

Andrew Pickup Bursary Report 2024

Placement organisation: University of Arba Minch (Ethiopia)

Dissertation title:

***“In our hearts, we are woga”*: Traditional Foodways, Cultural Autonomy, and Resisting Nationhood in the Gamo Highlands**



I am forever grateful to the family of Andrew Pickup who made it possible for me to travel to Ethiopia and conduct primary research in the Gamo Highlands of Southern Ethiopia, in partnership with a local university. As this project detailed the social and cultural value of growing, harvesting, eating, and sharing food, this bursary provided me with the access to collect qualitative data through personal accounts. I was able to interview a mixture of traditional elders, farmers, residents, and local academic staff.

Foodways, the social and cultural practices surrounding food production and consumption, provided a medium to examine state integration and the transformation of cultural identity. They created a space to explore how those forced into ways of life express disagreement and resistance. Thus, the bursary allowed my dissertation to describe how the ongoing construction of a state-capital nexus transforms life for those whose foodways do not align with the requirements of neoliberalism, or the nation-state. It also allowed me to provide a canvas for those experiencing the slow violence of political centralization to voice their concerns and beliefs.

During the trip, I was directly involved with harvesting and processing of wild edible foods, meal ceremonies, and overnight stays with families in different areas of the highlands. I was able to observe sacred sites, traditional assemblies, markets, and a plethora of landscapes including bamboo groves, household gardens, state forest, mountain rangeland, barley fields, and so on. Markets are deep rooted within these highland societies and represent a communal hub of life. They rotate daily to locations across the highlands, with people travelling long distances by foot or motorcycle to attend.

I have included an array of photographs that describe this trip best, and urge anyone that is interested in this bursary or the dissertation it allowed me to produce to get in touch. I'm more than happy to share my work and answer any queries regarding this award.

Once again, I thank the family of Andrew Pickup deeply for gifting me this opportunity.

Zachary Morris

