintentional establishment of the community:

Temesgen: This community, known as Koareh community, was started about 80 years ago. It all began when Emperor Haile Selassie established a hospital on the outskirts of the city, naming it after his daughter, Princess Zenebework. The hospital was established to treat people with leprosy and other illnesses. During this period, there used to be many lepers in Ethiopia and these lepers came to Addis Ababa to access healthcare. However, after they finished with their treatment, they didn't go back to their hometown. They decided to settle in the community close to the hospital for two reasons. The first reason was that most of the patients who came to the hospital to access treatment came too late to find a complete treatment - they had already lost their body structure. They had already lost their toes, fingers, and other body parts before they came for treatment, and

> *for those patients the treatment may not be as effective as they had hoped...Since they experienced severe stigma in their home community, they decided to build a house around the hospital and live there. The second reason was that most of them had other illnesses that required ongoing medical attention and if they suddenly got sick, they could access treatment...In addition to accessing the hospital for treatment, this community attracted sick and disabled people from other parts of the country because of the absence of stigma. People who moved to this area could easily find friends who had similar problems and could support each other. For example, a blind person could easily find another blind person in the community quickly. Even if they struggled economically and with physical health, this community provided people with strong social support.*

Many people migrate to Addis Ababa seeking healthcare and to visit family members. Webe, in the focus group discussion with women, identified employment and financial reasons as prominent:

> *Webe: Some come to Addis Ababa for social purposes such as to be with other family members and others for health reasons; however, a significant number of the migrants are coming to this city because of financial and employment reasons. When they come to this city they suffer a lot trying to get jobs and to find food. I know some migrants live off* kolo (roasted barley grain) *that they brought with them or bought on the street for many days.*

Webe's observation shows that not only does the flow of migrants to the city cause food insecurity, but also the migrants themselves struggle with severe food insecurity. During my observation, I noticed many women and children begging on the street. Three of the beggars I

spoke to informed me that they all had come to the city recently from the northern part of the country and planned to return because "life has been difficult being dependent on others."

Even The State of Addis Ababa 2017 report by the United Nations states that the rising cost of living and unemployment and the lack of infrastructure and services are discouraging the rural population from moving to the city (Spaliviero & Cheru, 2017), the findings of this study confirm that migration is still part of the cause of food insecurity. For many individuals and families who have migrated to Addis Ababa from the countryside, they come to the city to find a better way of acquiring food (Little, 2008)

4.3.5. Cost of Living

All participants' narratives depict the direct relationship between experience with food insecurity and the cost of living. In men's focus group discussion, Moges compared the price of basic staples he buys for his family in the last two years:

> *Moges: What we eat and how much we eat is profoundly affected by the price of food and the fluctuation of the market. Two years ago, I used to pay 15 to 20 birr for lentils; now the price is between 40 and 60 … ten years ago the cost of teff used to be 2 and 3 birr per kilogram, and now I pay 24 and 25 birr per kilogram.*

Fikirte's narratives examples of the drastic increase in the price of food in Addis Ababa and how it affects families' ability to ensure food security:

> *Fikirte: When I was younger, my grandmother prepared kale, tomato and even sometimes meat for us. We were not richer then than we are now but now it is just very expensive to buy any good food.*

Teff is the most common and required staple in most homes in Ethiopia. For some participants, buying teff to make injera is impossible. Endalkachew comments on his attempt to purchase enough teff for his family:

> *Endalkachew: Teff has become very expensive; I do not have enough money to buy 10 or 25 kilos at once, which is what I need for my family for a month. If we decide to purchase teff, we will finish all the money we have on teff only.*

Endalkachew reports that his income and his family's need for the regularly used food items do not match. While discussing the need for food aid and the type of food his organization provides to support the beneficiaries, Temesgen added a comment on the price of teff and families' incomes:

> *Temesgen: What I see in my community is that people are struggling because of food. We primarily consume teff, and the price of a kilo of teff is more than a dollar currently. The majority of the people who live in this community do not earn more than $100 a month. After paying income tax and other types of deductions, most salaried people earn way below one hundred dollars a month. On average one person can consume about 25 to 30 kilograms of teff per month, and if that person makes one hundred dollars a month, it is almost a quarter of the salary that a person would spend for teff only.*

This excerpt from Temesgen provide a clear example of how the ideal nutritional security is far from the reality. Injera is one of the commonly preferred and consumed foods in the homes of the study's participants. For many families, the price and availability of teff, needed for preparing injera, in the market is one of the primary indicators of the cost of living. Teff is also an essential Ethiopian crop that is used to both kick-start development and alleviate food insecurity (Lize, 2017).

Goshu, who had been sick for two weeks before the focus group discussion, spoke about how the price of food made it difficult for him to buy food that would help him to get well:

Goshu: My doctor recommended that I eat one banana a day for my health situation. When I went to buy a kilo of bananas, I was shocked when I heard the price and was surprised how fast it had increased from 15 birr to 22 birr. I had only twenty birr in my pocket, and I asked the guy to sell it to me for twenty birr because I did not have any more money, and I ended up paying twenty birr.

In the women's focus group discussion, Almaz commented on the difficulty of buying food for health reasons:

Almaz: The doctors tell us to give our children at least one egg per day, but there is no way that I can afford buying an egg every day.

Other group participants and semi-structured interviewees share Goshu's and Almaz's struggles with the rapid change in the price of food. Food insecure families often have frequent experience with health-related issues.

Participants talked about the different types of markets they access that fit their ability to afford the type of food they need and preferences they have. Most participants tend to access the *gulit* (micro-sellers) market regularly to buy basic food items. Haymanot, in focus group discussion, explained reasons why her family resorts to accessing other types of markets other than the *gulit* market:

Haymanot: If you go to gulit markets, you will not find grains such as teff, maize or wheat. If you have money, you will have to go to the "Ehil Berenda" market (Addis Ababa's largest central grain market) *to a local mill (*Wefcho Bet*). Additionally, we cannot find food items such as broccoli, cucumber, or lettuce in the gulit market, and we*

have to go to the expensive grocery stores or the wholesalers to buy these fancy vegetables.

The city's food marketplaces and the mismanagement of the food supply chain contribute to the food insecurity in families. Participants named the essential players in the food chain supply and gave their experiences with them and their observation on how they affect the ability to access affordable food. Women's focus group participant Askale shared her experience with food wholesalers:

Askale: Another reason for food insecurity in this city is because of the food wholesalers and the system they established to take advantage of the city dwellers' high demand for food. The sellers often give excuses for the rise of the cost of food by blaming it on the weather conditions or the global economy, but they are often the main reason for the cost of living becoming difficult for our families. Because of the high demand for food in the city, the sellers can ask any price they want. Since most food items are expensive in Addis Ababa, only a few people can afford their preferred and quality food. The cost of living has increased beyond our control. These sellers are in contact with the farmers through their middle person by phone regularly, and together they set the daily food price.

On the other hand, the part of the city in which people choose to live affects their ability to access quality and nutritional food in the local market:



Figure 4: Mini *gulit* market in Addis Ababa

Temesgen: The first characteristic that makes this area [koshe community] *different from the rest of the city is its high concentration of chronically ill people living together. For example, if you go to Bole area, most of the residents are wealthy and live a different type of life. If you also take people in the Merkato area, they are business people, whether it is big or small business, and they rely on their business. It is true for all parts of the city that people have a diverse way of living and accessing resources, but when it comes to this area, predominantly the residents are blind, beggars, disabled, lepers, or have other types of chronic illnesses. It is also important to note that residents are not only physically ill or disabled, but they are also psychologically victimized because other communities ostracize them.*

Temesgen's account shows that the unfair geographic distribution of wealth in the city is another factor that leads families in poor communities to food insecurity. While visiting the city's various food markets, I noticed the whole food market stores and supermarkets operate in affluent neighbourhoods. These markets have a diverse variety of food and have modernized preserving methods. However, the many *gulit* markets that are located in communities such as

Korah, Kolfe, Asko and Shiro-Meda carry limited items, and the vegetables appeared to be old and covered with dust or dirt. Even the prices of the food items in the supermarkets are much higher than the ones in the *gulit* markets, the quality and variety of food are better.

4.3.6. Unemployment, Underemployment and Income

The findings from both the focus group discussions and the semi-structured interviews link the immediate consequences of individuals' employment status and income level to families' food insecurity status.

Fikirte, who has employment as a cleaner in a daycare, talked about her experience:

> *Fikirte: Month to month everything I earn goes to buying food. I am 25 and young, but I do not socialize with my other friends at all because I do not have even enough money to buy tea at a coffee shop. I often do not participate in social activities that involve money or buying extra food because I cannot afford it.*

Fikirte's income does not extend beyond paying for food, and her limited income prevents her from joining in social activities.

Sintayehu in group discussion mentioned buying food as the reason why some people engage in challenging and risky activities:

> *Sintayehu: Even if they are engaged in difficult, labour intensive jobs and work long hours, the income they earn is not enough to provide adequate nutritious food for the whole family. They are forced to find other means of finding food or money. That is one of the reasons some women started working as prostitutes.*

Some residents are unable to work and earn money to ensure food security because of circumstances that are beyond their control. Individuals engage in activities such as prostitution

to cope with food-related problems. This finding is similar to what Hadley & Patil, (2006) discussed in a quantitative study conducted in Tanzania among 449 female caretakers.

Unemployment and underemployment can occur due to various circumstances. Selam's mother is an example of being out of her job because of illness:

> *Selam: My mother had an excellent business, and she used to run her small restaurant in the Korah area. When my sisters were my age, my mother became very sick, and the doctors highly recommended that she not return to this type of work because of the risk of falling and because she cooked injera with an open, wooden stove. In addition to her chronic physical illness, my mother started to experience mental health problems. The doctor told her that she could not perform the same type of work she used to do because of her mental illness. For many years she made injera and sold it in the neighbourhood, but now she had to find another way of earning money or getting food for us...For many years she made injera and sold it to the neighbourhood. She did not return to her work and eventually lost her business, and since we did not have an income, we could not maintain our housing.*

The loss of the job caused Selam's family to become homeless. In a focus group discussion with women, Tigist addressed the reality that unemployment is not limited to uneducated people who have migrated to the city but also affects new graduates from universities and colleges:

> *Tigist: In our area, there are young people who have completed school and even college and still expect their mothers to provide food for them because they could not find employment anywhere in the city.*

Samson, who lives in the Korah community with his mother and younger brother, shared his mother's employment status and their food security status:

> *Samson: My mother works in Koshe (in the city's landfill) - she collects recyclable materials from the damp and sells a bag for five birr. We have lived in a rental room in this area for sixteen years. I was born and raised in this area. Our life and ability to access food can change day by day, and it all depends on my mother's job.*

Some people take multiple jobs to provide for their families:

> *Endalkachew: In addition to working here as a guard, after work, I do labour jobs. Sometimes I get a call from some friends when there is a job in storage facilities when they need an extra person to help them. I also do other overnight guarding types of jobs. I sometimes have to work day and night with a short break...I also see some of my neighbours that are in a worse situation than I am; some of them collect firewood and sell it to buy food, and it is usually not enough.*

In addition to his full-time job as a guard and messenger, Endalkachew has to take extra jobs to buy adequate food for his family.

Many men and women in Addis Ababa have the experience of working in Middle Eastern countries and the Gulf States as domestic workers and in different capacities. Some participants decide to travel to work to provide for their family and support their siblings to go to school. While working in these countries, some participants have learned new skills and ways of cooking, but others have experienced severe forms of abuse by their employers and employment agents. Asma reported that working in Saudi was a positive experience:

> *Asma: I have lived and worked in Arab Countries, and I learned to cook different types of international food while I was there.*

Fikirte shared the abuse she endured while working in Saudi Arabia for three years:

> *Fikirte: A few years ago, I could not find any job in Addis Arabia, and I decided to travel to Saudi Arabia and worked there for more than a year. The only reason I endured the abuse by the employer is that I had to support my grandmother who was sick. I finally decided to come back home after working for a year and a little bit when I heard my grandmother was very sick and did not have anyone to take care of her. I am glad I came back; it was like slavery…Having enough income is very critical to eating good food. If you have a good paycheck, you can deal with life appropriately, and you have a choice as to how you are going to respond to challenges. If you have a small salary, you will have nothing; you will have a lower standard of life. I eat at least once a day, but these days I do not eat my breakfast because I do not have the money or there are not enough ingredients to make a meal at home for my grandmother and me... Currently, I get paid about 800 birr a month (CAD 40), and I also take an evening class and have to pay fees.*

Fikirte narrated with a sense of relief that she no longer lives under these conditions and talked about why she prefers being food insecure in Addis Ababa to earning more money in Saudi. Skipping meals is part of her experience because of her current low income.

Participants who lived in the Korah community shared their experience of working in the city's landfill and accessing food from the city's landfill itself. Temesgen states about his community:

> *Temesgen: It is also common for the residents here to work at the local trash dump collecting recycled materials as daily labourers... Since the location used to be outside of the city, the city administration decided to locate the landfill in the middle of this community fifty years ago. This landfill served the community as a significant source of*

food and income for the families and their children who live in this community for many years.

Some children in the city can participate in helping their parents while working. Samson, a nine-year-old boy, states:

Samson: At times, I go out to help my mother collecting recyclable materials when she goes out to work in the dump. I also try to gather as much recyclable material as I can in my bag, and it is tough to do it on my own. I decided to carry bags for other people; they pay some money for that, and I give the money I earn to my mother, and she buys food for all of us. I did that for about three months when I was a grade three student.

Samson appeared to be proud because he was able to assist his mother.

Tigist's comment came with frustration because she could not afford a variety of food and provide for her family as much as she wants:

Tigist: It is not because I do not want to feed my children good food; it is because I do not have enough money left after paying rent. I wish I had money and could cook different types of food for my children. It is also not because I am lazy; it is because I do not have a source of income that enables me to buy good food all the time. My daughter asks me for a new type of food when I serve just shiro wot - it is tough to explain to her that I cannot give them anything else other than shiro; they do not understand what I had to go through to afford that shiro.

The excerpts from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions show the role of unemployment, underemployment, and income on families' food insecurity status. Participants with low education are more likely to experience unemployment and underemployment, leaving them vulnerable to food insecurity and unhealthy coping strategies.

Consistent with Christiaensen & Alderman (2004)'s recommendation, accessing formal education or nutritional knowledge enables families to escape food insecurity effectively or alleviate challenges caused by food insecurity.

Even though the participants' stories expose the barriers they face daily, many participants attempted many strategies to minimize the impact of food insecurity on their families. Many men and women sought after employment in Middle Eastern countries and others found jobs for themselves in the city's landfill. Participants showed their perseverance in acquiring food for their families by working the landfill and working multiple long-hour jobs. Some children worked with their parents in the landfill to supplement their family's income. The coping methods they used to deal with food insecurity served families' needs temporarily; however, families identified various undesirable consequences.

Literature states the close relationship between food insecurity and social isolation. The findings from this study explore how the mere presence of food insecurity and the negative coping strategies families use leads to social isolation. The ongoing attempt to alleviate food insecurity and lack of income led some participants to social isolation and homelessness. Iacovou et al., (2013)'s evaluation of community kitchens internationally found that the enhancing of food security among participants and their families will automatically reduce social isolation and build resiliency.

4.4. Effects of Food Insecurity

The third central theme that emerged from the focus group discussions and interviews was the consequences of food insecurity in families and the aspects of their lives affected by their experiences. All participants recognized the significance of ensuring food security to live a

thriving life. Negash, in the focus group discussion, explained the condition of food insecurity in Addis Ababa:

> *Negash: What we have in this city is people who often eat lunch but are unable to eat supper daily. We have people that work hard all day and can afford only to eat a boiled potato or boiled maize on the cob at the end of the day.*

Study participants shared their individual stories and first-hand experiences with food insecurity and the aspects of their life affected. Most participants stated that they prioritize their need for food over other needs. For example, Endalkachew explained:

> *Endalkachew: Since hunger does not give you room for choice, you do not want to spend money on clothing or other necessities.*

Food insecurity is one of the hurdles that presents numerous challenges to many of Addis Ababa's residents. An objective of this research was to understand the extent, nature and impact of food insecurity on families' well-being. Findings from the focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and observations provide clear incidents and indications of food insecurity's impact on families' well-being in terms of decreased physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being. Many pieces of literature show the strong correlation between food security and well-being. Having access to enough food is a "defining moment" of many children's lives that enables them to have a "good life" (Marrow et al., 2017, p. 3). Tolossa' (2010) study among Addis Ababa's poor shows that when families live in food insecurity for many years, their well-being will deteriorate (p. 193). This study's result outlines several dimensions of families' well-being affected due to the experience of food insecurity.

The need for food takes precedence over other needs families have. In the incidents where limited food is available, participants shared that they give priority to their children to eat

first. Participants identified three areas in which food insecurity impacted their lives: impact on physical and mental health, living in a survival mode, and creating housing instability.

4.4.1. Impacts on Physical and Mental Health

Physical and mental health issues are identified as part of the consequences of living in food insecure households. Living in a food insecure family can cause high susceptibility to physical and mental illnesses.

In focus group discussions with women, Haymanot explained:

> *Haymanot: The lack of enough food in our homes has caused us to experience illnesses and repeated sickness. I am very sure that we often become sick because we do not eat properly.*

Fana agreed with Haymanot and shared the consequences of the lack of nutritional food in children:

> *Fana: It is tough to raise children and provide everything they need in this city. We know that if we do not provide our children with adequate and nutritious food, they are prone to different types of illness. Food is better than medication. I would rather spend money on food than medicine. Taking too many medications by itself can cause other diseases. Sometimes my children get a common cold or flu quickly, and I think the reason we often get sick is because of not eating nutritious food regularly for an extended period.*

Fana is knowledgeable about the benefits of nutritious food in preventing illness or helping to heal faster. Food is an essential component to ensure physical wellness, and the lack of it can cause illnesses or can perpetuate underlying health problems. Tigist talked about how her children get sick because of irregular access to nutritional food:

Tigist: When my children simply catch a cold, it takes them a very long time to get better; often they get sicker and sicker because they cannot fight off the illnesses. It is difficult to feed them good food; even adding an egg a day can improve their health, but I cannot afford it. When I take them to clinics, I frequently have to pay lots of money for examinations and medication. Recently, my daughter stayed in Yekatit 12 Hospital for several days because of severe pneumonia. She just got back home a few days ago. I was fearful and felt very sad after spending time in the hospital's department that treats children that suffered from malnutrition and related illnesses.

Tigist explains the severity of food-related illnesses and the impact on her child. Hospitalization is an everyday reality among children that live in food insecure households.

Similar to Tigist's and Fana's stories, Mola described the need for medications for illnesses that may have been caused by food insecurity. He stated:

Mola: We often are not able to afford essential medication when we get sick, and I know most of the sicknesses can be treated just by eating a variety of food.

Other participants expressed similar, culturally held opinions that food should be the primary medication for all types of illnesses.



Figure 5: A drawing from a nine-year-old girl, consequences of food insecurity.

Translation: As you can see in the drawing, my brother and I are sharing a meal because my mother cannot afford to buy enough for all of us. This happens when our family does not have money to buy enough food. If there is not food at home, we go to bed without eating our supper and if we do not eat someone from the family gets sick. For example, when my brother gets sick and we do not have money to take him to the doctor's office, he may get hurt further.

In the focus group discussion, Haymanot further shared another consequence of food insecurity in her community:

Tigist: I do not know if you heard that three months ago there was a breakout of a disease called "Atet" (Acute Watery Diarrhoea, AWD). We have people who died because of the contaminated food and water problem even here in Addis Ababa.

Other focus group participants agreed with her that death is a frequent and severe consequence of food insecurity.

Teshome reflected on the community that his organization serves and stated:

Teshome: The child mortality rate in our community is very high, and children spend lots of time being sick at home or in a hospital rather than going to school and playing with their friends. You can see children who are very short and have a prominent stomach; they look very sick.

Meron added, regarding the spread of disease because of water and food contamination:

Meron: Yes, it is prevalent to have people in our neighbourhood diagnosed with typhoid and become hospitalized. Everyone in our neighbourhood thinks that they have had a version of typhoid because of the quality of water we drink and use for cooking. We often have contaminated food at home because of the dirty water we access. I cannot say we can achieve food security while not getting enough water or having to drink and cook with contaminated water.

Meron made a connection between food insecurity and access to clean water. The provision of clean and consistent water contributes to leading a healthy, food secure life. Accessing reliable, clean, and safe water plays a crucial role in an enduring, healthy lifestyle. Participants repeatedly talked about food insecurity resulting in death.

Temesgen provides an example from the community where he grew up:

Temesgen: In this area, I have neighbours that died because of food-related illnesses or the lack of adequate food, and some end up having permanent physical disabilities such as blindness. We know that the child mortality rate is way higher than in other parts of the city.

Temesgen made a meaningful connection between health problems and food insecurity. Even if food insecurity does not cause most health problems, many types of illnesses are perpetuated by the lack of adequate food in families.

In addition to physical health issues, participants discussed the effects of food insecurity on their mental health. Participants used various terms to express mental health or mental illness such as mental stress, mental stability, worry, depression and anxiety. The term mental stress (የአእምሮ ጭንቀት) was the term repeatedly used by participants. Temesgen's story and assessment of his community indicate the impact of food insecurity on mental health conditions:

> *Temesgen: In addition to the physical health problems, we see psychological impacts on the members of the community. People often feel inferiority, discrimination, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and hopelessness. There are multiple psycho-social problems in this community.*

The experience of mental health issues caused by food insecurity can lead families to hide their experiences to avoid the shame and guilt of asking for help.

Fana explains further:

> *Fana: Hunger absolutely affects our mental stability [health]. At one time, we had everything we needed; our parents raised us with adequate food, and we never had to worry about whether we would have our next meal or not. I think the ongoing worry about food and the ability to access food affects our mental health. It also affects our children. If they could find a job, they could earn money, and that would help to remove their worries. However, the common problem we have in this city is that people get hungry and become stressed over food, causing them to experience mental health issues. They also carry lots of shame around going out to ask for help from others.*

Worry as a consequence of food insecurity is a common theme that emerged in both the focus group discussions and the semi-structured interviews. Fana describes worry as a significant contributor to mental illnesses.

Askale shared statements in the focus group discussions about the reality mothers experience in food insecure households. Mothers do not eat enough food daily because they have the obligation of providing for their family; they spend what they earned for the day on the needs of their family. Askale reflected on how worry becomes a factor:

> *Askale: Mothers worry about food all day, and they work hard to find something to feed their family. When we obtain some food or money, we give it all to our families. Fathers work very hard too but they sometimes don't understand the extent of the food problem their wives have to deal with...the truth is that If mothers can eat healthily and worry less about life, they will have a healthier life both mentally and physically.*

Askale's assessment shows that when food insecurity exists in a household, mothers become the last person in the family to eat whatever is left after the rest of the family members have eaten. Temesgen also raised the benefit of ensuring food security to rebuild their [mothers'] psychological health to help them to regain self-esteem and stop worrying about food regularly. Children often witness the worries and distress of their parents attempting to provide food and other basic needs. Many children participate in the process of solving the family's problems. Selam, who is a grade nine student, shared her and her four siblings' experiences after her mother's diagnosis of physical and mental illness:

> *Selam: My mother worries a lot, and seeing her worry so much makes me depressed a lot because I know she is worried about money and food. The doctors told her to stop*

worrying so much, but it is difficult not to worry because she is a mother and she has five children to take care of, and we do not have anyone else to support us.

Selam went on talking about how her eldest sister also struggles with mental illness, and Selam thinks that her sister's illness is caused by witnessing what their mother has experienced since the passing of their father. She also shared how living in a food insecure household affects her self-esteem and confidence:

Selam: Some of my friends at school have both of their parents and bring food to school and eat their lunch daily. They also have proper clothing. I used to be very jealous and feel depressed. While we were living in a plastic house (a shack made out of tarps and plastic, mostly built in squatter settlements) we were continuously worrying about food and that has damaged my self-confidence. When I saw other kids getting new shoes or new clothing, I used to be very jealous and sometimes cry...Most days, when I go to school, I cannot take lunch with me. Some students found out that I don't bring my lunch and they offered to share their food with me, but I am not comfortable eating other children's food. I am scared that I may get in trouble. Since there is nothing I can do about it, I try not to become sad but it is difficult - I sometimes think we are cursed. I know I am not the only one who is not getting food for the day; it is also both my brother and my mother.

Selam has been given a scholarship to go to school with children from more affluent families; however, she compares her nutritional and physical situation to other children in her school. Selam described her experience of depression, hopelessness, and futility by stating that it is as if she and her family are cursed and isolated from her peers.

Asma, who works in a school, provided an additional health-related effect of food insecurity in families, particularly in children:

> *Asma: You can find all types of societal problems here. Children that live in this city often have frequent illnesses related to food. It is obvious when children have growth retardation because of not having access to adequate and nutritious food.*

The experience of children who have some type of developmental or physical disability is prominent. Although achieving an active and healthy life is at the core of the 1996 WFP definition (FAO, 1996), the findings of this study display the effects of food insecurity on families' physical and mental wellness in Addis Ababa. The physical and mental consequences of food insecurity is an international phenomenon (Zezza & Tasciotii, 2010) and the findings of this study show the obvious national and local implications. Food insecurity causes physical health problems in families because of deficiency in the necessary nutrients for viable health, creating vulnerability to illnesses, and exacerbating other underlying health problems. Whenever families are placed in a position where they cannot afford nutritionally dense and safe food, they face immediate physical illness as a result of starvation (Seligman, 2009).

Food insecurity often has adverse physical health consequences for children. Ensuring food security in Addis Ababa can change the realities of children by reducing the child mortality rate and increasing children's engagement at home, in schools and in the community. The narratives and examples of the participants correlate with the fact that when children grow up in a food insecure family, they tend to have high rates of iron-deficiency anemia, acute infection, chronic illness and developmental and mental health problems (Seligman, 2009).

Many participants, including children, used Amharic idioms that describe their emotional distress when they feel hungry; when they have to engage in a negative activity to find money or

food, and when they are eating the same "undesirable food" on a regular basis (e.g. feeling like being cursed (*የተረገምኩ እንደሆንኩኝ ይሰማኛል*); feeling useless to self, to children, to others, or to the community in general; feeling like an outsider and living at the mercy of others; feeling out of place and not belonging). The feelings of worry and living in constant distress are also findings of Maes et al., (2010) that distress over food has a psychological impact and can be "mediated by [participants'] unique social network" (p. 1451, 1456).

Several other research studies on food insecurity have correlated the availability, access and utilization of food (Darmon & Drewnowski, 2008, p. 1112) with mental health concerns such as depression, anxiety and somatic symptoms (Maes, 2010, p. 1451). Parents' and grandparents' narratives about their inability to afford desirable and adequate food for their family expressed that it caused them to experience depression, stress and worries (Becquey, et al. 2010, p. 2238).

Similar to the impact on individuals' mental well-being, findings from this research show that food insecurity in Addis Ababa is contributing to prevalent physical health problems in families. Several participants attributed the many repeated physical illnesses members of their family experience to the reality of food insecurity in their lives. The impact of food insecurity in families is visible in both adults' and children's health as made obvious by participants' narratives and examples. Children's hospitalization due to malnutrition is part of the experience of food insecure families. Similar to the finding of Gundersen & Ziliak (2015), food insecurity results in physical health problems for adults and children in Addis Ababa. In some cases, food insecurity is considered one of the main factors that perpetuates other underlining chronic and acute illnesses.

Food security is at the core of meaningful, healthy life for families. Food secure families often heal quickly from mild types of illnesses because they are able to obtain nutritious food, and the likelihood of the illness getting worse is very slim. In the event that these food secure families experience major illnesses that require a pharmacological intervention, the presence of nutritious food helps the medication to work effectively. Whereas, when families with experience of food insecurity become mildly ill with a mild type of illness, they often suffer from the symptoms more severely than the food secure families. As the findings of this study show, when adults and children who live in a food insecure family become ill because of more serious disease, the illness will have more adverse consequences on the person, including death. Many families place a tremendous value on food over medication when a family member gets sick. Therefore, many families prioritize their children's well-being; when they budget and allocate their resources they ensure their children eat adequate and nutritious food.

4.4.2. Living in Survival Mode (Keij Wedaf)

Many participants used various idioms to explain their status in the area of food security. The most common Amharic idiom used is "living in *Keij Wedaf,"* (ከእጅ ወደአፍ) which means having a meager amount of food or just enough to live on but not enough to thrive. Participants described their experiences with food insecurity as living in survival mode for an extended period. Many participants indicated that their lives and daily activities revolve only around worrying about food, working for food, begging for, obtaining, or preparing food. The focus groups discussed this topic extensively, comparing their childhood nutritional condition and their family's level of joy. For instance, Mistru provided an example comparing his childhood experience and his current life:

Mistru: I want to start by comparing my experience growing up in this area until now. I remember that when I was a child and I returned from school, I asked to go outside and play football with my friends but I was not allowed to leave the house until I finished my snack - I had to at least eat some ambasha [traditional bread] and tea. Currently, I do not think about eating a snack after work or school, let alone snacks; there is no way I can afford that. I may have to go to bed without eating supper regularly. In my neighbourhood, I do not know any child who eats an after-school snack now.

Mistru's parents provided him with a childhood experience where he did not have to worry about food constantly, but he was unable to maintain a similar lifestyle for himself when he became an adult. He also reflected on his observation of the experiences of children in his community.

Bereket added his daily experience with food:

Bereket: I do not eat enough food at any time of the day. I mostly eat just enough to function and survive. When you take your child shopping, you give him a candy to trick him to be patient, and that is how we treat our stomachs; we eat just enough food to last us to the next meal.

Bereket compared his way of coping with his hunger and nutritional condition with the use of treats to bribe a child with candy to pass the time. Participants also talked about food insecurity leading them to depend on food accessed by begging or food aid.

Temesgen stated:

Temesgen: Many people in my community consider begging as a viable career because they do not have any other way of accessing food. For example, when a poor, blind child who lives in a small town in Ethiopia reaches the age of 11 or 12 and when he realizes

that he has to support himself and take care of himself, he decides to migrate to Addis, and often he ends up in this community and starts to beg for food.

Temesgen's observation of the conditions of some families in his community exemplified how many migrants, particularly those who experience some disability, come to the city to beg. Abera, who is age 45 and has been blind for most of his life, depends primarily on begging. He shared his experience with food insecurity:

Abera: Sometimes we receive food aid from an NGO; however, we still use begging as a source of food for my family, especially towards the end of the month. As you can see, I am sick and blind, and I am limited in what I can do. I mostly know my way around in this area, but when it is rainy season or when they start construction, I find it very difficult to move around. One of my daughters often guides me while I am begging. My wife is also very sick and cannot leave the house. When people see me, they often feel sorry for me and give me some coins. There is a leftover food market in this area, and I send my daughter with money I earned, and she buys whatever she can get. We prefer to buy dry injera and make our sauce at home, but it is not always possible. Clean leftover injera is more expensive than injera that has some sauce, and often we do not have enough money to buy fresh injera.

Abera's family has depended on begging for many years, and when he cannot physically go out and beg for money, his eldest daughter does it on her own. She also collects recyclables from the landfill and sells them to buy food. The leftover food market serves families in Abera's community as a significant source of food.

Temesgen explained that, in his community, when parents cannot work or beg any longer, the responsibility often lies on the eldest child to attend to the family's need. Participants

in the focus group also said that some women engage in commercial sex work to earn money to provide for their families:

> *Haymanot: Many women now are working in demanding and labour intensive jobs and jobs that were previously done by men, and they work long hours. The income they earn is not enough to provide adequate nutritious food for the whole family. Some women are forced to find other means of income, and this is one of the reasons many women started working as prostitutes. In addition to engaging as commercial sex workers, many women have gone to Middle Eastern countries to work as maids.*

Participants repeatedly used the word "enslaved" to describe women's experiences of working in Middle Eastern countries. In the focus group discussion, Askale commented:

> *Askale: We also see many people send their daughters to Arab countries for work. They work as slaves and send money to their family here. They rarely finish school before they get sent out. I am pleased that the government is intervening now and many of our women are returning and closing the many brokers' offices.*

Goshu commented in the focus group discussion with men:

> *Goshu: We have many young men who are involved in criminal activities because they are not able to find jobs.*

Food insecurity forces people to make decisions and engage in activities they would not have been involved in if their circumstances were different. In addressing the research question 'What are the families' experiences with food insecurity?', this study found that many of the participants' daily activities revolve around worrying about, acquiring, or preparing food for themselves and their families. Eating to survive, skipping meals, accessing the leftover food market, engaging in commercial sex work, accessing food aid, and migrating to Middle Eastern

countries for work are a few of the experiences the city's residents use to mitigate their families' food insecurity. The experiences of food insecurity among individuals with a disability are acute. Limited literature explores the realities of people with disabilities in Ethiopia. The findings of this study reveal the gaps in developing targeted strategies to alleviate food insecurity among people with disabilities.

4.4.3. Housing Instability

The problem with food insecurity is not restricted to leaving people in a survival mode of life but has left many people homeless and unable to integrate into society effectively. The theme of housing instability as it relates to food insecurity emerged from participants' narratives as they reflected on their experience with homelessness. For many families, the price of housing and rent become impossible to afford. Families pay a significant amount of their income on rent, and they use whatever they have left to pay for food and other necessities.

Most of the study's participants stated that they live in rental housing. In the focus group discussion with women, following comments by two participants about the benefit of budgeting to ensure food security, Mebrat responded, expressing feelings of futility because of problem related to housing:

> *Mebrat: I pay for my children's education, clothing, shoes, health care, and rent. Rent is the difficult one to manage. A substantial portion of our monthly income goes to paying rent. The owner of the house we live in increases the rental cost every three months, and sometimes he even increases it every month if he wants to. We do not have any other options except to pay what they ask us - I do not want my children to be homeless, so I pay rent before paying for anything else; then I pay for food. The first month you pay three thousand birr for rent, and after six months it becomes four thousand birr. Within a*

year or two, the rent can easily double. We do not have control over any of these, and there is no way to stop them.

Mebrat's family does not have any choice except to pay the rent, and if they want to have enough nutritious food to eat, they will have to choose to find another house or become homeless. Haymanot agreed with her comments about some of the realities of homelessness in the city:

Haymanot: Addis Ababa has significant problems with homelessness and street children. The typical reason children end up on the street is because they could not find food at home and their parents were not able to take care of them. There are also children that live on the street with their parents because their parents cannot maintain housing.



Figure 5: Housing in a squatter settlement in the Koshe community

As part of my observation of the situation, I walked during both the daytime and evening through the different parts of the city. I witnessed many children begging on the street, and most children, some as young as six years old, were begging for money by themselves. Seeing

homeless children begging for food and money is a typical scene in the prosperous parts of the city, such as Bole Road, Meskel Square, Piasa, and Stadium area. I also witnessed young children sitting with their mothers under the city's newly constructed bridges begging for food and money.

In the focus group with men, Bereket mentioned that many homeless individuals and families in the city are forced to access food from unsafe places:

> *Bereket: There are also people who live on the street in this city, and they rely on food from the city's garbage bins, or they ask for leftover food from hotels and restaurants and collect it in plastic bags.*

Following her mother's diagnosis, Selam narrated her family's living conditions:

> *Selam: She did not return to her work and after she lost her business, and since we did not have an income, we could not maintain our housing. For a while, we lived on the street and built our own home out of plastic and rugs beside the landfill. The problem got worse, especially while we were living a house made out of plastic and tarps. The plastic house we lived in was considered illegal, and the Sub City's bylaw officials ordered us to evacuate, and someone from the Keble* [local government office] *Administration gave us a one-room house. The room is built on what used to be somebody's pit toilet, and the Kebele officials decided to convert it into a living space. The Kebele owned the house – it is not that well maintained, and we currently live there.*

Housing stability is an essential indicator of families' food security or insecurity status. Many families try to maintain their housing by reducing what and how much they eat. However, some families end up living on the streets or in a squatter settlement when they run out of resources. In addition to these living conditions, the ongoing rise in food prices hinders families

from recovering quickly. Homelessness leads many families to reside in illegal squatter settlements. Living in squatter settlements automatically affects their ability to have a recognized status in the city and accessing social supports such as food aid become more difficult. Consistent with the findings of the World Food Program (2009) in the Amhara and Afar regions, vulnerable people groups such as "women-headed poor households, sex workers, shoe shiners, fuelwood sellers, guards, waiters in cafés, bars and hotels (as they are low salaried), poor pregnant and poor lactating mothers" are prone to homelessness and affected by food insecurity (p. 7).

4.5. Coping Strategies

The fourth significant theme that emerged from the focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and observation is related to the way families and individuals cope with food insecurity in their community. This section is divided into two areas of coping with food insecurity: accessing food and financial coping. These sections contain positive coping strategies where families display behaviours and attitudes that are described and discussed as desirable or harmless to their well-being. There are also negative coping strategies that are presented by the research participants. Some strategies have both positive coping and negative coping characteristics because either they assist families to continue to survive in situations where they do not have other options or they perpetuate the existing food-related problems by creating illnesses, stigmatization, or acute to severe financial crisis.

4.5.1. Accessing Food

Many families employ various mechanisms to access food both temporarily and long term. Many of the participants stated that thinking about, planning for or worrying about food takes up a significant portion of their day. Meron stated:

Meron: We spend most of our time and resources searching for food, cooking food or worrying about food...If we had a little bit more income, we would eat more regularly and stop worrying about and being obsessed with food every day.

In this study, to cope with food insecurity and the constant worry because of food, participants discussed five means of accessing food.

4.5.1.1. Begging

The first way for families to cope with food insecurity is by begging. Participants with begging experience shared that they beg for both food and money. Temesgen reflected on his personal and community reality:

Temesgen: The other primary food source for this community is begging. Many beggars travel throughout the city and ask for food all day. They take what they have gathered at the local second-hand food market and sell what they collected for a small amount of money, sometimes for 1 birr or 1.5 birr to give to other lower-income families who are unable to obtain food for themselves... When I say many people depend on food accessed through begging the number is not just in the hundreds - it is thousands of people (up to 10,000 people) that obtain food through begging or purchasing food from other beggars. These beggars collect food throughout the city by travelling on foot from home to home, and in most cases, people tend to give food instead of money, and they sell this food to other members of the community. These are the means by which our community members cope with food insecurity

According to Temesgen, begging for food has helped thousands of people and it has been a reliable source of food for many. Even if none of the people entered the begging "endeavour" willingly, it has helped to enable many of them to cope with adverse nutritional situations.

The city has many older adults begging for food on street corners, outside of churches and in marketplaces. Fana provided a reason why many older adults are begging compared to the younger generation:

> *Fana: Food insecurity affects different people in different ways. We have many beggars in this city, and they can only find food if someone gives them money or food. What we often forget is that we have lots of people in this city that do not have anyone to support them and they are unable to work because of illness or age.*

The findings of this study provide examples of the relationship between food insecurity and age and this finding is consistent with Gebre (2012)'s quantitative study.

Sileshi added other reasons why people end up begging:

> *Sileshi: Many people are barely surviving and resort to begging. They have large expenses. It is also common that children end up running away from their homes and living on the streets to beg and work for food.*

There are multiple reasons for people to resort to begging. Growing up with food insecurity often leads children to find various means of accessing food to support themselves and their families, through begging or other activities. For some people, accessing food by begging is not a regular activity, but they consider it a last resort if they are not able to find food through employment or other means. For example, Moges, who works as a daily labourer, shared his experience with begging:

> *Moges: There are times that I have to resort to begging for food. Since I am not disabled, people do not give me money, but we take plastic bags with us to different restaurants and ask for leftovers; that is how we are coping with life. It is all because of food insecurity. If we were food secure, we would not even think of doing such a thing.*

Similarly, when Selam's mother lost her business, she resorted to begging until she started receiving food aid.

> *Selam: We all care for each other, and we share what we have equally. For a long time, the only way we could cope with the problem was to go out begging. At some point, my mother went out to beg almost every day for food or money. She sometimes got 10 or 15 birr a day, and she used that money to buy food for us. Currently, since we receive food aid, she does not go out begging as often as she used to. What we receive from food aid lasts us for many weeks.*

In contrast, Abera, who lives in the Koshe community, shared a unique experience that his family primarily relies on food purchased from the leftover food market located in the community. People sell various grades of restaurant food collected through begging. The market opens every day after 4:00 p.m. and people from the community come and purchase food for one or two birr, depending on the quality of food they want.

4.5.1.2. Food from the Landfill

Addis Ababa's landfill is located in the Koshe community where the majority of the residents utilize the landfill as a source of food and employment. Many people have illegal squatter settlements built around the landfill, despite the repeated evacuations by the local government. Temesgen, who grew up in the community, narrated his experience with accessing food from the city's landfill:

> *Temesgen: I would say up to one thousand people benefit from the landfill directly or indirectly. The majority of the people access this garbage dump area to find leftover food that has been discarded by hotels and marketplaces. They take any food they can gather to their home and cook it for themselves and their families. This community houses the*

poorest people in the city. I was born and grew up in this community because both of my parents are lepers. My parents are very ill, and when I was growing up, they could not provide me with food or other necessities. It was when I was five years old that I started to seek for food from the city's landfill. From age five to twenty, I relied on the garbage dump as the primary source of my daily food. When I was a child, our biggest problem was accessing food. When I used to access food from the landfill, I remember that I knew where to locate the various types of food in the dump. For example, I could find potatoes and onions from the garbage that came from the Merkato area. Some hotels, such as the Hilton, Sheraton, and Addis Ababa Bole Airport, often dumped more varieties of meat, and the community knew when, where and how to access this food. We collected the different types of ingredients from different parts of the landfill, and we either cooked and ate it there by making a fire from the garbage or brought it to our homes and prepared it with our families.



Figure 6: Drawing from a nine-year-old, obtaining food from begging and landfill

Translation: *My brother and I eat together the food my father brings from begging and we prepare food at home with the money my mother brings from working in the landfill.*

The city's landfill has served the *Koshe* community as a place of employment and means of acquiring food. When families experience chronic food insecurity, they often resort to various behavioural and material means of coping to fulfill their dietary needs. Families in the *koshe* area are unique in how they utilize the resource that is available in their community.

4.5.2.3. Skipping Meals

All participants stated that they had had experience with skipping meals for various reasons. Skipping a meal or meals is a popular coping method for families when they face insufficient access to food.

Haymanot stated what she observed in the city:

Haymanot: In this city, most families' worry is not whether they are going to have enough protein or carbohydrates for the day. Instead, they mostly think about whether they are going to eat supper tonight. They often do not have the choice of what they will eat or when they will eat. Most families in this community eat when food is available. Sometimes that means they eat once or twice a day, and on a good day, they may eat three times a day. Therefore, the question of food security is not applicable in a community like this, but mostly the issue is survival. The struggle with food is also real in many cities throughout the country.

Haymanot explained that the question of food insecurity is not about worrying about getting nutritional food, but it is about being able to eat regularly. Fikirte provides another reason why she skips a meal:

Fikirte: Preparing the kind of food we eat takes a very long time. Sometimes I leave home without eating any food to avoid arriving at work late. Sometimes, we do not have any food at home, so I leave home without breakfast. This last year, I have been working as a cleaner and an assistant in a daycare.

Wesene, a mother who sells cooking ingredients in the Mesalemia market, stated:

Wesene: I sometimes skip lunch at work because I have to save money to sustain my business. I work and spend my profits on transportation and paying other fees.

Amberbir, who works and lives around the biggest vegetable market in the city, responded:

Amberbir: Yes. I have skipped meals many times. After paying for food and accommodation, I won't have any money left in my pocket. In the morning, I don't get to eat breakfast. I have to wait until I get some work and earn some money to eat some food. There are also times that I skip lunch. I rarely eat breakfast because I need to work in the morning. Otherwise I will not have enough money for the day. There are some months when I don't have to skip a meal because I can find a job easily.

Some families also skip food in order to save nutritional food for their children. For example, Endalkachew talked about his and his wife's reasons for choosing to skip meals:

Endalkachew: I have not eaten breakfast in a long time, and it is the same for my wife; she doesn't eat in the morning either. Everything we have we save for our children - we do not want them to go hungry or get sick because of not eating. We want to make sure they eat at least three times a day.

Many families prioritize their children's nutritional security over their ability to eat three times a day. Many participants, similar to Endalkachew's family, give nutritious food to their

children while they skip a meal, reduce meal size, or shift to less expensive and less preferable food items.

4.5.2.4. Seasonal Food

The season of the year determines the availability and price of the different types of food families can access. Many participants use seasonal food to cope with food insecurity and address their nutritional needs. For many people, eating seasonal food is part of the culture. This study was conducted during the rainy season and I observed a large quantity of specific seasonal food. For example, maize, potatoes, cabbages, oranges are a few of the types of food I observed being sold in the Piasa's Atikilt Tera (vegetable food market), *yesefer suks* (neighbourhood convenience stores), supermarkets, *gulit* market (micro-sellers), and by other street vendors. Temesgen explains:

> *Temesgen: It is a common practice for people to use seasonal foods to cope with hunger in this area. In the rainy season, there is a surplus of maize, potatoes and cabbage, and they become a little bit more affordable. Around February and March tomatoes become extremely expensive because of the weather and also because of the fasting season. People tend to eat only vegetarian dishes during the fasting season. From August to October oranges become a little more affordable, and people may get a chance to eat them during this season, but around February, we may not even see oranges in the market. For example, my family takes advantage of the seasonal food - now that it is the rainy season, we buy lots of potatoes and maize, and they help us to keep warm. My children love them very much.*



Figure 7: Selling boiled maize in Addis Ababa

Figure 8: A woman roasting and selling maize in Addis Ababa

Figure 9: Selling boiled potatoes in Addis Ababa

Asma also talked about how she uses seasonal fruits:

> *Asma: I prepare vegetables dishes and prepare juices using pineapple, mango, avocado, and papaya. I often cook food using seasonal ingredients. If it is mango season I mostly buy mangoes and if it is pineapple season I mostly buy pineapples. I do the same with other fruits and vegetables...When it is rainy season, we take advantage of the lowered price of maize and potatoes. We often use them as a snack. We boil or roast the maize, or we cook the potatoes. It often helps us to cut down on the other things we have to buy. It is also a filler during the day – it is also good for the cold season, and we quickly get hungry during this season. My son also loves boiled maize.*

The data collection was conducted during the rainy season, and I observed many street food vendors (Figure 7, 8, and 9) selling boiled maize using mobile woodstoves and a few others selling "*bokolo tibs*" (roasted corn) and boiled potatoes. In all parts of Ethiopia, particularly in

the urban areas such as Addis Ababa, it is common to have seasons of plenty and seasons of food shortages (Derara & Tolossa, 2012).

The findings of this study show that families modify their behaviours to take advantage of the types of food available during each season. They choose to use seasonal food for several reasons: they are nutritious, available in most marketplaces, and cheap to buy. They use it as comfort food and as a snack. Participants linked seasonality of food to accessing fruits, vegetables, crops, and animal products. In addition to using it as a means of coping with food insecurity, some participants access seasonal food because they have positive memories associated with the specific food.

4.5.5.2. Food Aid

Nine of the study's participants are currently receiving food aid from a local non-governmental organization. One participant has a child who is part of a school-based breakfast and lunch program. A few more participants had the experience of receiving food aid through child sponsorship programs from an organization called Compassion International Ethiopia. Currently, they self-identified as no longer needing food aid. All participants who mentioned food aid as part of their family's past or present experience spoke positively about the benefit of food aid and the presence of those non-governmental organizations in their community.



Figure 10: A drawing by a grade four student

Translation: *My mother prepares food for me and my older brother. Since we have a shortage of food at home, we do not eat what we need. If I were older I would help my mother earning money and we would have enough income. My mother sometimes does not eat, but now we have started to receive food aid*.

Temesgen, who is a director of a non-governmental organization and grew up in a family that was food insecure in the Koshe (landfill) community, stated the benefit of food aid for the beneficiaries of the program he runs:

Temesgen: The food aid can assist a family for a month and reduce their daily stress. I see the families we support benefited in various ways. First, they will be able to rebuild their psychological health by regaining self-esteem and no longer worrying about food regularly. They gain a sense of hope because they know that there are people who care about them and they feel valued. The other thing is that if they are free from their worries over food and able to access food regularly, they will feel free to engage in different types of income-generating activities. They will gain motivation, and it will be easy for us to assist them in participating in income-generating activities. What we found is that when we first provided people with food aid and then helped them to engage in income generating activities, they were more efficient and successful in their jobs than when we began with income-generating activities. The only secret to their success is that we continued to support them by providing them with food as they engaged in income-generating activities. We have the secondary benefit that they can rebuild their psychological health and change their lives to be more sustainable.

Various forms of food aid have been a vital support in helping families to overcome their most difficult days. For example, Kasech's family's dire situation has not been solved, but food aid helps them to have access to a fundamental nutritional supply:

> *Kasech: My grandmother is very poor, and she goes through many trials to provide us with enough food every day. The last few months we are doing a little bit better because we started receiving a monthly grain and pasta support from a local non-governmental organization. Even if we do not get as much as we want, we get enough to keep us from going to bed without eating daily. We often don't eat what we prefer to eat, but we eat whatever is given to us. I am happy to see my grandmother happier and less worried again. She has even started to attend some social events since we started to get food support from this organization. I also heard [the director] talking about adding my grandmother to an income generation program they have, and she will start her own small business.*

Despite Kasech's appreciation and feelings of relief for herself and her grandmother, she stated that the amount and type of food they receive does not cover all their nutritional needs. Abera also raised a similar reflection that food aid reduced his family's worries by supplementing the food he collects from begging.

Selam's mother did not want to receive food aid when she first lost her job, but when her health started to decline she agreed to receive food aid. She reported feeling shame about asking for help. However, currently, Selam stated that when they received food aid, they sold a portion of the flour they received to buy other ingredients they needed or to pay for other expenses. Regarding the extent of improvement food aid brought to children and families that receive food aid, Temesgen added:

Temesgen: I look at the children working hard to make their dreams come true. It is all because they have a better nutritional situation than before. You can see them having the same goals as children that grow up in families that are a little more food secure. Primarily, I see them becoming very successful in their education. They are also able to interact with society and feel they belong. When we compare the families we support with other families and children that do not get any food support; our children have high self-esteem, confidence, a higher engagement level and are able to dream big. They have hope and are engaged in life and in their community. We know that we offer them only limited monthly food support, but the result is beyond what we hoped.

Accessing food is vital to having thriving children and families. Participants identified begging, food from the landfill, skipping a meal, buying seasonal food, and food aid as functional coping mechanisms they have at their disposal.

For many participants who reported having experienced a severe and chronic form of food insecurity, food aid has been a significant source of emotional relief from their distress and has kept them from resorting to socially unacceptable activities. Food aid in Ethiopia is a typical policy response to both temporary and long-term regional and national shocks that would lead many households to "sale of assets and other coping strategies which may, in turn, lead to more severe shocks" (Mekonnen & Gerber, 2017, p. 373).

4.5.2. Financial

The second theme that emerged from the focus group discussions and interviews is families' financial approach and management as their coping strategies. Participants mentioned finance in every question. This section presents how families source finances and how they obtain and manage their finances.

4.5.2.1. Budgeting

Many participants talked about how budgeting helped them to manage their finances effectively and lessen the worries that come from finishing their money and resources ahead of their next paycheck or food aid. Asma gives a clear example of how budgeting helps her family have access to food throughout the month:

> *Asma: I budget and prepare my family's daily meals. I use a system where I allocate our income to purchase a variety of types of food and make sure we have enough food for the end of the month. I make sure to have enough fruit and vegetables. I try to employ my knowledge about nutrition and food preparation...When I budget and shop for food, I prefer to buy things that could last a month such as* teff *and pasta - especially ingredients that I need for my child. I prepare daily food from that, but I purchase food that needs to be kept fresh weekly so that we have fresh and healthy eating. I often buy ingredients that need to be refrigerated, and I purchase them weekly.*

Although many talked about budgeting as an essential part of financial mechanisms for coping with food insecurity, many participants stated conditions where budgeting does not work due to circumstances that are outside of their control.

Sileshi described a circumstance that keeps him from budgeting regularly:

> *Sileshi: We also have family members staying with us for several months at a time. Our food budget is not consistent – some months we do well and others we finish everything ahead of time.*

While discussing the need for budgeting for rent, food and other necessities, Mebrat identifies the fluctuation of food prices and the constantly changing market as the primary barriers for families in budgeting for food:

Mebrat: I cannot budget at all. I cannot estimate how much I need for a year because with the year things can change drastically - always increasing. There is never a month in a year that we would say, "Thank God for a lower cost of living." Every month something goes up; one month it could be oil and sugar, and the next month it could be teff or rent.

Meron agreed with Mebrat and added:

Meron: The food sellers and brokers are the reason why the cost of food increases not yearly but weekly and sometimes daily.

The unpredictability of the price of food has affected families' ability to plan and budget for their meals according to their preferences.

4.5.2.2. Eating Cheaper Staples

In addition to budgeting or making budgeting work for them, some families choose to purchase only foods that are cheaper. For example, Wesene, who is a single mother, shared her approach to making her money last for the month:

Wesene: I see food-related problems in high-income households as well. People with money often eat meat, eggs and butter. As for me, I eat meat only three times a year, during holiday seasons. I know that some people use some variations of a dish to have variety in their nutrition. My income only allows me to buy shiro, tikur injera (dark injera), and sometimes misir wot (lentil). I do not worry about the colour of the food.

In a focus group discussion, Meron shared about her family's use of shiro as a viable alternative:

Meron: When we are tired of eating shiro, I sometimes mix shiro and potatoes for a change - it is a cheap way of managing food. My children asked me to prepare a meal

different from shiro, and I sometimes mix the shiro with other ingredients such as potatoes or lentils, and they will be a little bit satisfied.

Injera and shiro are the types of food that all participants reported preparing for their families frequently, in many cases daily. Many families cannot afford to purchase meat or other expensive ingredients, but they shared that they sometimes replace shiro with other types of food items.

In the focus group discussions, Webe agreed with Hymanot:

Webe: If we have leftover money and we have food, we use the money for critical expenses before we buy other nutritious food. We consider nutritious food as luxury food. We do not have a problem with availability of fruit in this part of the city; the problem is the high cost.

Buying certain types of food such as broccoli, cucumber, lettuce and cauliflower is not the priority of the participants. Some explained that if they have extra money after buying their necessary food, they would prefer to use it for paying for other expenses rather than buying "luxury food" items.

4.5.2.3. Selling Assets

Some participants reported selling an asset when they cannot find employment or other sources of income to pay for food. Many families resort to selling assets when they exhaust all the options they have to access food or finances. The selling of assets is considered a temporary, crisis-based response to food insecurity. Participants who have sold an asset also shared their regrets and sadness.

Samson shared:

Samson: We used to have a TV in our home. When I was in grade two or three we were starving, and my mother was sick, and she did not have money to pay for rent. We decided to sell the TV and pay our debt and buy some food for the month.

Samson appeared to be sad when telling the story; at the same time he acknowledged that the decision was appropriate. Other participants shared the experience of selling wedding rings and other possessions to buy food or to pay for a debt.

4.5.2.4. Buying Food in Bulk

In addition to budgeting and buying cheap staples, participants talked about their food purchasing customs. Most of the participants that have salaried employment stated that they purchase certain types of food in bulk. They purchase some ingredients once a month from the various large markets. Many participants indicated that they utilize the Piasa's Atikilt Tera (vegetable food market) or *Mesalemia Ehil Berenda* (grain food market) once a month and other markets on a weekly basis. Many participants also talked about the benefit of having flour mills *(Wefcho bet)* right in their neighbourhood as an easy way of accessing grains and flour. Saving money and purchasing quality food are the two commonly shared goals participants have when they go to marketplaces. They also make sure that they have the basic ingredients at home that could last them for the month.

Fana and her husband allocate some money and plan their food more in advance than most of the participants:

Fana: I often prepare enough shiro and berbere to last us for a year. I try to make sure we I have shiro, berbere and teff at home. The next thing I prioritize is oil and onion. We are four in my family and we use 25 kilograms for two months. With whatever money we have left, I buy vegetables and fruit.

Sileshi also shared his experience with purchasing in bulk to make sure food is available at home at all times:

> *Sileshi: Sometimes I may get some additional income, and I often use this income to buy things for the kitchen and extra non-perishable food items. Purchasing non-perishable food helps my family to save a lot of money.*

4.5.2.5. Utilize the Gulit Market

A number of the participants reported the importance of the *gulit* markets in their day-to-day effort to ensure easy access to vegetables. Since there are few fresh vegetable and fruit wholesalers, many people have to travel long distances and pay high transportation fees. *Gulit* markets are often located in close proximity to many neighbourhoods and provide families with many basic food items.

Temesgen stated:

> *Temesgen: Most families in this area use the gulit markets because we can find vegetables we need that fit our incomes and needs. The difference from the wholesalers is that If we want to buy an ingredient for five birr, we can find and purchase it for five birr. In communities like ours, gulit markets have more benefits than the large wholesalers.*

Gulit markets are available in every neighbourhood in various forms and sizes. Many *gulit* markets have a regular physical location that is allocated by the local government as part of the microfinance business model. However, there are newer types of *gulit* markets starting up in the newer parts of the city. During an evening observation, particularly around the newly constructed condominium complexes in the Lebu area, I witnessed a unique type of *gulit* market. These *gulit* markets operate between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. When the day starts to get darker, sellers use flashlights shining on their products:

Some participants indicated that they use the *gulit* markets when they run out of food.

> *Fikirte*: *I sometimes buy vegetables and fruit from Atikilt Tera Market (a major fresh fruit and vegetable market) because it is cheaper and closer to my house. I also use the local gulit market at least once a week because we run out of ingredients very quickly. The other reason we use the gulit market is that we can purchase any amount of ingredients we want at any time, whereas the large markets sell only in bulk.*

Some participants compared the *gulit* market to other types of markets, and they found that the *gulit* market is more fitting for their family's needs and their ability to access affordable food.

Asma stated:

> *Asma: I use the gulit market in my neighbourhood to buy ingredients. The gulit market works very well for me because I can buy a small portion of ingredients at a time more affordably than from supermarkets or other types of market close to my house. We also have some people who sell food on the street. Even if the city's bylaw officials remove them from the side of the road repeatedly, they change their locations or start to sell at a time of the day when the officials are not at work. I often buy vegetables from them because they are cheaper than most places, even gulit markets.*

People who prefer to buy food in bulk do not prefer to make use of the *gulit* markets because buying from the *gulit* markets makes budgeting difficult and costs more money in the long run. For example, Gebyanesh stated:

> *Gebyanesh: I do not find buying from the local gulit market financially beneficial. It is tough to balance a budget when you buy ingredients daily. There is a big difference in the quality of food you buy at a gulit market and at the wholesale stores. People that sell in a*

gulit market often buy from the wholesalers. Since they add another cost to the original price, I do not find buying from the local gulit market to be financially beneficial. I find it tough to balance my budget when I buy ingredients daily. It makes it impossible to budget. For example, onions can stay fresh up to two weeks, even more, so it is better to buy in bulk than daily from a gulit market. I often go to the Piasa Wholesale market.

Families in this study use various coping mechanisms that allow them to alleviate the adverse emotional, mental, and physical consequences of food insecurity. As outlined in the in this chapter, families engaged in both negative and positive coping methods. Even if adults are the main actors in the coping mechanisms, in many cases, children displayed active participation in families' coping strategies and activities. The reality of children's active role in creating and engaging in coping mechanism activities is consistent with Ghattas et al.,'s (2018) findings in the study of children's experience with food insecurity in Lebanon (p. 33).

Some families engage in negative activities to cope with food insecurity by performing risky and hazardous coping behaviours that would lead them to other adverse emotional, social, spiritual, and health problems. The negative consequences, including health problems, that come from the undesirable coping activities move families from transient food insecurity, where they can become food secure in the near future, to chronic food insecurity where they continue in a state of high vulnerability and become food insecure continuously (Bogale, 2012, p. 589-590). For example, families in the *Koshe* community that utilize the city's landfill as a means of obtaining food or employment reported illnesses, social isolation, and low self-esteem affecting their physical, social, and emotional well-being. The illnesses, isolation and low self-esteem keep family members from finding meaningful employment or lead to becoming underemployed or lacking connection to the larger society. As Ivers (2015) explains, food insecurity and health

problems such as HIV/AIDS can have a "bidirectional" relationship where food insecurity puts people in a position where they have to engage in coping strategies such as "high-risk sexual behaviours" that would increase the risk of infection (p.10). When these coping skills are inadequate to satisfy the expectations and needs they have, many family members encounter stress. In addition, by engaging in negative coping mechanisms families can create a potential to perpetuate their state of food insecurity. Mekonnen & Gerber (2017), address a related statement that in the effort to respond to their temporary food-related problems or "temporary shocks," families engage in negative coping strategies such as selling their assets or borrowing money, resulting in "more severe shocks" (p. 737).

Many parents make sure that their children eat nutritious food regularly while they are employing negative coping strategies for themselves such as skipping a meal, begging, accessing the city's landfill for food, or borrowing money or food. In addition to providing nutritious food, some parents decide to use the money they earn to send their children to private schools even though they do not have enough food at home for themselves. Parents endure the state of hunger while raising their children food secure with a hope that their children will have a better chance of having a successful life when they grow up. The narratives from some families show that their sacrifice is taken as a worthwhile decision and they take pride in the action.

On the other hand, many families engage in positive coping strategies to deal with food insecurity. Many families become inventive to form coping strategies that fit the resources they have at their disposal. First, purchasing and utilizing seasonal food allows families to obtain affordable and accessible food items. Particularly, the *kiremt* season (rainy season) makes available a variety of types of food such as oranges, leafy vegetables, potatoes, and maize. The starch dense food items such as potatoes and maize are used as part of a regular meal, for

snacking, and on many occasions, as a comfort food. Secondly, budgeting is used, particularly by families with educated parents or with a regular, reliable income. Many families appreciate the concept of budgeting and consider it an essential part of financially coping with food insecurity; however, circumstances such as the constant drastic rise of the price of food, unemployment, underemployment, and other circumstances that are outside of their control often prevent them from budgeting. Families with the knowledge and financial capacity to budget prefer to purchase food items in bulk from wholesalers or directly from the farmers. Accessing food from the *gulit* market is also an essential way of managing finances and accessing food without travelling long distances.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1. Conclusion

The primary purpose of this research was to explore families' experiences with food insecurity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and to understand the ways they cope with it to offset the problem. This qualitative study embarked on responding to three specific objectives (1) to understand the extent, nature and impact of food insecurity on Addis Ababa's families; (2) to discover the strategies families employ to cope with food insecurity; (3) to explore families' attitudes, priorities, preferences, and perception of their food insecurity by asking their lived experiences.

An ethnographic methodology using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observations was used to gather qualitative data. Thirty-four Addis Ababa residents participated in the study and revealed essential and interesting findings that I presented and elaborated in chapter four. The data were analyzed using the grounded theory approach with the aid of the Dedoose software. Four major themes emerged from the excerpts of the focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews. The observational notes are used to further explain and support the themes identified.

I used eleven focus groups and semi-structured questions to support explain the objectives of the study. The study included thirty-four adult and children participants. I used the Narrative-Empowerment theoretical framework to guide the research outcome and implications, and I applied the grounded theory methods for the data analysis process to create themes and sub-themes. Four themes emerged from the data: the perception of food insecurity, causes of food insecurity, the effect of food insecurity, and coping mechanisms.

Participants constructed their perception of the term "food insecurity" using their experience in the city. In Addis Ababa, food has created a persistent social inequality between the poor and the rich as food security is for the rich. Many families viewed food insecurity as a source of stress, worry and shame in their lives. These feelings often came from either parents' or caregivers' inability to adequately provide for their families or the fear that others would find out that they did not have food to eat at their homes. Children became disengaged, worried, and distracted from their school work because they often had to worry about when their next meal was coming. Lastly, participants discussed the failure to acquire a nutritious and balanced diet as a mark of living in food insecurity. Participants did not worry about the amount of food they ate but rather what they ate and when they ate food.

Narratives from participants also helped to identify six interrelated causes of food insecurity in the city. The number of people, particularly dependents, living in a household creates vulnerability for food insecurity. Disrupted harmonious family life and the absence of a parent or parents in the family are other leading factors in food insecurity. Grandparents play a significant role in keeping families together and raising children who were without parents. Some participants identified the low production of food, and the low supply of food in the city leads to an increased price of food, which ultimately affects families' capacity to acquire nutritious food consistently.

Similar to many other African urban centers, Addis Ababa is one of the growing urban areas where there is a massive influx of people moving from the rural and urban fringe areas of Ethiopia. In addition to low food production, the ongoing population growth has resulted in a dramatic increase in the price of food, the expansion of begging as an endeavour, increased unemployment and underemployment rates, and the establishment of squatter settlements.

Participants' stories indicated that migration not only affects the residents' nutritional status but even more, it leaves migrants prone to chronic food insecurity.

Both food security and insecurity have an impact on people's mental health and their emotional well-being. Consistent with previous studies both in Ethiopia and other parts of the world, mental and physical health are the crucial aspect of families' experience where food insecurity results in multiple negative concerns. The manifestation of the consequences of food insecurity appears as mild or severe physical illnesses or death or makes pre-existing diseases worse than they were. Excerpts from the semi-structured interviews, children's diagrams and focus group discussions showed that physical and mental health of family members are highly related to the identified causes of food insecurity. A significant indication of families' and individuals' mental and emotional well-being is their ability to stop worrying about food or means of accessing food constantly. Many people who identified as food insecure reported their emotional reactions to the process of acquiring a meal to be mostly negative emotions.

In this study, food insecure families spent most of their time worrying about food or means of accessing food. In addition to the existence of stress and worry, food insecurity caused signs of depression as reported by participants. This study did not explicitly assess participants' experience of depression or deliver any assessment tool for mental health implications of food insecurity. However, many participants used the terms depression, anxiety and distress while telling their narratives. Some participants used words and phrases that mimic signs of depression such as feelings of helplessness and hopelessness for a long period, isolation from social and communal life, and self-loathing and self-deprecation due to not fitting in the city. One participant reported her mother's diagnosis of mental illness and how it affected their family's nutritional status.

Living in *keij wedaf* (in a survival mode) is a phrase participants frequently used while stating the condition of their daily lives. Participants who identified themselves as living in a food insecure household reported that they spent most of their days thinking about, worrying about, searching for, or preparing food. The phrase was also meant to indicate that whatever the family earned for the day, most, if not all, went to provide for the day. That often left families and children vulnerable to homelessness, dropping out of school, unemployment, underemployment and severe physical and mental health problems. As the literature stated, families that have an educated household head (Christiaensen & Alderman, 2004; Wolde, 2010) will likely have access to higher income and will experience food security. On the other hand, when children do not go to school and start engaging in income-generating activities at a younger age to survive their food insecurity, they will be susceptible to chronic food insecurity and create intergenerational food insecurity.

Families in this study also narrated the various coping mechanisms they use to address their food problems. This study presented and discussed the coping strategies in two categories: accessing food and managing finances. For many families, finding food through the conventional market is not feasible. Therefore, they engage in behaviours such as begging, obtaining food from the city's landfill and skipping meals. Families also utilize seasonal food to meet their nutritional needs and budgeting. Many participants spoke positively about acquiring food from food aid from not-for-profit organizations. Food aid kept many families from engaging in begging or accessing food from the landfill while they were healing from illnesses, trying to start microfinance programs, going to school or taking care of their young children. Second, participants appropriated their finances and resources using various strategies to cope with food

insecurity. This study synthesizes the findings in categories of budgeting, eating cheaper staples, selling assets, buying food in bulk, and utilizing the *gulit* market.

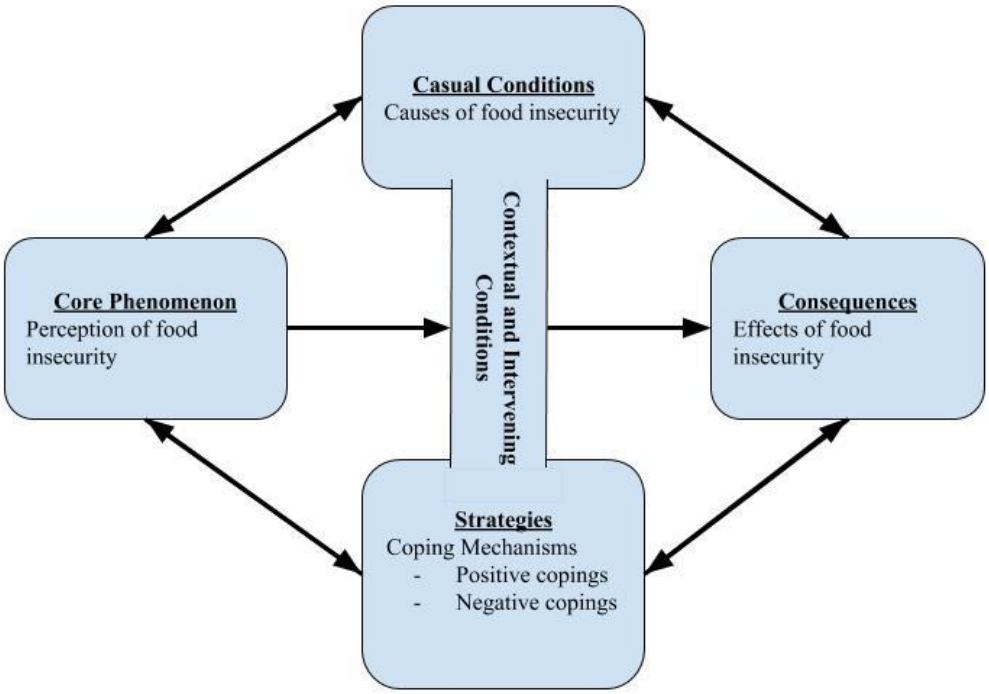


Figure 12: The intertwining of the themes

5.2. Limitation and Strength of the Research

In this section, I highlight some of the limitations and strengths of this study to provide readers with a contextual background.

This research was conducted during the *kiremt* (the rainy) season where families' activities and their access to food are highly influenced by the season. The limitation of conducting this research in one season affects the diversity and the depth of the findings. Utilizing the findings from this study needs to carefully consider these limitations. The rainy season also affected the process of the data collection. Five valuable semi-structured interviews were not included in the data analysis process because of failed audio recordings created by rain noise on the tin roof. This research would benefit from a broader, longer-term ethnographic study

that includes the other seasons. These limitations were instituted by financial constraints and the university's requirements.

In addition, as an individual who grew up in Addis Ababa and as a sole researcher in this study, my personal experiences and expectations may have contributed to the findings. However, growing up in the city and speaking the language enriched the findings of the study in many ways. This study puts importance on specific idioms, styles of expression, and style of telling stories to represent the experiences of the research participants. Even if the experience of food insecurity is a common feature of the city, the direct translation of the term food insecurity was difficult to understand for the majority of the participants. Translating the term using contextual words and examples helped participants to capture the meaning easily. Even though there was a time constraint for the data collection process, this study presents a fairly large sample size.

5.3. Implications of Findings

Even if the field of social work plays a vital frontline role in addressing problems similar to food insecurity, there is a scarcity of research available on food insecurity from the perspective of social workers. Social workers need to contribute to the dialogue of food insecurity on a macro level by transmitting families' and individuals' voices and experiences. Social workers have skills and mandates that promote changes in the current food insecurity conditions. As a social worker, in this study I included the voices of families in the food security discourse, along with the voices of many professions, to draw some social work and policy implications.

Families in Addis Ababa display strong resiliency despite their challenging experiences with food insecurity. Allowing the stories and experiences of families to come to the surface

provides insights into the extent of the problems and inspires directions which community partners could take to alleviate the problem.

This study contributes to the literature by filling an existing gap in a need for qualitative studies that unravel families' experiences in Addis Ababa using their narratives. By presenting the narratives and the daily experiences of participants, this research attempts to add a perspective to the existing literature. Creating an understanding of the day-to-day experiences of families in Addis Ababa can help researchers, community development workers, policymakers, and educators in the process of planning and implementing food security strategies. The process of giving voice and expounding the experiences of the families empowers families to have a voice on policies and programs and fits with the narrative-empowerment theory.

The results of this study have significant implications for the effort to tackle food insecurity in Addis Ababa. Creating a broader understanding of the connection between food insecurity, coping mechanisms and the mental, physical, and emotional consequences is essential for planning and delivering services in the various areas of Addis Ababa. Acknowledging families' and children's experiences and the adverse outcomes of food insecurity is foundational to targeting assistance to them. As part of the recognition of the experiences, social workers, community development workers, policymakers, and non-governmental organization leaders need to show care for the communities by respecting their cultural, social, and moral norms when providing support.

With consideration of the narrative-empowerment paradigm of this study, the implications for social work practice are to ensure families' food security through engaging families in the process of identifying the issues affecting them, finding solutions, and decision-making. These results can have direct implications mainly for the profession of social work and

social workers. One of the mandates of social workers is to work towards the "promotion of social change, problem-solving, and empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being" (IFSW, 2012). Taking on the challenge of changing the status quo of individual families in a society imposed by circumstances that are beyond their control, such as food insecurity, is part of social workers' professional responsibilities. The findings of this study fit with the social workers' role in empowering people by practicing ethical work and professional principles and guidelines. The International Federation of Social Workers provides relevant statements of ethical principles. The statements include the advancement of human rights and human dignity by "treating each person as a whole – social workers should be concerned with the whole person, within the family, community, societal and natural environments, and should seek to recognize all aspects of a person's life" (IFSW, 2012).

Food aid, in the form of providing food and other related assistance to help tackle hunger, in Ethiopia has been used as a necessary policy and strategy to address food insecurity. Even if the presence of food aid has not eradicated food insecurity in the country, still many families in Addis Ababa utilize food aid to maintain their well-being and to keep them from engaging in negative coping strategies. The narrative-empowerment theory is used as a theoretical framework to guide the findings of this study, and the results can be used to question and challenge the discourse around "dependency [syndrome] theory" (Matunhu, 2011). Dependency syndrome is characterized as a top-down approach to families coping via the utilization of food aid and humanitarian activities by assuming that the locals do not have the expertise and ability to fight their way out of their poverty (Siyoum, et al., 2012). The other assumption is that food aid brings behavioural and perception change in the poor because of the anticipation of aid (Matunhu, 2011, p. 69). Even if dependency syndrome is a controversial topic, the experiences of the families in

this study indicate that food aid plays an essential role in helping parents to invest their time and resources on their children instead of engaging in activities that are unsafe both for them and the children. Food aid, including in the form of free school meals, helps children to attend school regularly, focus on their studies, and ultimately become successful and independent. On a national level, food aid in the northern part of Ethiopia has served as a coping and recovery strategy for many families, rather than being an obstacle to a sustainable economic development (Little, 2008).

The first policy implication from this study that I want to put forward is for governmental and local and international non-governmental organizations to consider adopting a national school breakfast and lunch program where all children in school can have access to nutritious and adequate food regularly. Accessing food in school has multiple benefits. The provision of food for children in school encourages children to stay engaged in education. In 2001, after India's supreme court order making provision of a mid-day meal mandatory to all primary and upper primary school children (Right to food campaign, 2001), reports from schools showed that after the implementation of this policy, children had more energy and improved concentration in classes (Neil, 2011), and the policy "improved the school enrollment, increased attendance and raised nutrition levels among the children" (Chutani, 2012, p. 153). Children in Addis Ababa could benefit from accessing food in school.

The literature and findings from this study indicate that the urbanization and migration rates in Addis Ababa will continue to grow, leaving a larger demand for food in the future. Establishing and improving urban and urban-fringe agriculture can serve as a means of alleviating food insecurity problems in Addis Ababa. A study conducted by Zezza & Tasciotii (2010) discovered a strong association between urban agriculture and the availability and

diversity of food, which are closely related to ensuring food security (p. 271). Nugent (2000) outlines eight benefits of urban agriculture for families: "production for home consumption, income enhancement, economic crisis, high prices of market food, income or asset diversification, supplementary employment, conflict, and poor weather" (p. 74). The findings of this study explored unemployment and underemployment as part of families' experiences that lead to food insecurity. In addition to providing additional ways of accessing diverse food, urban agriculture can provide job creation and employment opportunities for many families. It also positively impacts the "efficiency of the urban food markets" many food insecure families rely on (Zezza & Tasciotii, 2010, 272).

5.4. Future Research Recommendation

This study attempted to capture the experiences of 35 families in Addis Ababa, but the time constraints and limitations of the study influenced its findings. However, this study could be developed in more depth by conducting the data collection and analysis over a more extended period during all seasons.

Participants narrated and discussed a wide range of circumstances and factors affecting their ability to become food secure. Due to the scope and the limitations of this study, some of these findings are not included in this research. In addition to what has recorded in the data, my interaction with the community through the focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and observational visits triggered different research questions and topics of interests that could be approached with qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method studies. These are some of the topics that could be further studied.

The first area of interest that I want to research is how do the current food markets and food supply chain management in Addis Ababa affect communities' access to preferable food?

For this question, I want to use a mixed method to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a clearer understanding of the realities. I want to conduct this study over the different seasons of a year to obtain a broader range of data that this study unable to address.

Secondly, I want to look specifically look at how does the *gulit* market contribute to food security? The utilization of the *gulit* market in Addis Ababa is one of the essential coping mechanisms participants in this study identified. I want to conduct a quantitative research method to understand how the *gulit* market can support the efforts to create sustainable food security in Addis Ababa.

In this study, several participants talked about their experiences of living and working in the Middle Eastern countries to support their families. Since the scope of this study limited to exploring the experiences of food insecurity for all Addis Ababa's residents, this study does not provide an in-depth look at their experiences. I want to answer what are the before, during, and after experiences of women who have worked in Middle Eastern countries? I want to conduct a qualitative study using case study to allow me to collect data from interviews and other means such as news publications, government documents, and international policies.

Learning about the experiences' of families and children in the Koshe community has left a profound interest in studying further on how do environmental stressors of living near and inside landfills in Addis Ababa impact families? I want to conduct community-based participatory research using photovoice as a methodology. Utilizing photovoice as a method can help to create a partnership with the community to show the stories, issues, and solutions that are important to them.

Appendices

Appendix A

Participant Consent Form for Semi-Structured Interview

Principal Investigator Elias Omer

Master of Social Work Candidate

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Supervisor: Dr. Magnus Mfoafo M'Carthy

Lyle s. Hallman faculty of Social Work

Wilfrid Laurier University

120 Duke Street

Kitchener, Ontario, N2H 3W8 Canada

Contact: mmfoafomcarthy@wlu.ca

Introduction

My name is Elias Omer. I am conducting research in the Addis Ababa community on the experiences of families with food insecurity and their coping mechanisms. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. If this consent form contains words that you do not understand, please ask me for further explanation. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to ask me.

Research purpose

The purpose of the study is to gather your families' experiences with food insecurity and the ways you cope with it. I want to learn about the extent of the problem and the areas of your life that have been affected by it. I want to learn about the type of action you took in your family to deal with past or present food problems. I want to learn what has worked and what has not worked in your attempts to move your family from food insecurity to food security. The results of this research will help to add to the knowledge of how to alleviate food insecurity problems in this community and other communities in other parts of the world.

Procedure

You are invited to meet with the researcher to participate in a focus group for a period of 60 to 90 minutes to answer questions about your understanding, history, and experiences with food insecurity. You will also be asked to talk about the type of action you took or are taking to cope with or alleviate food insecurity in your family. To capture the data accurately, the interviews and the conversations will be audiotaped and transcribed. Any identifying information such as names and addresses will be deleted. Quotations in the interview or discussions may be used in the final paper. You have the option to have direct quotations omitted from the final report. The questions will be in these areas of focus:

- The extent and nature of food insecurity
- How food insecurity affects a family's well-being
- Families' coping mechanisms
- Families' judgment, attitudes, preferences, priorities, and perceptions about food insecurity

Potential benefits and risks

The results of the study will be used to enhance the professional understanding of social workers and other community partners who work in the field of food security. There is limited literature related to the Addis Ababa community addressing the issue of food insecurity.

You may request for the interview to be in your choice of location. If your location does not provide a confidential setting, others may listen to part or all of the interview. I want you to feel fully comfortable with the situation before we start the interview.

I want to inform you that inviting me into your residence may lead you to be vulnerable to negative gossip and stigmatization by the community. I want to give you the option of meeting in a public and safe place. I want to make sure you are completely comfortable with the place you choose to have the interview.

Some of the questions in this interview may trigger negative feelings and cause you discomfort. As we discuss the topic you may recall traumatic events related to food insecurity. During the interview, I will make sure to be aware of the symptoms of discomfort in you with the topic and allow you to take a break and make sure you are safe at all times. I will avoid questions that can activate such memories during the interview. I will also provide you with community-based resources that could be helpful.

Compensation

There will a small gift for your participation the interview. The small gifts may include school supplies, food, or other materials to thank you for your time and effort.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality is very important to us and every effort will be made to maintain your confidentiality during the interview. All information identifying you that is provided during

the course of the interview will be deleted during the course of the study. The information you provide in this study is confidential with the following exceptions:

1) if you disclose a plan or desire to harm yourself or someone else;

2) if you disclose a situation in which a child is being abused or neglected.

In any of these situations, the researcher may offer to make a referral for an assessment or counseling. As a participant, you have the right to make a request to review, erase or edit your part of the transcript of the interview. All the tapes will be erased after the discussions have been transcribed. Upon request, a copy of the transcript could be sent to you. Quotations from the interview may be used; however, you will not be identified in any of the quotations. Additionally, you may choose to have your direct quotations omitted from the final report. Participants in the study will be assigned codes or pseudonyms so they cannot be identified. All information gathered, including contact information, will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet and the researcher will be the only person with access to the information. The data collected will be kept indefinitely for the use of further studies. All electronic information will be stored in password-protected files on a secure computer and all the information will be destroyed after seven years by the researcher. The audio recordings will be deleted by the researcher after transcription and translation, no more than three (3) months after the interview.

Participation and withdrawal

You have the right to agree or disagree to participate in this interview. On agreeing to be a part of this study, you have the right to withdraw at any time without consequences, and information provided prior to withdrawing will be destroyed. Also, you have the right to either answer or decline to answer any questions.

Dissemination of findings

The research findings of this study will be published in professional journals and presented at conferences and forums in the community. The data will be presented in aggregate presentation. During the data cleaning process, we will remove all of your identifying information and you will not be identified in the process of dissemination. At your request, the researcher will ensure that a summary of the findings will be made available to you.

Agreement to participate

I, _____ have read the information sheet for the study named "the experiences of families in the Addis Ababa community with food insecurity and their coping mechanisms". The purpose of the study is to gather my family's experiences with food insecurity and the ways we cope with it. I am aware that that the interview will require audiotaping and observations. All questions/concerns I have regarding this study have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I do not waive any of my rights.

If you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Robert Basso PHD chair research ethics board, Wilfrid Laurier University at rbasso@wlu.Ca or 11-519-884-0710 ext. 4994

I agree to have my quotations included in the final report.

Yes _____ no_____

Yes _____ no_____

If yes, please provide your contact information.

I want to review my quotations before they are included in the final report.

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

I would like to receive a copy of the final report.

Yes _____ no_____

If yes, please provide your contact information.

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

I agree to participate in this study.

Participant

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher(s)

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Participant Consent Form for Focus Group

Principal Investigator Elias Omer

Master of Social Work Candidate

Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work

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120 Duke Street

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+1 226 749 1518

Supervisor: Dr. Magnus Mfoafo M'Carthy

Lyle s. Hallman Faculty of Social Work

Wilfrid Laurier University

120 Duke Street

Kitchener, Ontario, N2H 3W8 Canada

Contact: mmfoafomcarthy@wlu.ca

Introduction

My name is Elias Omer. I am conducting research in the Addis Ababa community on the experiences of families with food insecurity and their coping mechanisms. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. If this consent form contains words that you do not understand, please ask me for further explanation. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to ask me.

Research purpose

The purpose of the study is to gather your families' experiences with food insecurity and the ways you cope with it. I want to learn about the extent of the problem and the areas of your life that have been affected by it. I want to learn about the type of action you took in your family to deal with past or present food problems. I want to learn what has worked and what has not worked in your attempts to move your family from food insecurity to food security. The results of this research will help to add to the knowledge of how to alleviate food insecurity problems in this community and other communities in other parts of the world.

Procedure

You are invited to meet with the researcher to participate in a focus group for a period of 90 to 120 minutes to answer questions about your understanding, history, and experiences with food insecurity. You will also be asked to talk about the type of action you took or are taking to cope with or alleviate food insecurity in your family. To capture the data accurately, the interviews and the conversations will be audiotaped and transcribed. Any identifying information such as names and addresses will be deleted. Quotations in the discussions may be used in the final paper. You have the option to have direct quotations omitted from the final report. The questions will be in these areas of focus:

- The extent and nature of food insecurity
- How food insecurity affects a family's well-being
- Families' coping mechanisms
- Families' judgment, attitudes, preferences, priorities, and perceptions about food insecurity

Potential benefits and risks

The results of the study will be used to enhance the professional understanding of social workers and other community partners who work in the field of food security. There is limited literature related to the Addis Ababa community addressing the issue of food insecurity.

You may request for the interview to be in your choice of location. If your location does not provide a confidential setting, others may listen to part or all of the interview. I want you to feel fully comfortable with the situation before we start the interview.

I want to inform you that inviting me into your residence may lead you to be vulnerable to negative gossip and stigmatization by the community. I want to give you the option of meeting in a public and safe place. I want to make sure you are completely comfortable with the place you choose to have the interview.

Some of the questions in this interview may trigger negative feelings and cause you discomfort. As we discuss the topic you may recall traumatic events related to food insecurity. During the interview, I will make sure to be aware of the symptoms of discomfort in you with the topic and allow you to take a break and make sure you are safe at all times. I will avoid questions that can activate such memories during the interview. I will also provide you with community-based resources that could be helpful.

Compensation

There will a small gift for your participation the interview. The small gifts may include school supplies, food, or other materials to thank you for your time and effort.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality is very important to us and every effort will be made to maintain your confidentiality during the interview. All information identifying you that is provided during

the course of the interview will be deleted during the course of the study. The information you provide in this study is confidential with the following exceptions:

1) if you disclose a plan or desire to harm yourself or someone else;

2) if you disclose a situation in which a child is being abused or neglected.

In any of these situations, the researcher may offer to make a referral for an assessment or counseling. As a participant, you have the right to make a request to review, erase or edit your part of the transcript of the interview. All the tapes will be erased after the discussions have been transcribed. Upon request, a copy of the transcript could be sent to you. Quotations from the interview may be used; however, you will not be identified in any of the quotations. Additionally, you may choose to have your direct quotations omitted from the final report. Participants in the study will be assigned codes or pseudonyms so they cannot be identified. All information gathered, including contact information, will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet and the researcher will be the only person with access to the information. The data collected will be kept indefinitely for the use of further studies. All electronic information will be stored in password-protected files on a secure computer and all the information will be destroyed after seven years by the researcher. The audio recordings will be deleted by the researcher after transcription and translation, no more than three (3) months after the interview.

Participation and withdrawal

You have the right to agree or disagree to participate in this interview. On agreeing to be a part of this study, you have the right to withdraw at any time without consequences, and information provided prior to withdrawing will be destroyed. Also, you have the right to either answer or decline to answer any questions.

Dissemination of findings

The research findings of this study will be published in professional journals and presented at conferences and forums in the community. The data will be presented in aggregate presentation. During the data cleaning process, we will remove all of your identifying information and you will not be identified in the process of dissemination. At your request, the researcher will ensure that a summary of the findings will be made available to you.

Agreement to participate

I, _____ have read the information sheet for the study named "the experiences of families in the Addis Ababa community with food insecurity and their coping mechanisms". The purpose of the study is to gather my family's experiences with food insecurity and the ways we cope with it. I am aware that that the interview will require audiotaping and observations. All questions/concerns I have regarding this study have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I do not waive any of my rights.

If you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Robert Basso PHD chair research ethics board, Wilfrid Laurier University at rbasso@wlu.ca or +1-519-884-0710 ext. 4994

I agree to have my quotations included in the final report.

Yes _____ no_____

Yes _____ no_____

I want to review my quotations before they are included in the final report.

If yes, please provide your contact information.

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

I would like to receive a copy of the final report.

Yes _____ no_____

If yes, please provide your contact information.

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

I agree to participate in this study.

Participant

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher(s)

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Oral Consent Text – Semi-Structured Interview

Date _____

Dear _____

My name is Elias Omer. I am conducting research in the city of Addis Ababa on the experiences of families with food insecurity and their coping mechanisms. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. If this consent information contains words that you do not understand, please ask me for further explanation. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to ask me for an explanation or to read the information again.

My research supervisor's information is

Dr. Magnus Mfoafo M'Carthy.

Lyle s. Hallman Faculty of Social Work

Wilfrid Laurier University

120 duke street

Kitchener, Ontario, N2H 3W8 Canada

Contact: mmfoafomcarthy@wlu.ca

Research purpose

The purpose of the study is to gather your families' experiences with food insecurity and the ways you cope with it. I want to learn about the extent of the problem and the areas of your life that have been affected by it. I want to learn about the type of action you took in your family to deal with the past or present food problems. I want to learn what has worked and what has not worked in your attempts to move your family

from food insecurity to food security. The results of this research will help to add to the knowledge of how to alleviate food insecurity problems in this community and other communities in other parts of the world.

Procedure

You are invited to meet with the researcher to participate in an interview for a period of 60 to 90 minutes to answer questions about your understanding, history, and experiences with food insecurity. You will also be asked to talk about the type of action you took or are taking to cope with or alleviate food insecurity in your family. To capture the data accurately, the interviews and the conversations will be audiotaped and transcribed. Any identifying information such as names and addresses will be deleted. Quotations in the interview or discussions may be used in the final paper. You have the option to have direct quotations omitted from the final report. The questions will be in these areas of focus:

- The extent and nature of food insecurity
- How food insecurity affects a family's well-being
- Families' coping mechanisms
- Families' judgment, attitudes, preferences, priorities, and perceptions about food insecurity

Potential benefits and risks

The results of the study will be used to enhance the professional understanding of social workers and other community partners who work in the field of food security. There is limited literature related to the city of Addis Ababa's community addressing the issue of food insecurity.

You may request for the interview to be in your choice of location. If your location does not provide a confidential setting other may listen to part or all of the interview. I want you to feel fully comfortable with the situation before we start the interview.

If you are female participant, i want to inform you that in Ethiopia culture when if you are a female participant, i want to inform you that in Ethiopian culture when a female invites a male individual who is a stranger into their residence it is considered to be inappropriate behaviour and it may lead you to be vulnerable to negative gossip and stigmatization by the community. I want to give you the option of meeting in a public and safe place. I want to make sure you are completely comfortable with the place you chose to have the interview.

Some of the question in this interview may trigger negative feelings on you and cause you discomfort to participate. As we discuss the topic you may recall traumatic events related to food insecurity. During the interview, i will make sure to be aware of the symptoms of discomfort in you with the topic and allow you to take a break and make sure you are safe at all times. I will void questions that can activate such mamoties during the interview. I will also provide you with a community-based resources that could be helpful.

Compensation

There will a small gift for your participation the interview. There will not be a compensation in forms of money, but the small gifts may include school supplies, food, or other materials to thank you for your time and effort.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality is very important to us and every effort will be made to maintain your confidentiality during the interview. All information identifying you that is provided during the course of the interview will be deleted during the course of the study. The information you provide in this study is confidential with the following exceptions:

1) If you disclose a plan or desire to harm yourself or someone else;

2) If you disclose a situation in which a child is being abused or neglected.

In any of these situations, the researcher may offer to make a referral for an assessment or counseling. As a participant, you have the right to make a request to review, erase or edit your part of the transcript of the focus group discussion. All the tapes will be erased after the discussions have been transcribed. Upon request, a copy of the transcript could be sent to you. Quotations from the interview may be used; however, you will not be identified in any of the quotations. Additionally, you may choose to have your direct quotations omitted from the final report. Participants in the study will be assigned codes or pseudonyms so they cannot be identified. All information gathered, including contact information, will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet and the researcher will be the only person with access to the information. The data collected will be kept indefinitely for the use of further studies. All electronic information will be stored in password-protected files on a secure computer and all the information will be destroyed after seven years by the researcher. The audio recordings will be deleted by the researcher after transcription and translation, no more than three months after the interview.

Participation and withdrawal

You have the right to agree or disagree to participate in this interview. On agreeing to be a part of this study, you have the right to withdraw at any time without consequences, and information provided prior to withdrawing will be destroyed. Also, you have the right to either answer or decline to answer any questions.

Dissemination of findings

The research findings of this study will be published in professional journals and presented at conferences and forums in the community. The data will be presented in aggregate presentation. During the data cleaning process, we will remove all of your identifying information and you will not be identified in the process of dissemination. At your request, the researcher will ensure that a summary of the findings will be made available to you.

Agreement to participate

I, _____ have heard the information sheet for the study named "the experiences of families in the city of Addis Ababa with food insecurity and their coping mechanisms". The purpose of the study is to gather my family's experiences with food insecurity and the ways we cope with it. I am aware that that the interview will require audiotaping and observations. All questions/concerns I have regarding this study have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I do not waive any of my rights.

If you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Robert Basso PhD chair research ethics board, Wilfrid Laurier University at rbasso@wlu.ca or 11-519-884-0710 ext. 4994

I agree to have my quotations included in the final report.

Yes _____ no_____

I want to review my quotations before they are included in the final report.

Yes _____ no_____

If yes, please provide your contact information.

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Appendix D

Oral Consent Text – Focus Group

Date _____

Dear _____

Introduction

My name is Elias Omer. I am conducting research in the city of Addis Ababa on the experiences of families with food insecurity and their coping mechanisms. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. If this consent form contains words that you do not understand, please ask me for further explanation. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to ask me for an explanation or to read the information again.

My research supervisor's information is Dr. Magnus Mfoafo M'Carthy.

Lyle s. Hallman Faculty of Social Work

Wilfrid Laurier University

120 duke street

Kitchener, Ontario, N2H 3W8 Canada

Contact: mmfoafomcarthy@wlu.ca

Research purpose

The purpose of the study is to gather your families' experiences with food insecurity and the ways you cope with it. I want to learn about the extent of the problem and the areas of your life that have been affected by it. I want to learn about the type of action you took in your family to deal with the past or present food problems. I want to

learn what has worked and what has not worked in your attempts to move your family from food insecurity to food security. The results of this research will help to add to the knowledge of how to alleviate food insecurity problems in this community and other communities in other parts of the world.

Procedure

You are invited to meet with the researcher and/or participate in a focus group for a period of 90 to 120 minutes to answer questions about your understanding, history, and experiences with food insecurity. You will also be asked to talk about the type of action you took or are taking to cope with or alleviate food insecurity in your family. To capture the data accurately, the focus group discussion will be audiotaped and transcribed. Any identifying information such as names and addresses will be deleted. Quotations in the interview or discussions may be used in the final paper. You have the option to have direct quotations omitted from the final report. The focus group's questions will be in these areas of focus:

- the extent and nature of food insecurity
- how food insecurity affects a family's well-being
- families' coping mechanisms
- families' judgment, attitudes, preferences, priorities, and perceptions about food insecurity

Potential benefits and risks

The results of the study will be used to enhance the professional understanding of social workers and other community partners who work in the field of food security.

There is limited literature related to the city of Addis Ababa addressing the issue of food insecurity.

Some of the question in this focus group discussion may trigger negative feelings on you and cause you discomfort to patriciate. As we discuss the topic in group you may recall traumatic events related to food insecurity. During the focus group, i will make sure to be aware of the symptoms of discomfort in you with the topic and allow you to take a break and make sure you are safe at all times. I will avoid questions that can activate such memories during they interview. I will also provide you with a community-based resources that could be helpful.

Compensation

There will a small gift for your participation the interview. There will not be a compensation in forms of money, but the small gifts may include school supplies, food, or other materials to thank you for your time and effort.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality is very important to us and every effort will be made to maintain your confidentiality during the interview. All information identifying you that is provided during the course of the interview will be deleted during the course of the study. The information you provide in this study is confidential with the following exceptions:

1) if you disclose a plan or desire to harm yourself or someone else;

2) if you disclose a situation in which a child is being abused or neglected.

In any of these situations, the researcher may offer to make a referral for an assessment or counseling. As a participant, you have the right to make a request to review, erase or edit your part of the transcript of the focus group discussion. All the

tapes will be erased after the discussions have been transcribed. Upon request, a copy of the transcript could be sent to you. Quotations from the interview may be used; however, you will not be identified in any of the quotations. Additionally, you may choose to have your direct quotations omitted from the final report. Participants in the study will be assigned codes or pseudonyms so they cannot be identified. All information gathered, including contact information, will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet and the researcher will be the only person with access to the information. The data collected will be kept indefinitely for the use of further studies. All electronic information will be stored in password-protected files on a secure computer and all the information will be destroyed after seven years by the researcher. The audio recordings will be deleted by the researcher after transcription and translation, no more than three months after the interview.

Participation and withdrawal

You have the right to agree or disagree to participate in this interview. On agreeing to be a part of this study, you have the right to withdraw at any time without consequences, and information provided prior to withdrawing will be destroyed. Also, you have the right to either answer or decline to answer any questions.

Dissemination of findings

The research findings of this study will be published in professional journals and presented at conferences and forums in the community. The data will be presented in aggregate presentation. During the data cleaning process, we will remove all of your identifying information and you will not be identified in the process of dissemination. At

your request, the researcher will ensure that a summary of the findings will be made available to you.

Agreement to participate

I, _____ have read the information sheet for the study named “the experiences of families in the city of Addis Ababa with food insecurity and their coping mechanisms”. The purpose of the study is to gather my family’s and community’s experiences with food insecurity and the ways we cope with it. I am aware that that the focus group discussions will require audiotaping and observations. All questions/concerns i have regarding this study have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, i do not waive any of my rights.

If you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Robert Basso PHD chair research ethics board, Wilfrid Laurier University at rbasso@wlu.ca or 11-519-884-0710 ext. 4994

I agree to have my quotations included in the final report.

Yes _____ no_____

I want to review my quotations before they are included in the final report.

Yes _____ no_____

If yes, please provide your contact information.

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Appendix E

Focus Group Members Confidentiality Agreement

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group to discuss your experiences with food and food security. During this focus group discussion your experience and story will be known to other focus group participants and you will also get to know the experiences of others in the group. The researcher cannot guarantee that others in these groups will keep the confidentiality. You are asked to sign below to indicate that you will keep all comments made during the focus group confidential and not discuss what happened during the focus group outside of this meeting.

I, _____hereby agree to maintain the confidentiality of information disclosed during focus group discussions.

Signiture _____

Date _____

Appendix F

Observation form

Date:	Place:
Type of Data:	Start: End:
Space (layout of the physical setting; rooms, outdoor spaces, etc.)	
Actors (the relevant details of the people involved)	
Activities (the various activities of the actors)	
Objectives (physical elements: cooking supplies, furniture, etc.)	
Act (specific individual action)	

Events (particular occasions: meeting, celebrations, etc)
Time (the sequence of the event)
Goals (what actors are attempting to accomplish)
Feelings (emotions in particular context)

Appendix G

Recruitment Letter

Dear _____

I am asking for your participation in a study around the topic of food security with Elias Omer, a student from Wilfrid Laurier university. Elias is conducting this study as part of his Masters program in the School of Social Work and he would like to request your participation in a 60 minute interview about your and your family's experiences with food security and about how you have coped with those experiences.

The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of families with food insecurity in the community. Knowledge and information generated from this study may help us to understand the realities of food insecurity in our community and may help us and organizations like us to improve the services we provide. The study may also be used by other researchers to further their study and to shape some food policies and strategies in the community.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You make your own independent decision as to whether or not you would like to be involved. You will be informed and reminded of your right to participate or withdraw before any interview, or at any time in the study, as well as be given an informed consent form.

To support the findings of this study, quotations and excerpts from the stories will be used, labelled with pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participant. The study has been reviewed and has received ethics clearance through the Wilfrid Laurier University

research ethics committee. However, the final decision about participation belongs to you.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information in the process of this study, please contact me at this telephone number +251911652705

Thank you,

Appendix H

The Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Make sure the environment is comfortable, confidential, safe, and accessible to all participants. Preferably conduct the interview in the participant's own environment.

- How are you doing today?

- Thanks/appreciation

- Explaining the research/consent

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself…?

Background Information

Age_____

Gender_____

Length of time living in Addis Ababa _____

Marital Status _____

Educational Level _____

Other formal or informal trainings/workshops attended _____

Employment _____

Size of family _____

Who lives at home? (children, extended family members, adopted or fostered children)

_____

Do your children go to school? If yes, what grades are they in?

_____

Do you have children that do not reside with you? _____

1. Can you tell me about your understanding of food security? How does or has it affected you and your family?
2. How do you describe your family's current nutritional condition?
3. Tell me about the last time you struggled to provide adequate and nutritious food for your family? How did you cope?
4. Tell me about the last time you or someone in your household had to skip a meal because there wasn't enough food. Tell me the whole story from start to finish. What about the time before that?
5. How has food insecurity affected your family's well-being?
6. If you have ever accessed food aid from governmental or nongovernmental sources, how has it helped you or not helped you cope with your family's food problems.
7. Tell me about the last time you ran short on what you needed to get food. How did you cope? How about the time before that? What do you typically do when access to adequate and nutritious food is difficult?
8. Think about this week. What type of food did you prepare? Who ate adequate food in your family? Tell me about anyone who had a meal somewhere else (for example, at school or ate out) or did not have a meal at all.
9. What type of food do you frequently prepare in your family? How do you prepare your meals? What are the ingredients you use?
10. How do your meal preparation skills contribute to your food security?
11. What does your family's food security look like in various seasons of the year - in *kiremt* and *bega* (rainy season and dry season)?

12. How does your participation in communal food preparation or access influence your security programs: for example, urban agriculture, community shared kitchen, use of community food market (*wefcho bet*).

Appendix I

Focus Group Guide

Make sure the environment is comfortable, confidential, safe, and accessible to all participants. Preferably conduct the interview in the participant's own environment.

- how are you doing today?

- thanks/appreciation

- explaining the research/consent

- can you tell me a bit about yourself…?

Background information

Age_____

Gender_____

Length of time living in Addis Ababa _____

Marital status _____

Educational level _____

Other formal or informal trainings/workshops attended _____

Employment _____

Size of family _____

Who lives at home? (children, extended family members, adopted or fostered children)

_____

Do your children go to school? If yes, what grades are they in? _____

Do you have children that do not reside with you? _____

1. What are the types of food you love to prepare?
2. What does it mean to be food insecure for you?

3. How have you witnessed or experienced food insecurity in your community?
4. What are other factors or situations that affect the well-being of your family?
5. What food items do you purchase the most and what are the reasons? What types of food do you often prepare and to what types of food do you give priority when shopping?
6. Think about a time where you felt you were food secure. What are the situations and conditions that brought a sense of food security?
7. What types of things do you do in your family that others in your community don't do to help you cope with food insecurity?
8. In your family today, what opportunities do you have that you are taking advantage of to minimize food-related problems?
9. What types of strengths, skills, insights and abilities do you have in your family that enable you to enhance food security?
10. From all the things we discussed today, what is the most important?
11. Suppose that you had an opportunity to speak to the mayor of Addis Ababa for one minute about food security in your family. What would you say?

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