

A System, Networks, and Human-Centered Design Approach to Assessing the Resilience of Ethiopian Communities Experiencing Recurring Violent Conflict Shocks

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Objective and Need for Research

- To co-design a framework for assessing community resilience with communities that are facing recurring and compounding shocks
 - With focus on assessing

A complex **system** of conflict and other **shocks** as well as vulnerability factors

(Research Question 1)

Community level **components** and **connections** showing strengths and weaknesses in responding to shocks

(Research Question 2)

Current **capacities** for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution

(Research Question 3)

Differentiated by **gender, age, and social groups**

Value-Add of a Networks, Systems, and Human-Centered Approach

A complex **system** of conflict and other **shocks** as well as vulnerability factors
(Research Question 1)

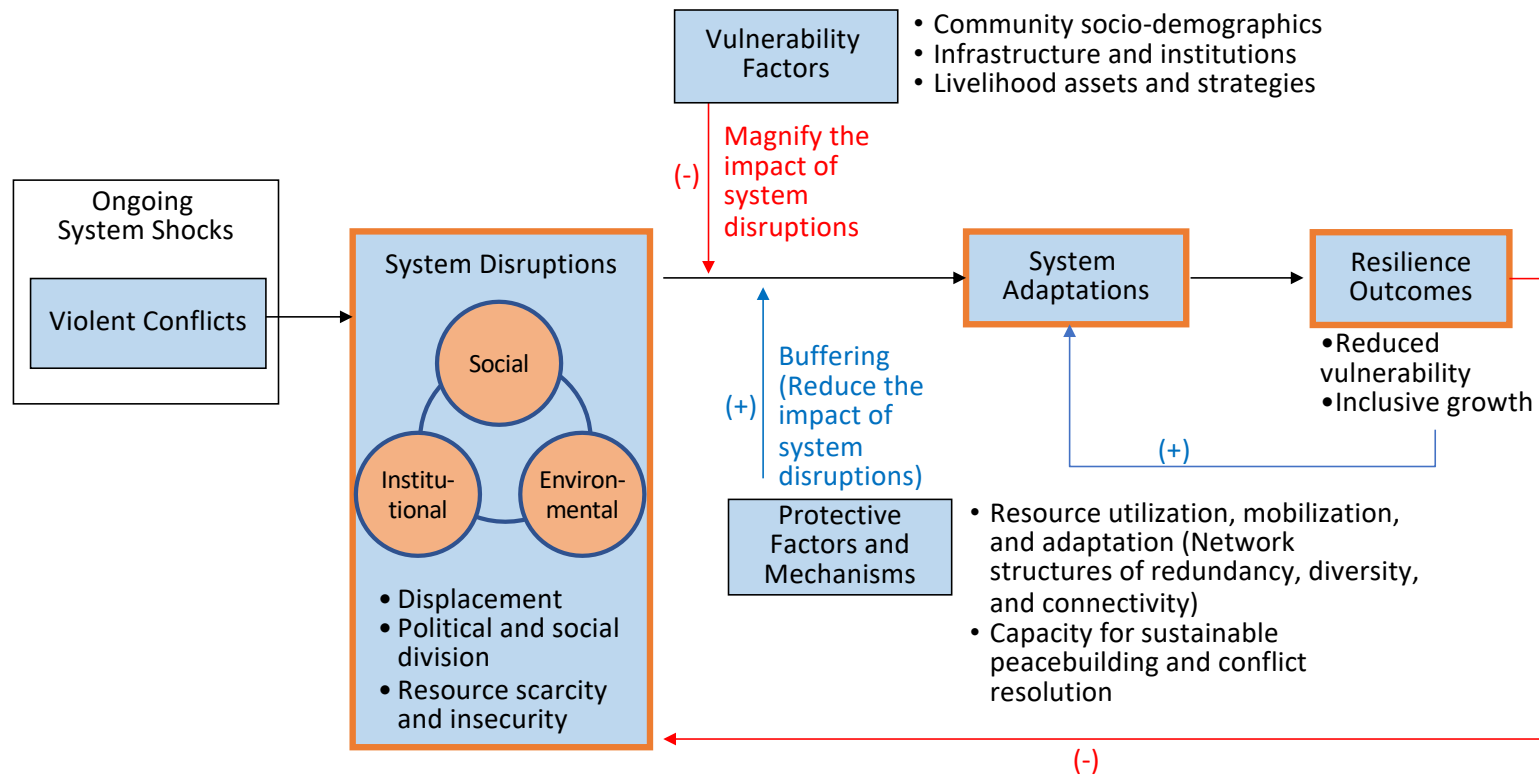
Community level **components** and **connections** showing strengths and weaknesses in responding to shocks
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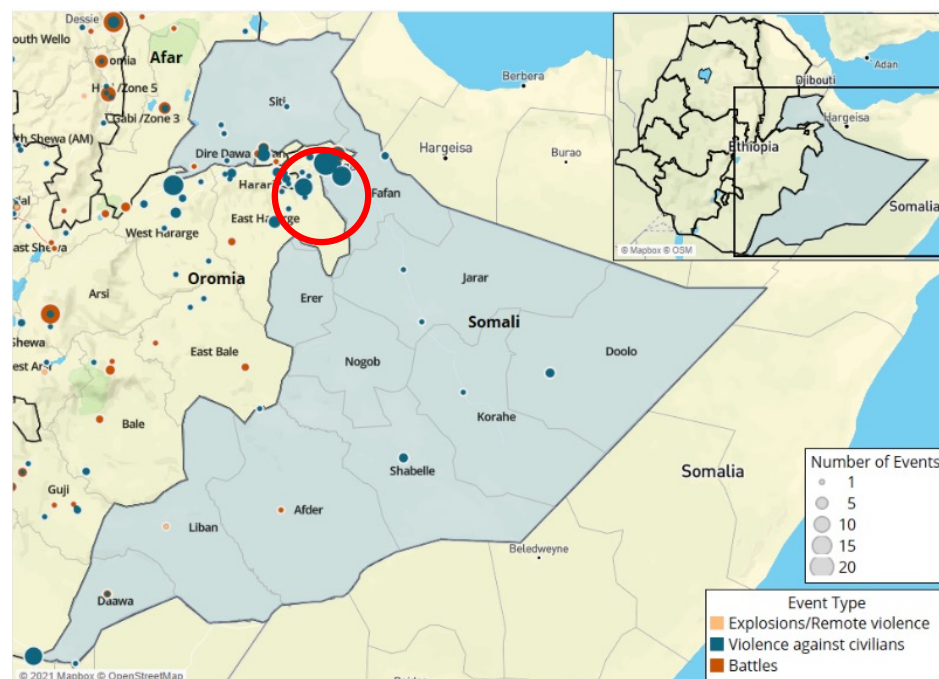
- Encourages us to attend to the patterns of connectedness among human and nonhuman system components
- Reveals structures of connectivity in multiple domains
 - Presence of influential, isolated, and marginalized groups
 - The position of informal and formal institutions
 - Dependence and overdependence on resources
- Helps us understand how some aspects of resilience capacities may compete with each other

Our Framework for Resilience Processes to Violent Conflict Shocks



Babile and Gursum Woredas in Somali Region

- Somali region has experienced recurring intercommunal conflict shocks
- Ecological shocks such as drought have impacted the local livelihoods and vulnerability in the region
- ACPA has built strong relationships in the Somali region and is trusted by local residents



Political violence in Somali region (April 2018-April 2021)

Source: Ethiopia Peace Observatory, <https://epo.acleddata.com/somali/>

Our Overall Storyline

- The conflict ecosystem in the Somali region is complex and dynamic. It is related to many factors.
- These communities have developed their own systems and methods for being resilient.
- Our research findings reveal a locally driven resilience system that is grounded in a web of local (community level) relationships.

Our Overall Storyline

- Our research findings underscore that frameworks for assessing community resilience to recurring violent conflict (the purpose of our study) should consider the nature of local relationships in the community as well as the diverse ways in which women and men, youth and elders, act.
- Results from the research have implications for
 - What we know about community resilience
 - Future programming related to resilience, peacebuilding, and other areas.

Overview of Research Implementation to Date

- Collected, organized, and analyzed secondary data
- Completed fieldwork in Babile and Gursum woredas
 - Wave 1 Co-construction Focus Groups (May 2022)
 - Key Informant Interviews (May 2022)
 - Wave 2 Focus Group data collection (June 2022; $n = 12$; 8 to 15 participants in each group)
 - Wave 3 Individual survey data collection (December 2022; $n = 750$)

Methodology

- 12 focus group discussions (FGDs)
 - 3 men groups; 5 women groups; 2 elder groups; 1 youth group; 1 women & men group
 - Translated and transcribed audio recordings
 - Conducted both an inductive thematic analysis and a deductive, theoretically-driven qualitative content analysis
- 750 paper-pencil surveys in English
 - Questionnaire items informed by literature and FGD data
 - Trained Somali and English-speaking enumerators
 - Entered and cleaned data
 - Conducted preliminary descriptive analyses



Source:
Livia Rohrbach, June
2022



Source:
Gary Burniske,
Dec. 2022

Questions and Measures

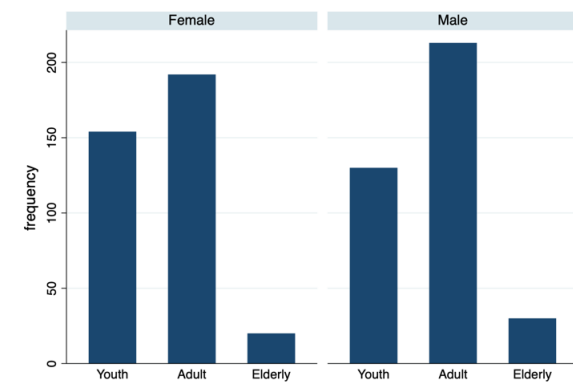
- Focus Group Discussion
 - Groups that make up your community
 - Things that unite and disunite your community
 - Tensions that happened in your community and have been resolved
 - Actors and resources in the resolution of the conflict
 - Connectivity among social actors (e.g., agreement, competition, trust)
- Survey
 - Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics
 - Trust toward social groups
 - Conflict shocks and other shocks experienced in 2021 and 2022
 - Perception of community resources: importance, sufficiency, alternatives
 - People or groups who provide social support

Survey Participant Demographics

Kebeles in Babile	# of Participants	Kebeles in Gursum	# of Participants
Aanod	131	Barakale	41
Dawrato	23	Bombas	31
Dendema	99	Dhagahle	92
Elbahay	143	Dhake	48
Elgari	2	Fafan	83
Hassan Guraje	19	Halahago	37
Lenja	1		
	418 Total		332 Total

- **Age:** Mean = 38.4; Range 17-100
- **Gender:** 366 Female, 373 Male
- **Marital status:** 576 Married
76 Divorced/separated,
16 Widowed,
79 Single

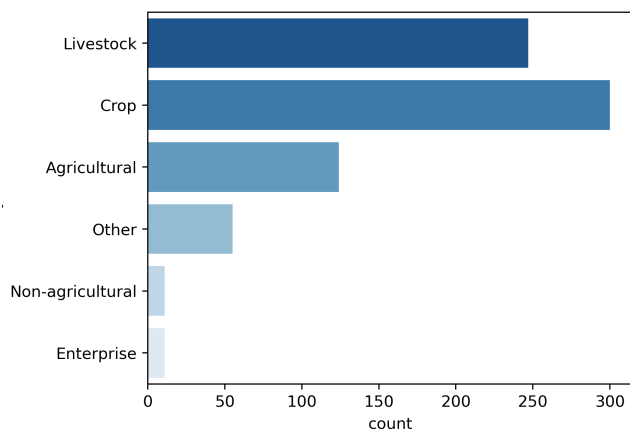
Age group by gender



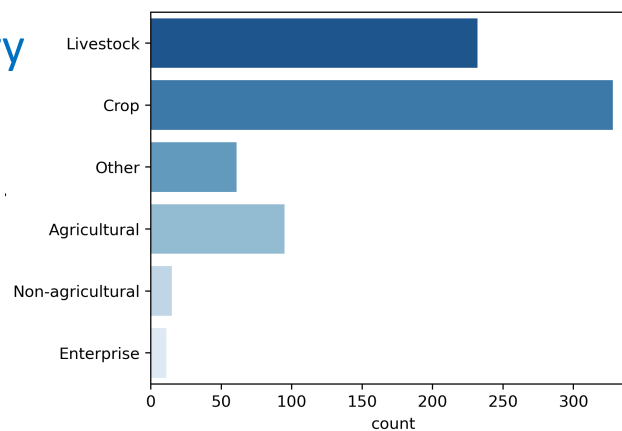
Survey Participant Demographics

Primary profession: 388 Farmer, 142 Agropastoralist, 106 Pastoralist, 58 Trader

Primary income



Secondary income



Residency: 536 Host community, 186 IDP members, 17 Pastoralist

In our proposal: A community includes a combination of ethnicity, gender and age subgroups who are exposed to both common and differing shocks and stressors (Bujones et al., 2013)

How we “hear” our participants talking about “community”

- Community is made up of *different* groups: men & women; youth & elders; multiple social groups
- Community has an element of *sameness*: common faith, values, and social services
- Community is talked about as *a web of relationships*, which are activated during conflict
 - “*We are not a people that can live without each other*” (FGD 5 participant)
 - Perceptions of “brotherhood” and “sisterhood” (multiple FGDs)
 - When relationships are not activated, conflict ensues (i.e., “private” feelings toward land ownership vs. “communal” ones)

A complex **system** of conflict and other **shocks** as well as vulnerability factors
(Research Question 1)

Community level **components** and **connections** showing strengths and weaknesses in responding to shocks
(Research Question 2)

Current **capacities** for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution
(Research Question 3)

Differentiated by **gender, age, and social groups**

Research Question 1

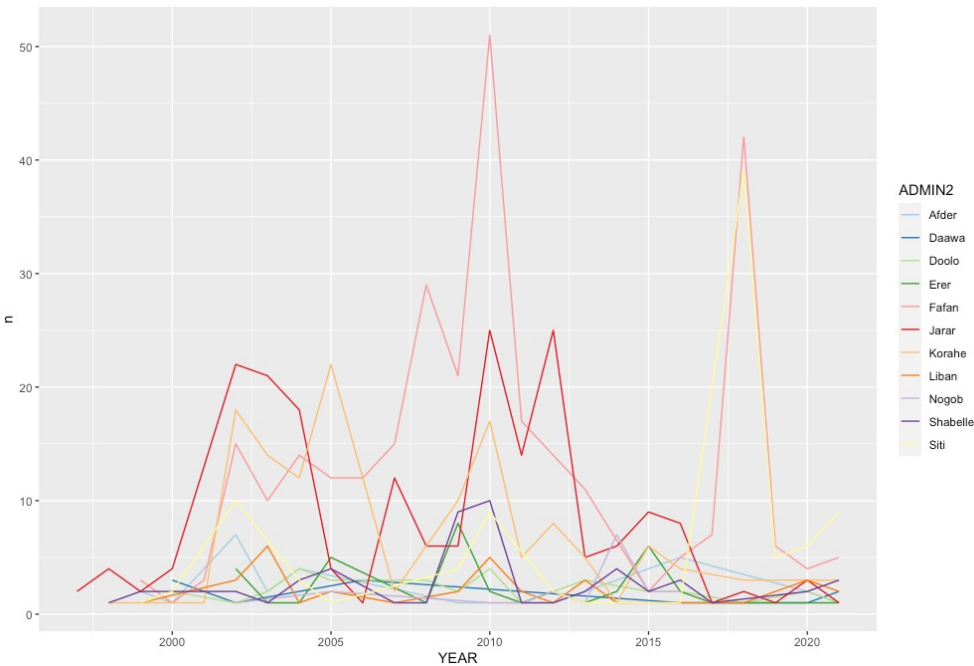
- What shapes Somali communities' response to violent conflict shocks?
 - 1a. In what way are violent conflict shocks interwoven with other shocks in the community? How are these shocks and interdependencies perceived and experienced by different gender and demographic groups?
 - 1b. What are the community-level vulnerability factors in facing violent conflict shocks?

Storyline: An interdependent system of shocks (e.g., drought, conflict) that community members respond to with local resources and capacities

Conflict Shocks in Somali Region Shown in Secondary Data

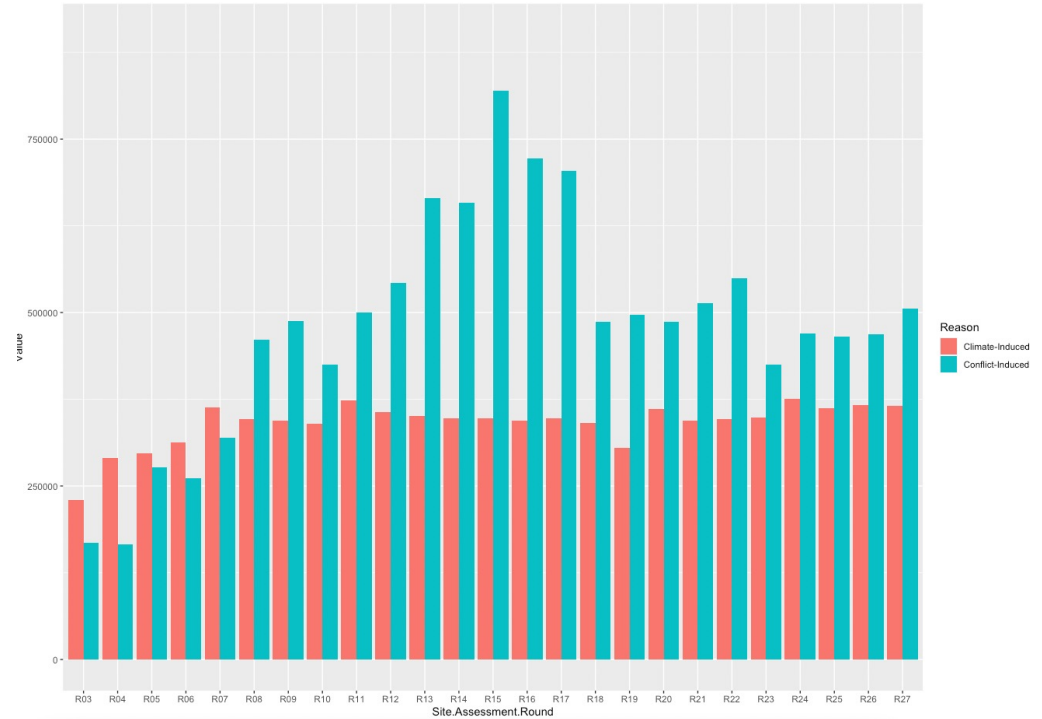
Number of political violence, protests, and conflict events

Reported Conflict by Year in Somali region



Source: Ethiopia Peace Observatory <https://epo.acleddata.com>

Number of conflict-induced and climate-induced IDPs

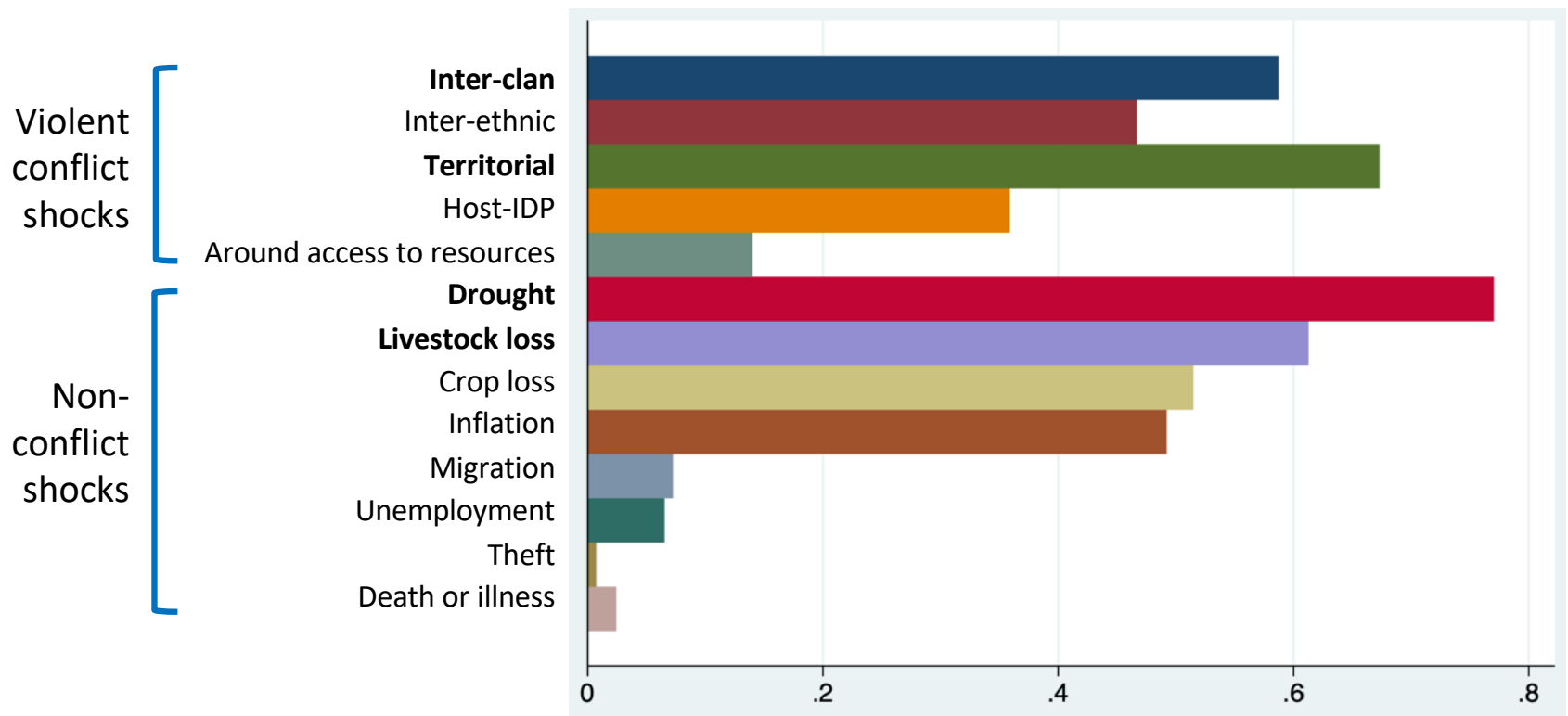


Source: Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Somali Region, Ethiopia

FGD Participants Note that Violent Conflict Shocks are Interwoven with:

- Ecological crises
- Social and economic factors
 - Population growth, IDPs, migration of youth
 - Inflation, unemployment, poverty, responsibility to support families
- Land ownership and borders
 - Competing perceptions: communal vs. private
 - Sudden changes in land ownership
 - History – who has owned it?
 - Changes to land borders between Oromia and Somali
- Diaspora (both in and out of country)
- Tribalism

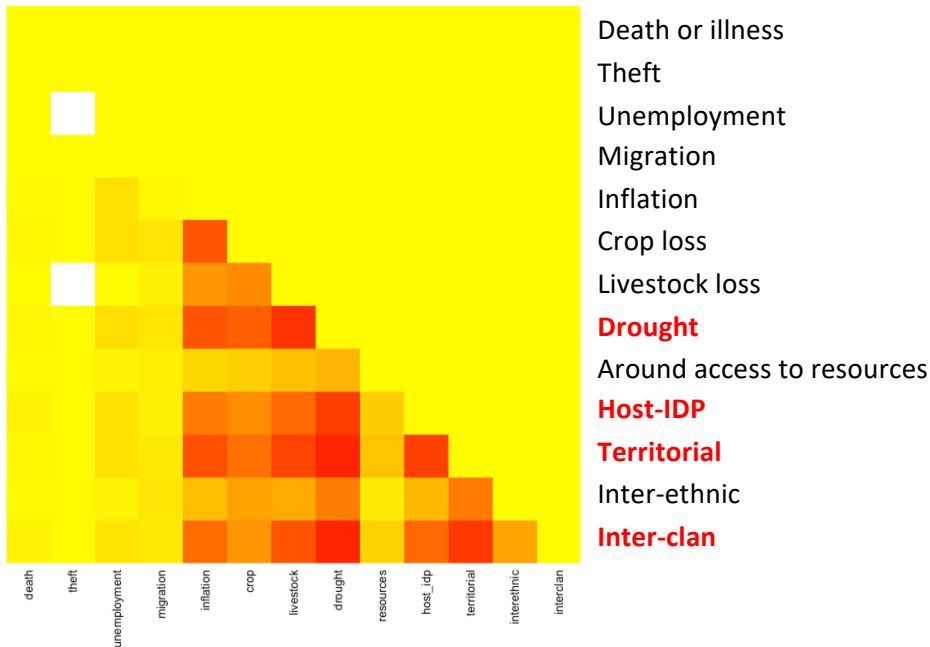
Survey Participants Report Violent Conflict Shocks and Other Shocks which Significantly Influenced Them in 2021



The Two Woredas Reported Differing Experiences of Compounding Shocks

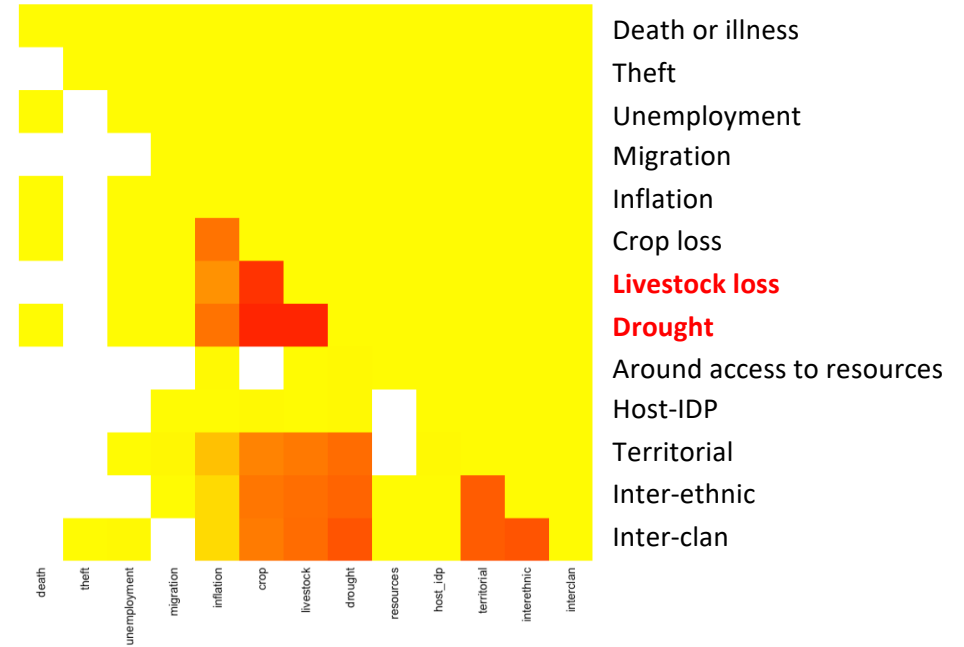
Babile

- Interclan and territorial conflicts co-occurred with drought
- Host-IDP conflict co-occurred with drought, and with livestock loss



Gursum

- Less frequent violent conflict shocks
- Drought, livestock loss, and crop loss co-occurred

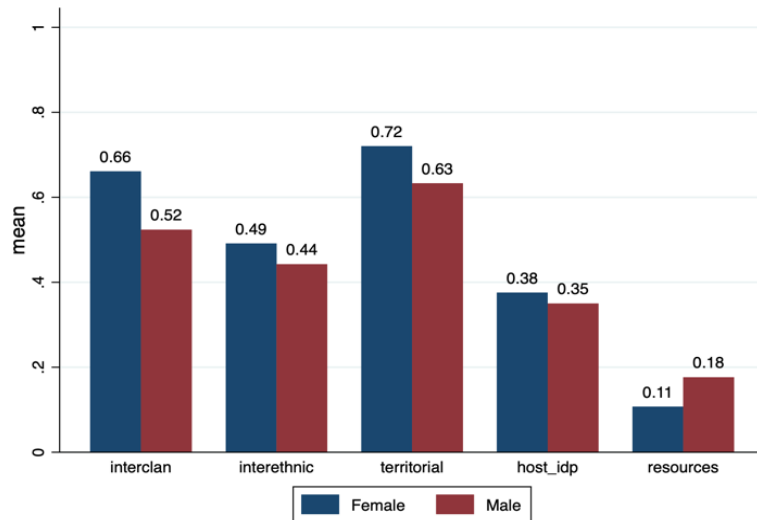


Women and Youth FGD Participants Perceived and Experienced Shocks Differently:

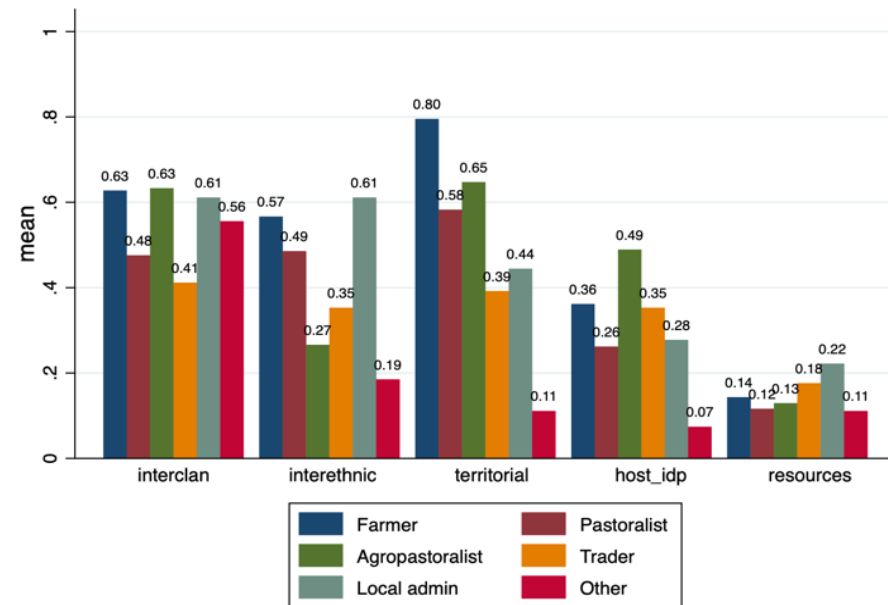
- Women:
 - Women are a resource that is exchanged to prevent or resolve conflict (i.e., marriages)
 - Women are agents in locally driven processes for preventing or resolving conflict (i.e., women exchange resources with each other; women's cooperatives and informal organizing)
- Youth:
 - Youth migrate and leave the community to send resources back

Differences Shown across Gender, Age, and Social Groups

Differences by gender



Differences by profession



FGD Participants Discussed Community-Level Vulnerability Factors

- (Perceived Lack of) Fairness and justice
- (Perceived) Distrust in institutions and elders/actors
- (Sudden) Limited resources (that threaten local ways of doing)
 - Economic resources
 - Natural resources

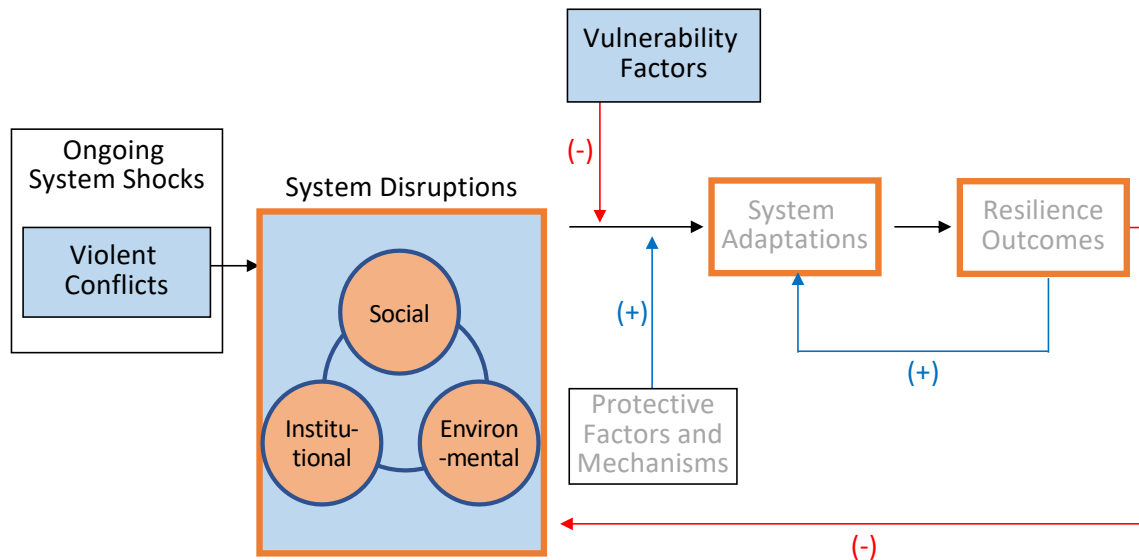
Differences by gender and age:

Women – Marriage

Youth – Economic challenges that lead to migration

Elders – Lack of fair elders, kebele administration, and justice system

Key Take-aways



- The conflict ecosystem in the Somali region is complex and dynamic, related to many factors
- Need to respond to compounding shocks which will likely continue and intensify (e.g., drought, resource scarcity)
- Each community experiences the shocks differently; and gender, age, and social groups within the communities are affected differently
- Need multi-faceted approaches for addressing these interconnected problems which create heterogeneous needs for each social group; programming needs to be adapted to target groups

A complex **system** of conflict and other **shocks** as well as vulnerability factors

(Research Question 1)

Community level **components** and **connections** showing strengths and weaknesses in responding to shocks

(Research Question 2)

Current **capacities** for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution

(Research Question 3)

Differentiated by **gender, age, and social groups**

Research Question 2

- How do community level system components and connections show strengths and weaknesses in resilience capacities for responding to violent conflict and other compounding shocks?

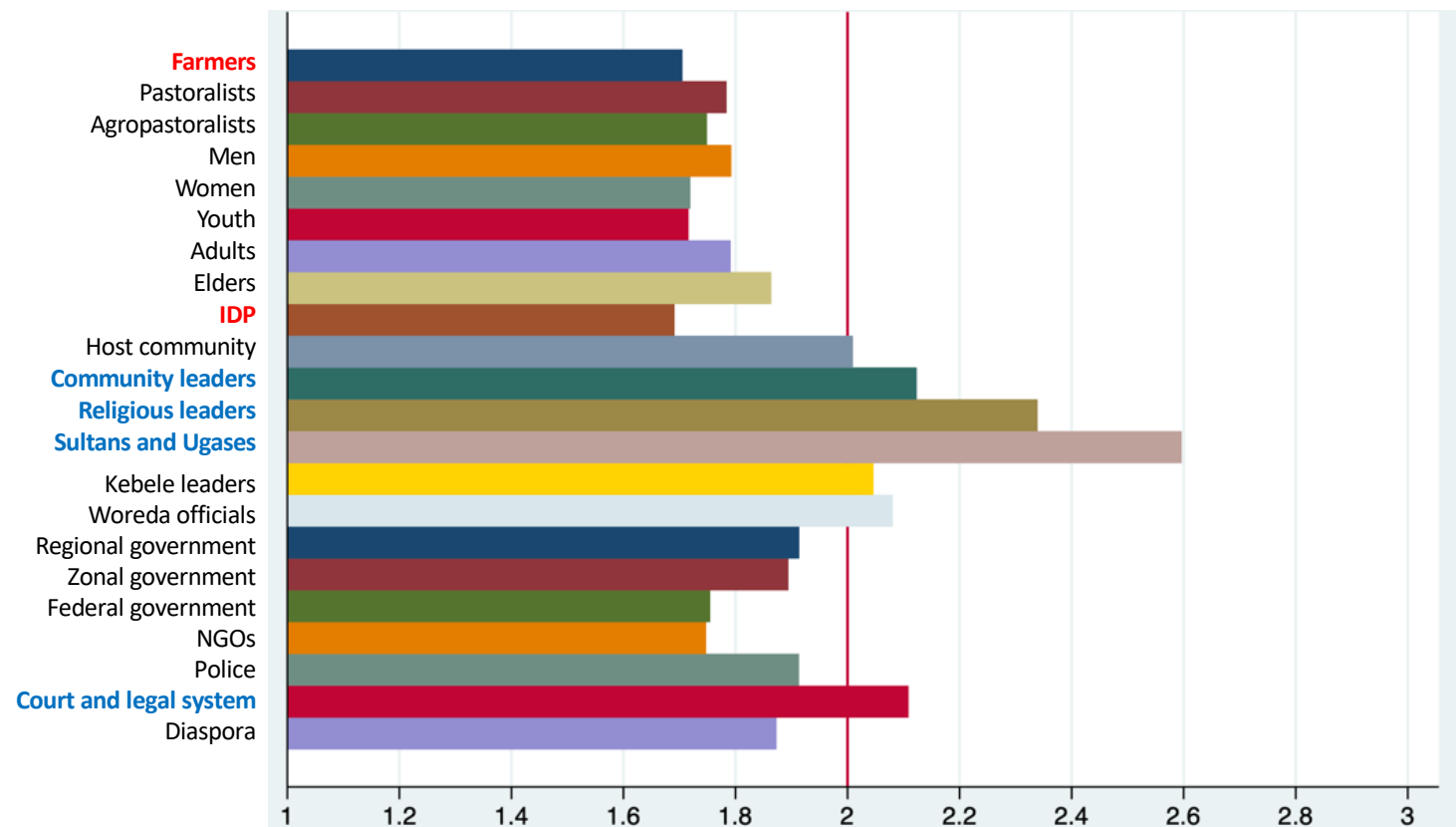
Storyline: Through local relationships and strategies, differentiated by women and men, and other social groups

FGD Participants Noted Community-Level Systems and Resilience Capacities

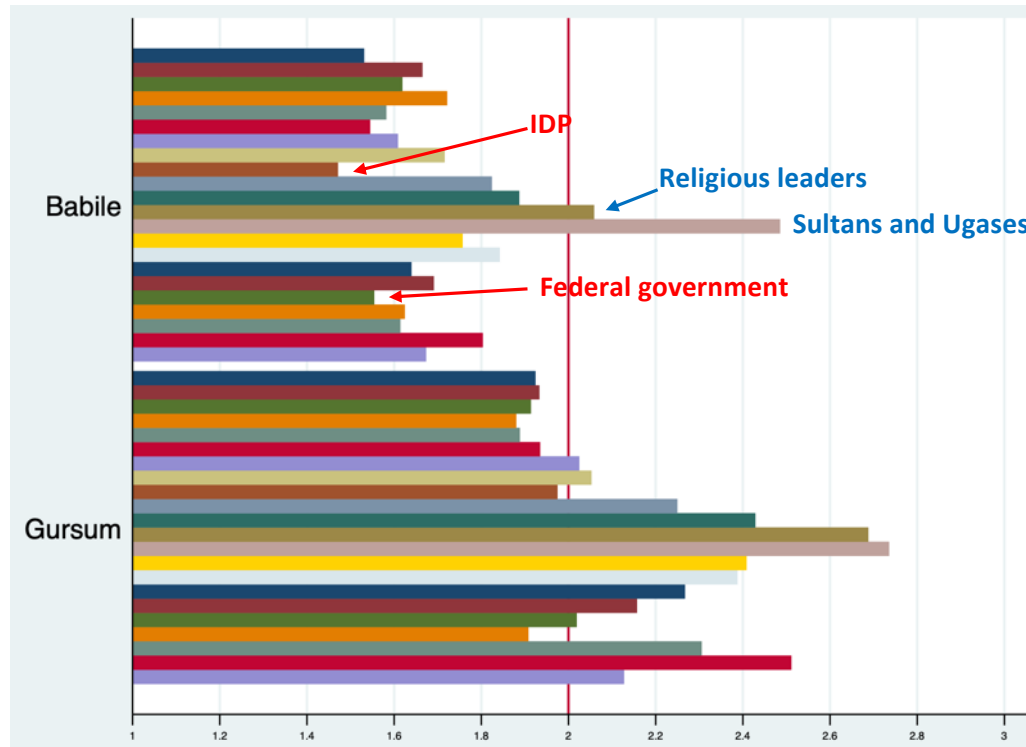
- Through local level social relations (e.g., Bekele et al., 2020)
 - Strength
 - Value of caring for each; and do it, to the extent they can
 - *"we have traditional money saving system like 'Hagbad' and we try to support the poor people in the community"*
 - Weaknesses
 - All are trying to survive themselves; economic realities can be at odds with their communal values
- Through trusted actors in resolving conflict
 - An interdependent web that is activated to resolve conflict: Elders (often said first), religious leaders, kebele administrators, fair and just people and institutions

Survey Participants Responded to the Question:

“How much do you trust these groups in dealing with conflicts or other shocks?”



Differences in The Two Woreda's Level of Trust Could be Interrelated with the Broader Social Systems



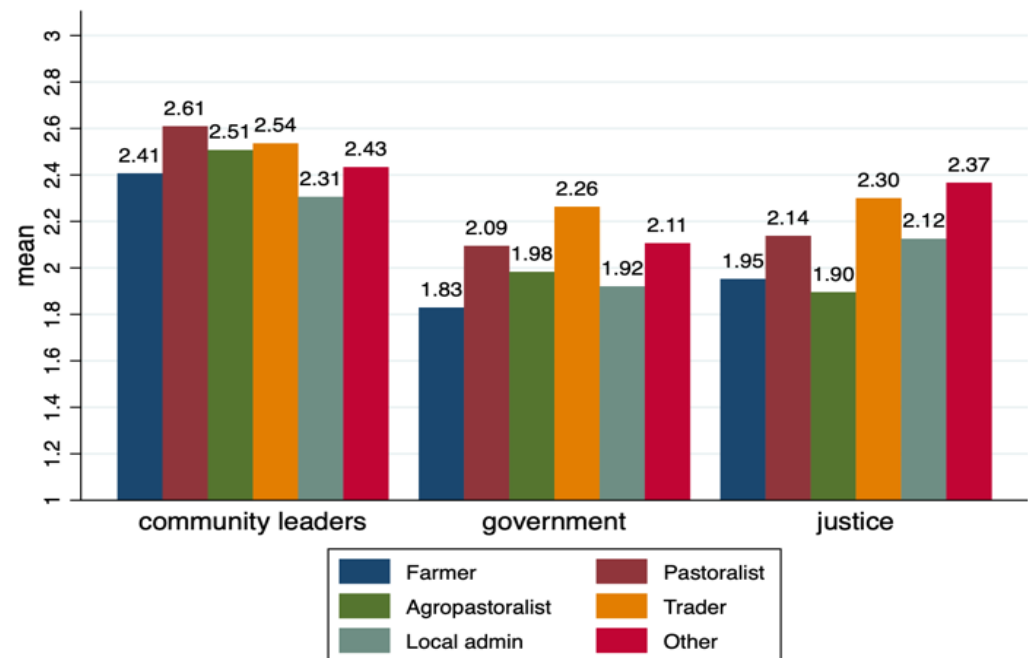
Differences Shown across Gender, Age, and Social Groups in Their Trust of Social Groups

Community leaders: Religious leaders, Sultans and Ugases

Government: Kebele leaders, Woreda officials, Regional gov., Zonal gov., Federal gov.

Justice: Police, Court and legal systems

Differences by profession

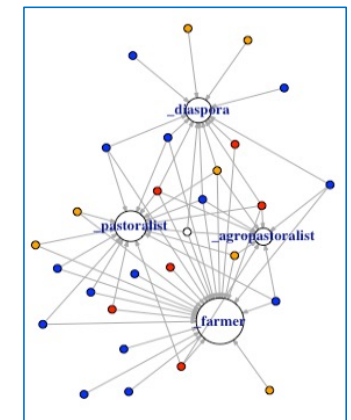
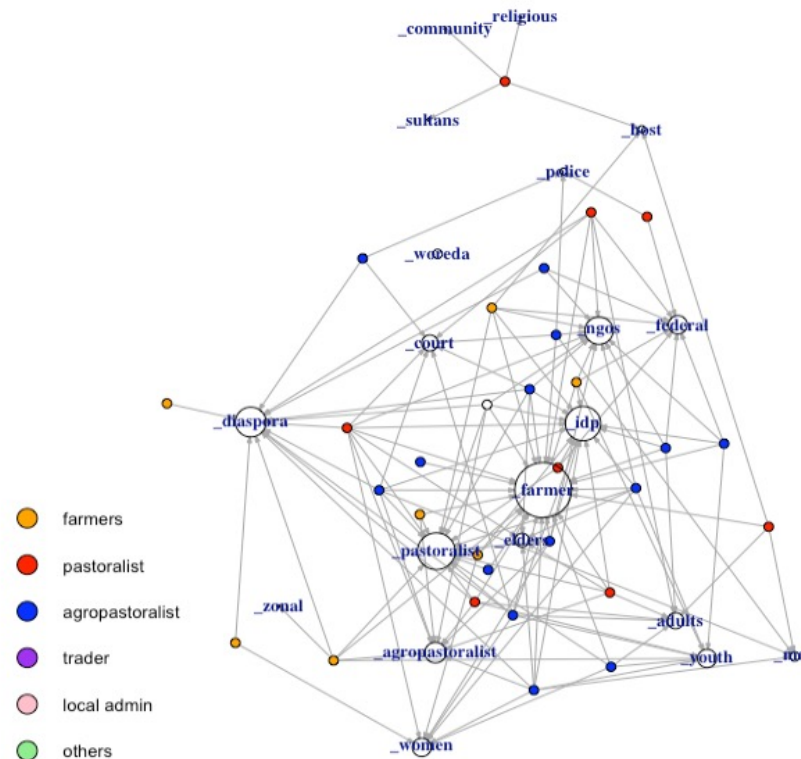


FGD Participants Noted Weaknesses in Formal Institutions

- Local people tend not to trust institutions
- Government gives financial support (short-term fix)
- Limits in the sustainability of institutional support
 - *“Many NGOs who used to come here to help both the host and the IDP community. But now those efforts have been declined and we need help for both the host and the IDP communities in the area.”*

Potential Weaknesses in Resilience and Conflict Resolution Capacities

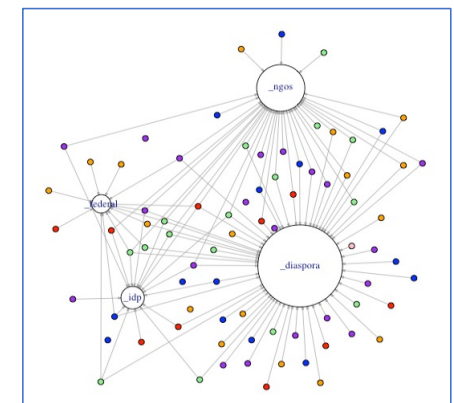
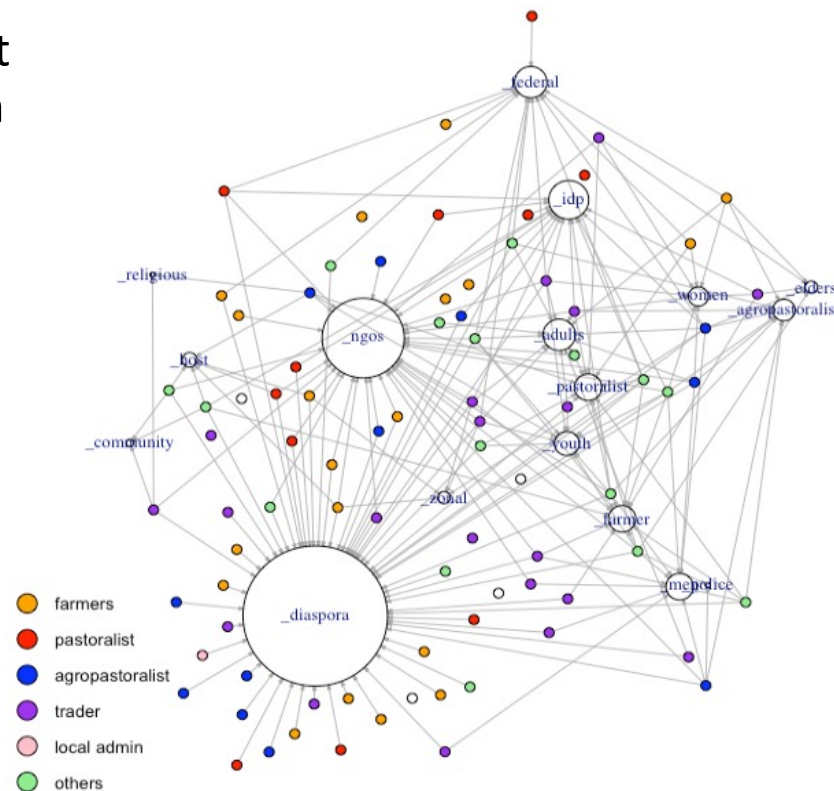
- Illustration of distrust ties in Dhake (Gursum woreda):
 - Perception of “poor” trust in dealing with shocks



Highly distrusted groups

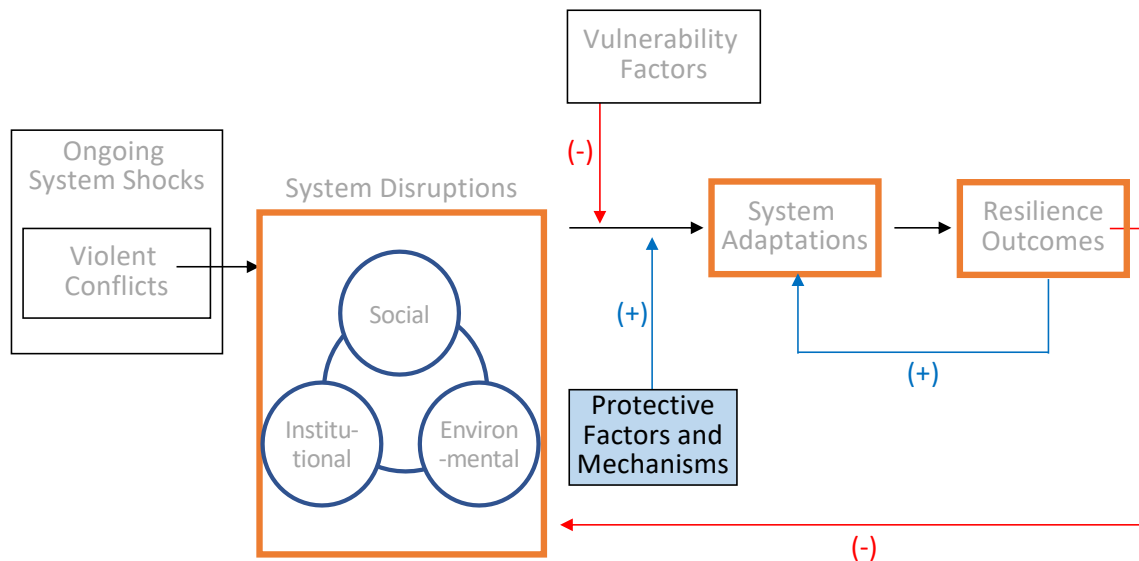
Local Social Relationships are Context-Specific

- Illustration of distrust ties in Fafan (Gursum woreda):
 - Perception of “poor” trust in dealing with shocks



Highly distrusted groups

Key Take-aways



- Informal and local-level institutions are more strongly trusted than formal institutions
- In general, in the two woredas, farmers were less trusted and trusting, while traders had high trust of other social groups; opportunities for interaction across social groups could potentially be valuable for peacebuilding
- Local relationships and strategies are highly contextual, differentiated by gender, age, and social groups

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(Research Question 1)

Community level **components** and **connections** showing strengths and weaknesses in responding to shocks
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Current **capacities** for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution
(Research Question 3)

Differentiated by **gender, age, and social groups**

Research Question 3

- What are the current capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution?

Storyline: Locally-driven processes exist and are utilized by community members

FGD Participants Perceived These Capacities for Sustainable Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution

- Local processes for preventing conflict; for addressing resource shortage
 - Host community and IDPs' processes for accessing water resources
 - Household help each other – women drive the process
 - Community processes for protecting the most vulnerable
- Local ways of enforcing rules (Punishment)
 - Social exclusion, cutting social support, excluding from community membership
 - Named process: “Hagaan Ku Goya” [Social relation cutting]
- These local capacities could be challenged by external factors (drought, irregular migration, economic issues)

What Do We Mean by “Local”?

- What people came up with (traditional) and not top-down administrative (prescribed)
- Rooted in traditional practices
 - Example: “Hagbad” (traditional money saving system); “Hagaan Ku Goya” (Social relation cutting)
- Informal (may not be documented) but reached consensus by community members involved

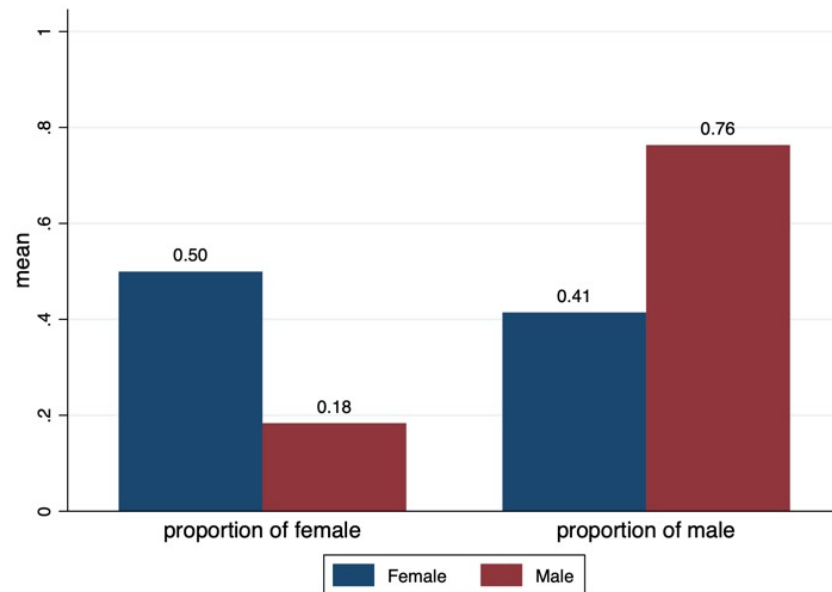
Survey Participants Named Both Informal and Formal Institutions as Sources of Support

“Please think of up to 5 people or groups who help you when you need resources”

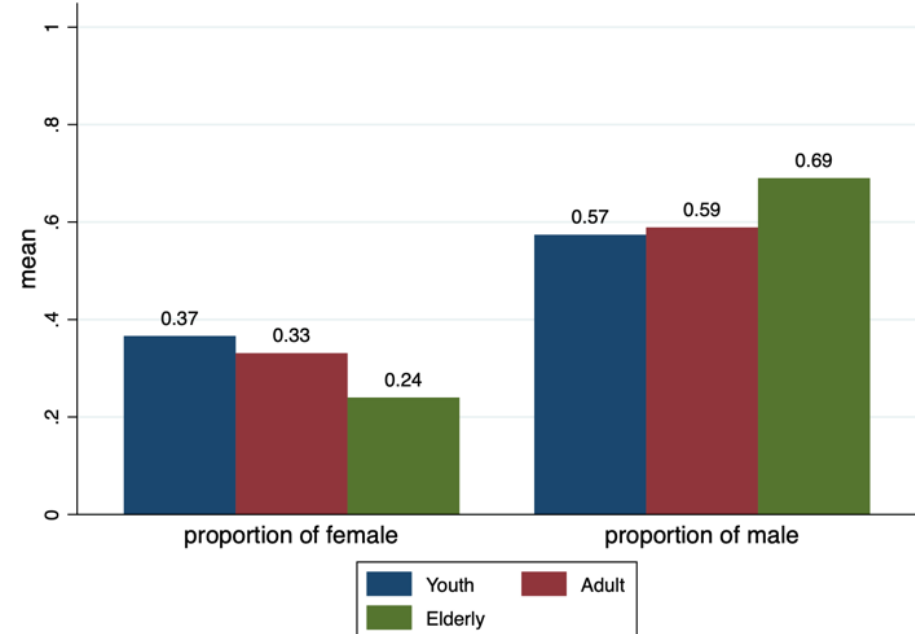
Sources	Frequency
Informal sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and relative • Friend • Neighbor • Elder • Religious leader • Local administrator 	2782
Productive Safety Net Programme	107
Microfinance	59
World Health Organization	37
The Woreda Office of Disaster Risk Management	34

The Composition of Informal Networks Varies Across Population Groups: Proportion of Women and Men in Respondent's Support Network

Differences by gender

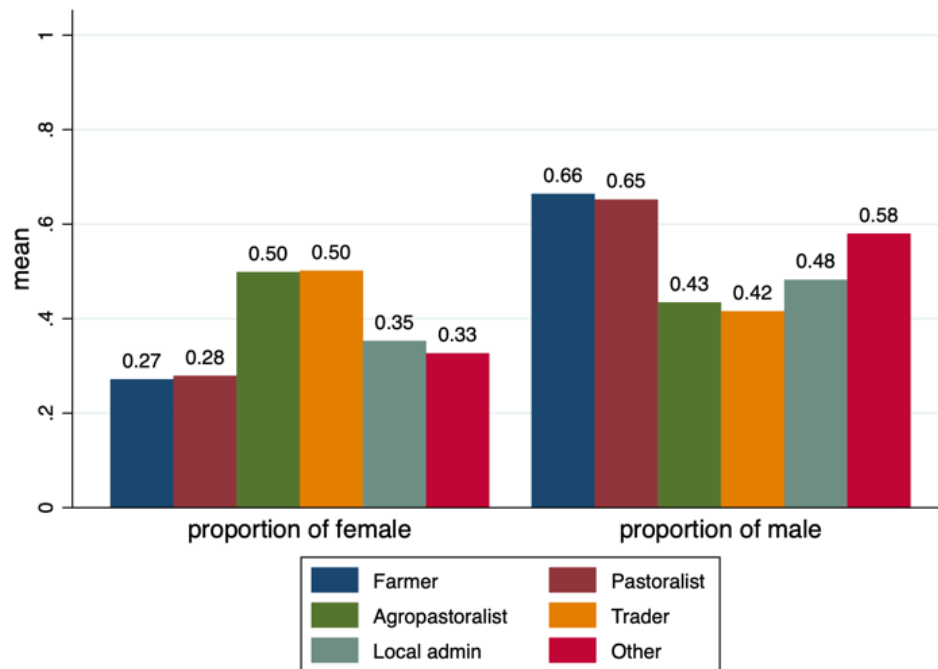


Differences by age group

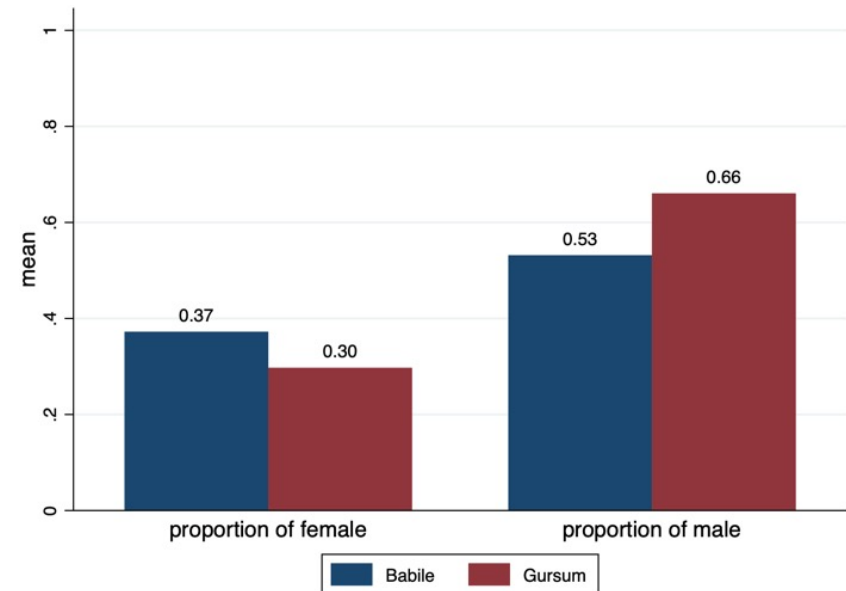


Proportion of Women and Men in Respondent's Support Network

Differences by profession

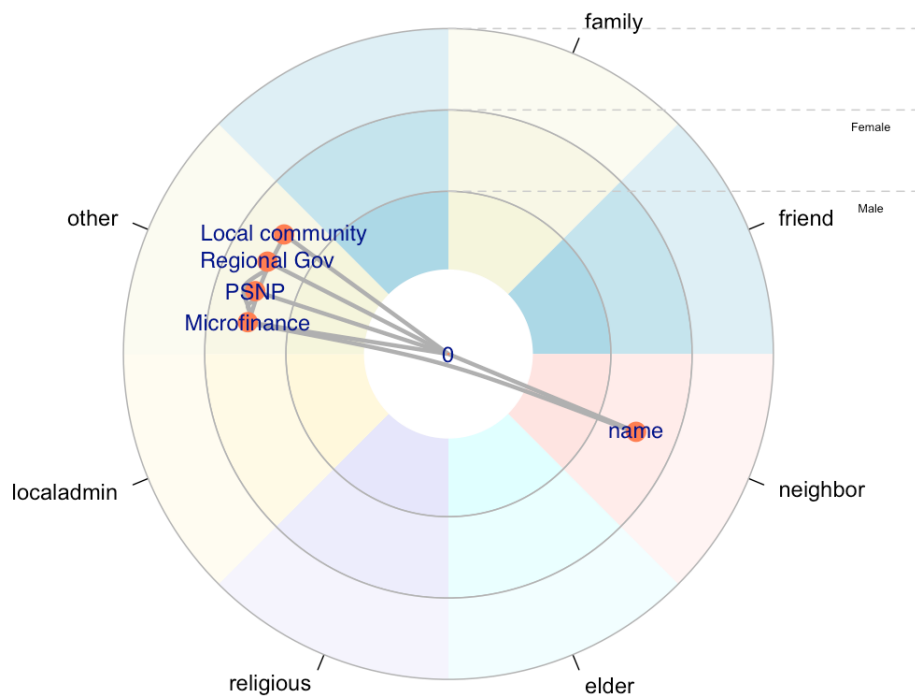


Differences by woreda

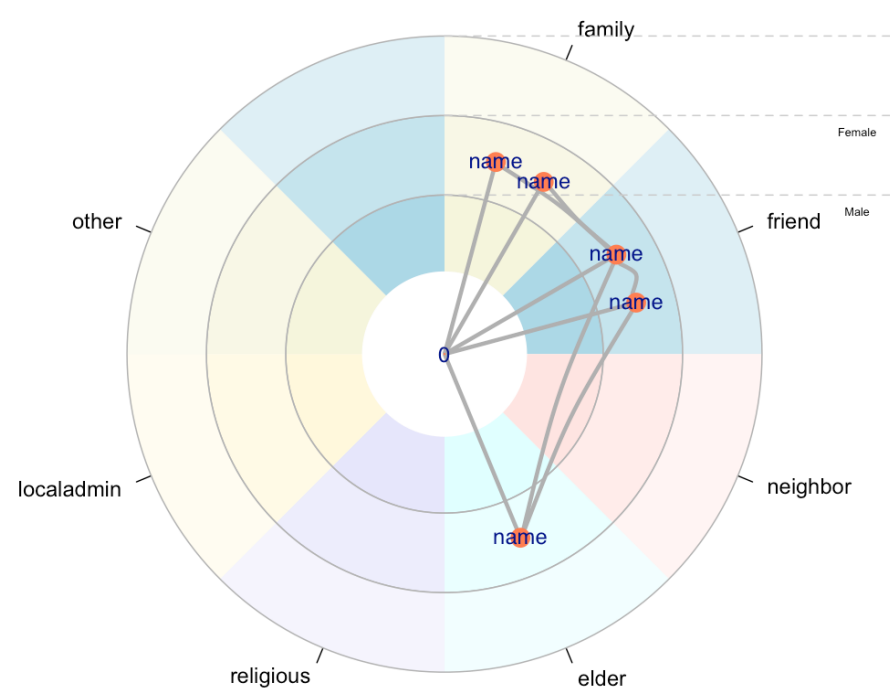


Illustrations of Respondents' Support Network

Female, 50 yr old, Babile Aanod/Qoloji

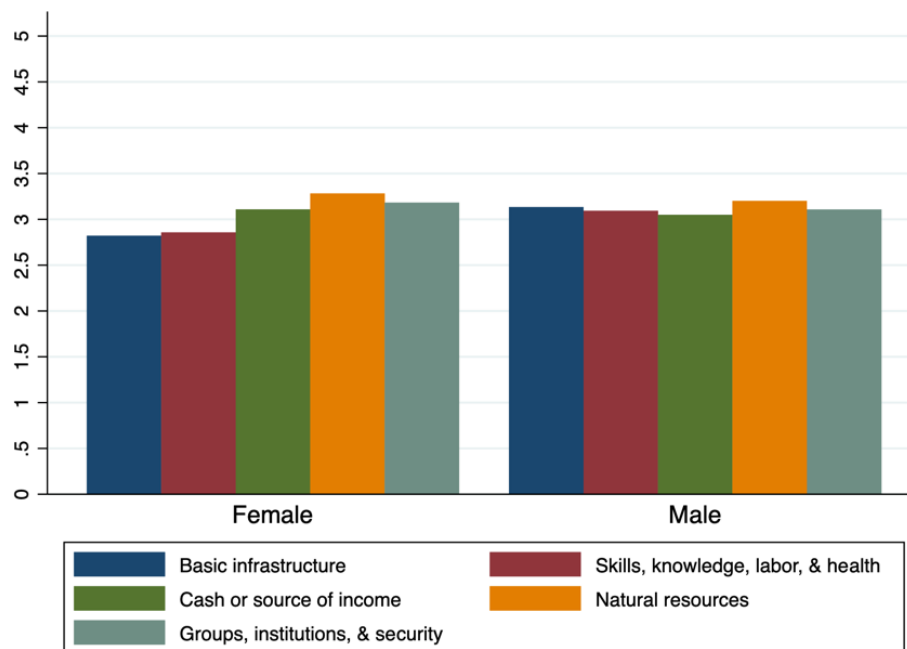


Female, 29 yr old, Babile Aanod/Qoloji



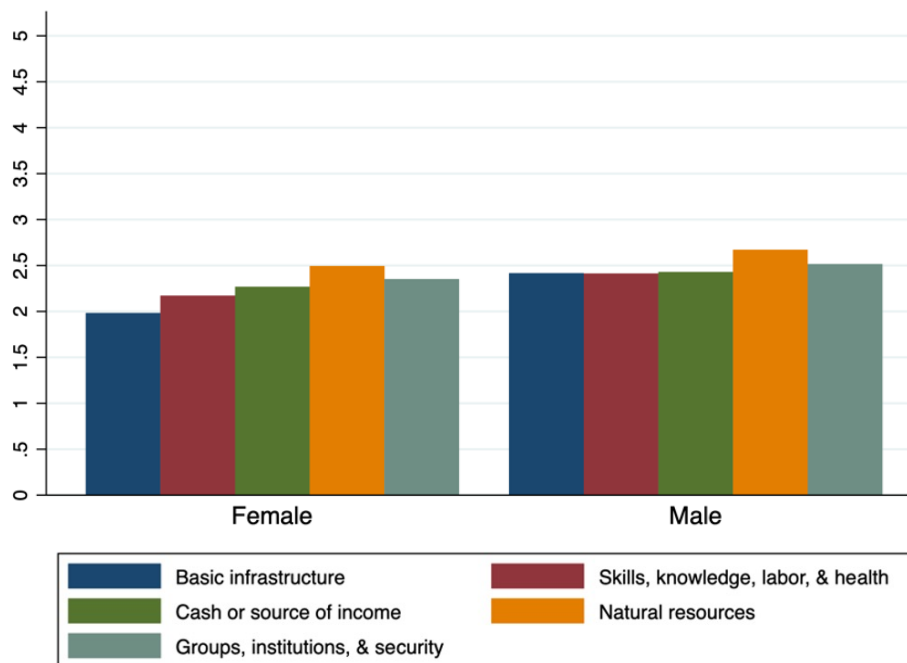
Survey Participants' Perception of Resilience Capacities: Differences Shown Across Gender

Absorptive capacity:
“Can keep these assets stable when there are shocks”



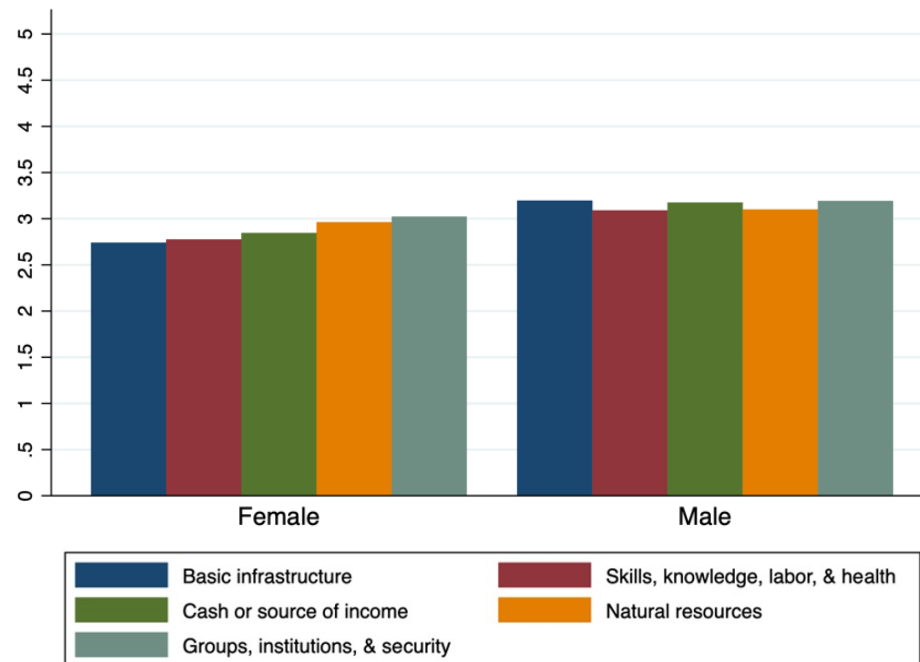
Survey Participants' Perception of Resilience Capacities: Differences Shown Across Gender

Adaptive capacity:
“ Make adjustments to these assets to better respond to shocks ”

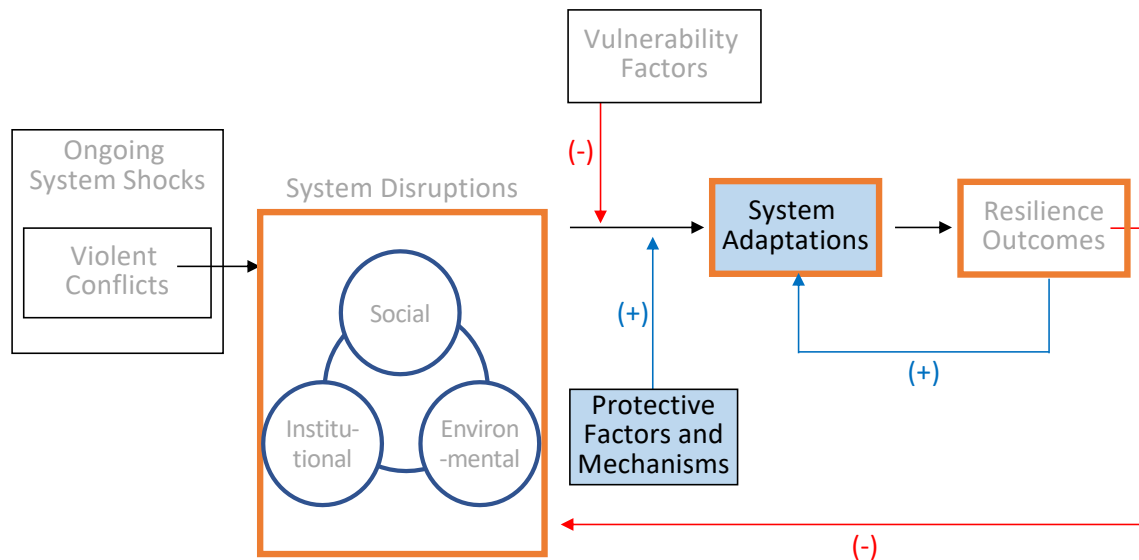


Survey Participants' Perception of Resilience Capacities: Differences Shown Across Gender

Transformative capacity:
“Create new systems, policies, and governance to strengthen these assets”

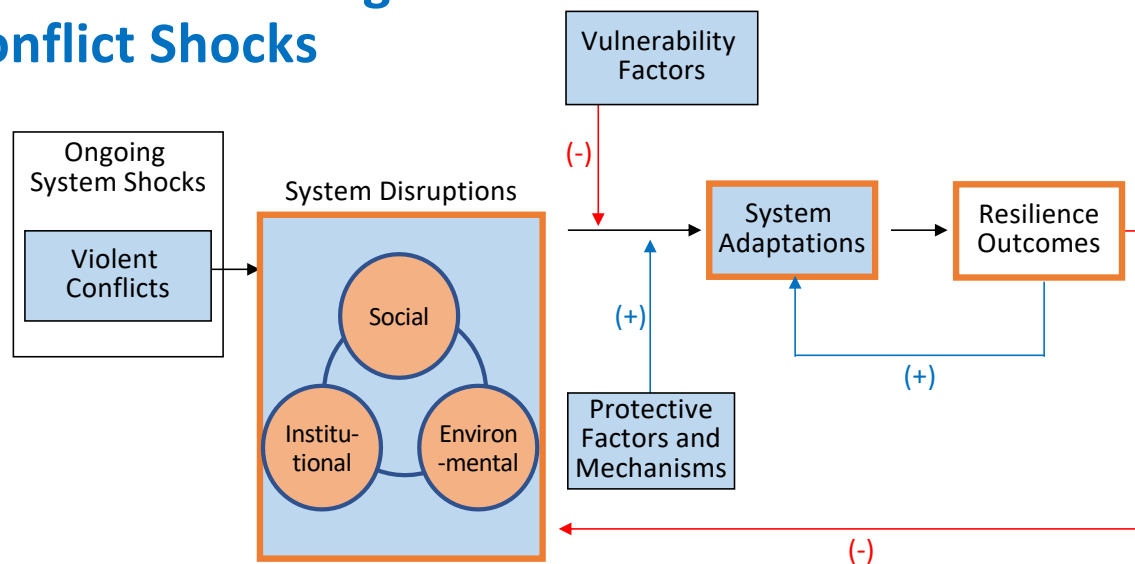


Key Take-aways



- Communities have developed a locally driven resilience system that is grounded in a web of local (community level) relationships, which should be embraced in programming
- Community members have internal mechanisms of enforcing these systems and rules
- Need to consider ways to strengthen women's informal organizing and networks
- Ties to components outside of the system bring both strengths (e.g., youth's migration) and weaknesses (e.g., diaspora)

Next Steps for Addressing Our Framework for Resilience Processes to Violent Conflict Shocks



- Test the **relationships among components** in resilience processes
- Further analyze differences across **social groups** and the impact of **intersectionalities**
- Identify measures for **assessing resilience outcomes** in future projects
- **Replicate and scale up** the analyses in other regions: Local contexts are complex and heterogenous, but methodologies for examining the complexities are applicable

Limitations of and Lessons from Our Study Design and Methodology

- Data collected from two woredas with unique geographic and institutional contexts
- Difficult to assess the representativeness of participants
- Complications in survey data collection due to sensitivity of topics and participant literacy
- Difficult to assess a “complete web” of relationships among community members since residential and administrative boundaries are permeable

Implications of these Findings

- Research
 - Tease out the relationships among conflict shocks and other types of shocks (e.g., drought; pandemic) and the relationship to community resilience
 - Understand the relationship between community resilience to conflict shocks and community/individual health
- Programming
 - Acknowledge the interconnectedness of shocks
 - Prepare for the shocks...they are likely to continue
 - Target groups (i.e., women and youth) differently
 - Consider ways to strengthen women's informal organizing and networks
 - Be aware that something is happening with trust & farmers
 - Embrace locally-driven community resilience strategies and mechanisms

Thank You!