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# Land registration and policy reforms toward gender equality in Ethiopia

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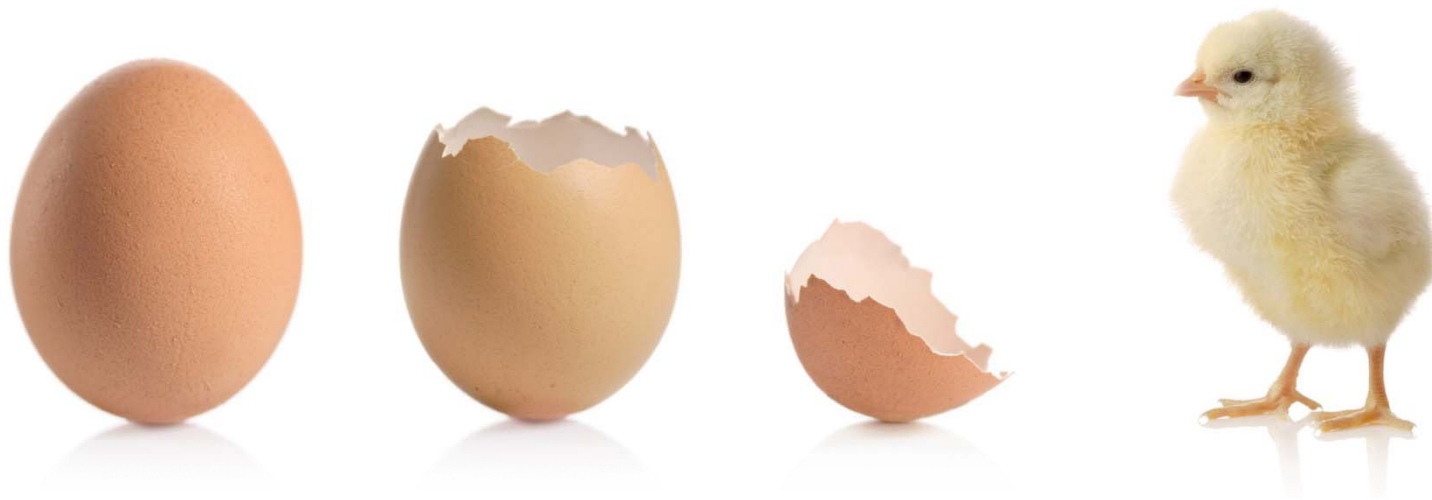
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# *Kes be kes enqullal be-egrwa tihedalech*

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# Context

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- Ethiopia: poor country, substantial ethnic and religious diversity
- Diverse gender norms related to property ownership, inheritance, and the division of assets after divorce, with men favored in the majority of cases (Fafchamps and Quisumbing 2005).
- Gender disparities have important welfare consequences: poor women in the Southern Ethiopia, where customary laws on settlement at divorce are biased against women, fare worse when illness shocks occur. (Dercon and Krishnan 2000).
- Relative nutrition of spouses is associated with correlates of bargaining power, such as cognitive ability, independent sources of income, and devolution of assets upon divorce (Fafchamps, Kebede, Quisumbing 2009); several dimensions of female empowerment benefit the nutrition and education level of children.

# Policy reform: An opportunity for increased gender equality?

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- Changes in legislation may improve well-being outcomes for women. Example: In Canada, suicide rates of married women are lower in states with divorce laws that are more beneficial to women (Hoddinott and Adam).
- In Ethiopia, the recent Land Registration process (~ 2003 onwards) led to joint certification of husbands and wives, giving stronger land rights to women
- The revised Family Code, passed in 2000, gave equal rights to women and men in terms of marriage, inheritance and property.
- To what extent do these policy reforms reinforce each other?

# The reforms in a nutshell (eggshell?)



Photo: Stein Holden



Photo: Agnes Quisumbing

# Land registration

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- Land certification in Ethiopia was carried out through a low-cost, rapid, and transparent process
- Land administration committees at kebele level were required to have at least one female member (although variations in compliance).
- Land certificates were issued after public registration for transparency.
- Land certificates include maps and pictures of husband and wife, though there were regional variations.

See Deininger et al. (2007), work by Holden and colleagues for more

# Family Law

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- At the federal level, a new Family Code based on the principle of gender equality came into effect in mid-2000
  - However, constitutional recognition gave full sovereignty to seven regions out of nine, each having its own family law. Six regional governments continue to apply the previous law.
- Assets brought to marriage remain the property of each spouse upon divorce
- Common property to be divided 50:50 upon divorce

# Objectives of this paper

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- Using a recently collected round (2009) of the Ethiopian Rural Household Survey, we explore:
  1. differences in the awareness, participation, and perception of land registration process between male- and female-headed households;
  2. determinants of awareness, participation and perception of the land registration process
  3. determinants of changes in perceptions regarding the division of assets (land and livestock) upon divorce
- Explore role of initial wealth, social networks, regional variations in explaining these differences

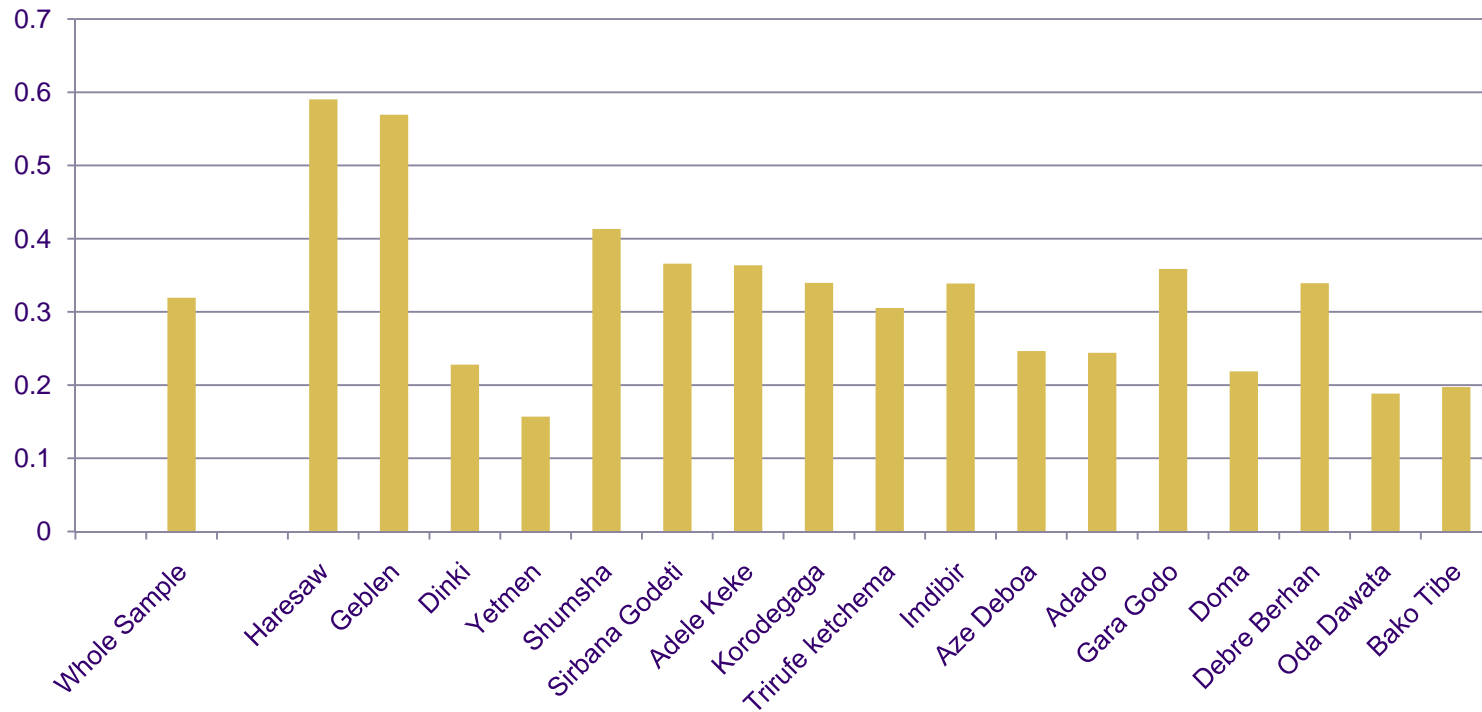
# Data

## Ethiopian Rural Household Survey Villages



# There is regional variation in female headship...

Figure 2. Proportion of Female Headed Households

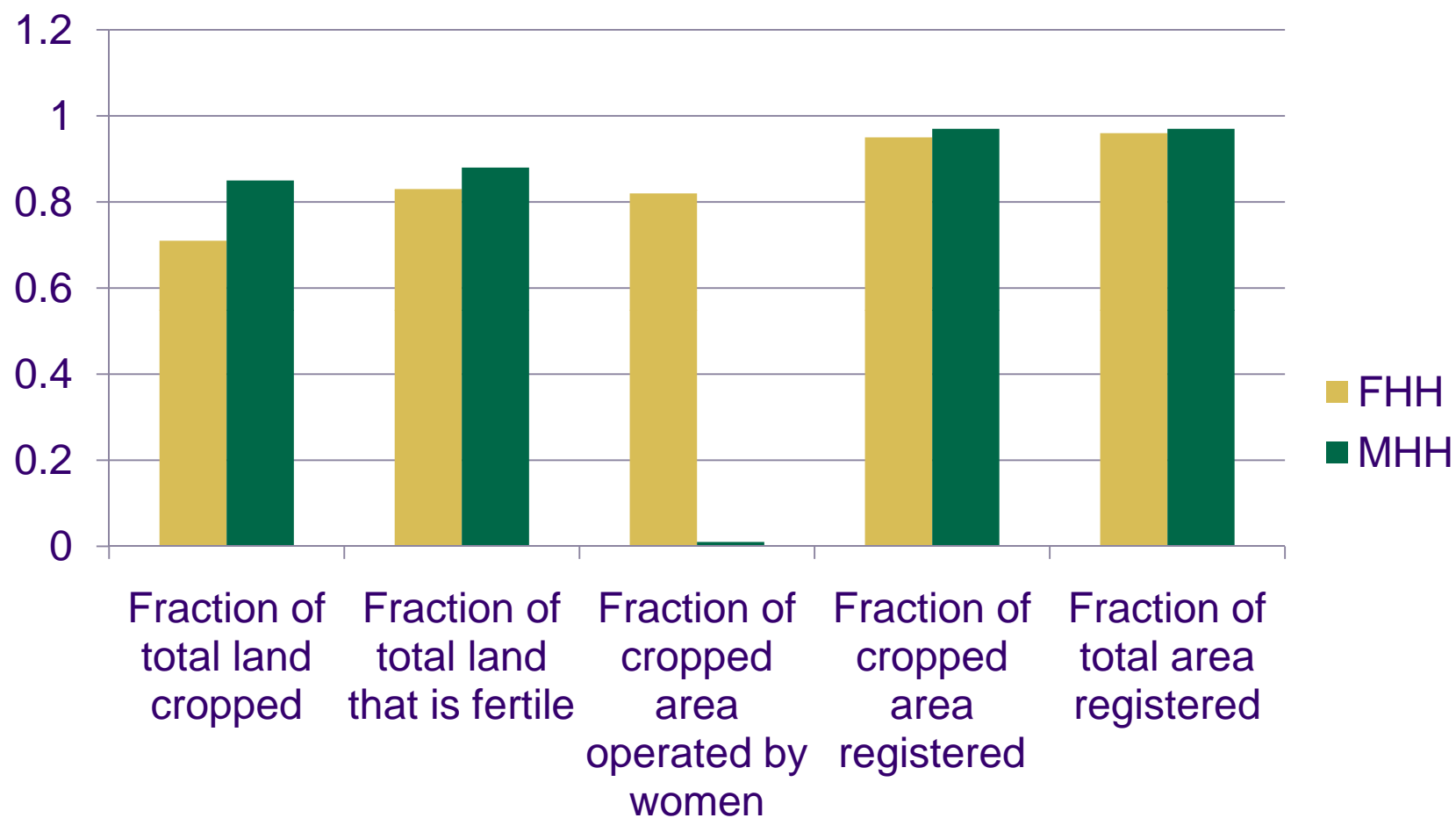


## ...and in resources of FHHs and MHHs

	FHH	MHH	P-value
Age of head	54.3	52.5	**
Highest grade obtained	4.76	6.28	***
Household size	4.39	6.38	***
Total land owned (hectares)	1.73	2.20	***
Total livestock owned (TLUs)	8.82	9.39	***
Per capita consumption in 2004 (birr)	94	91	
Prop household belonging to iddir	0.76	0.89	***
Network size	8.61	11.41	***
Number of sources from which hh can borrow	1.32	1.57	***

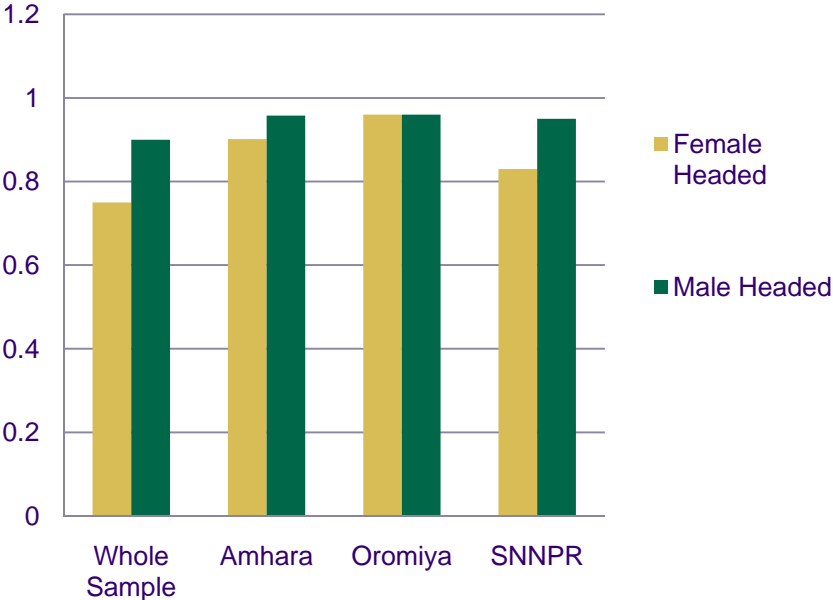
\*\*\* significant at 1%, \*\* at 5%, \* at 10%

While differences in land management are statistically significant, magnitudes are similar

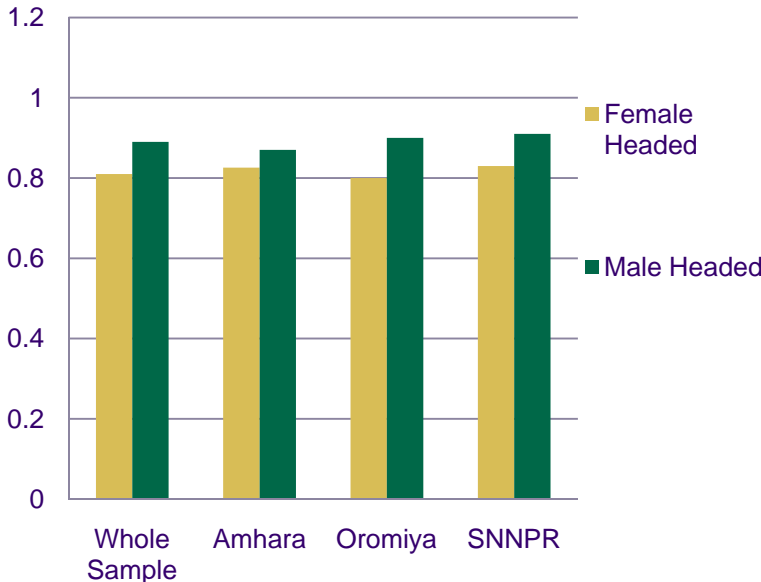


# Gender differences in awareness of land registration process

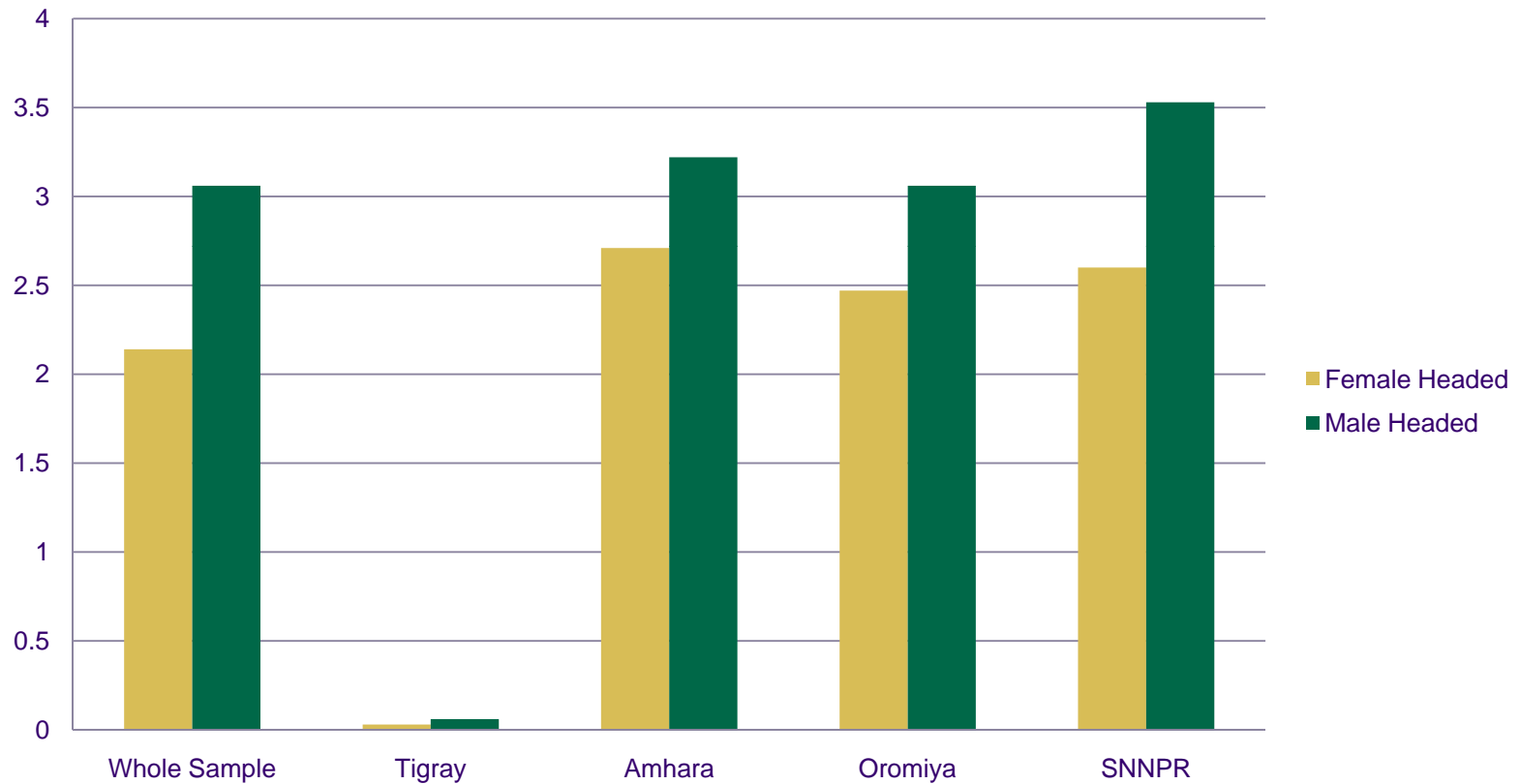
## % hhs aware of land registration



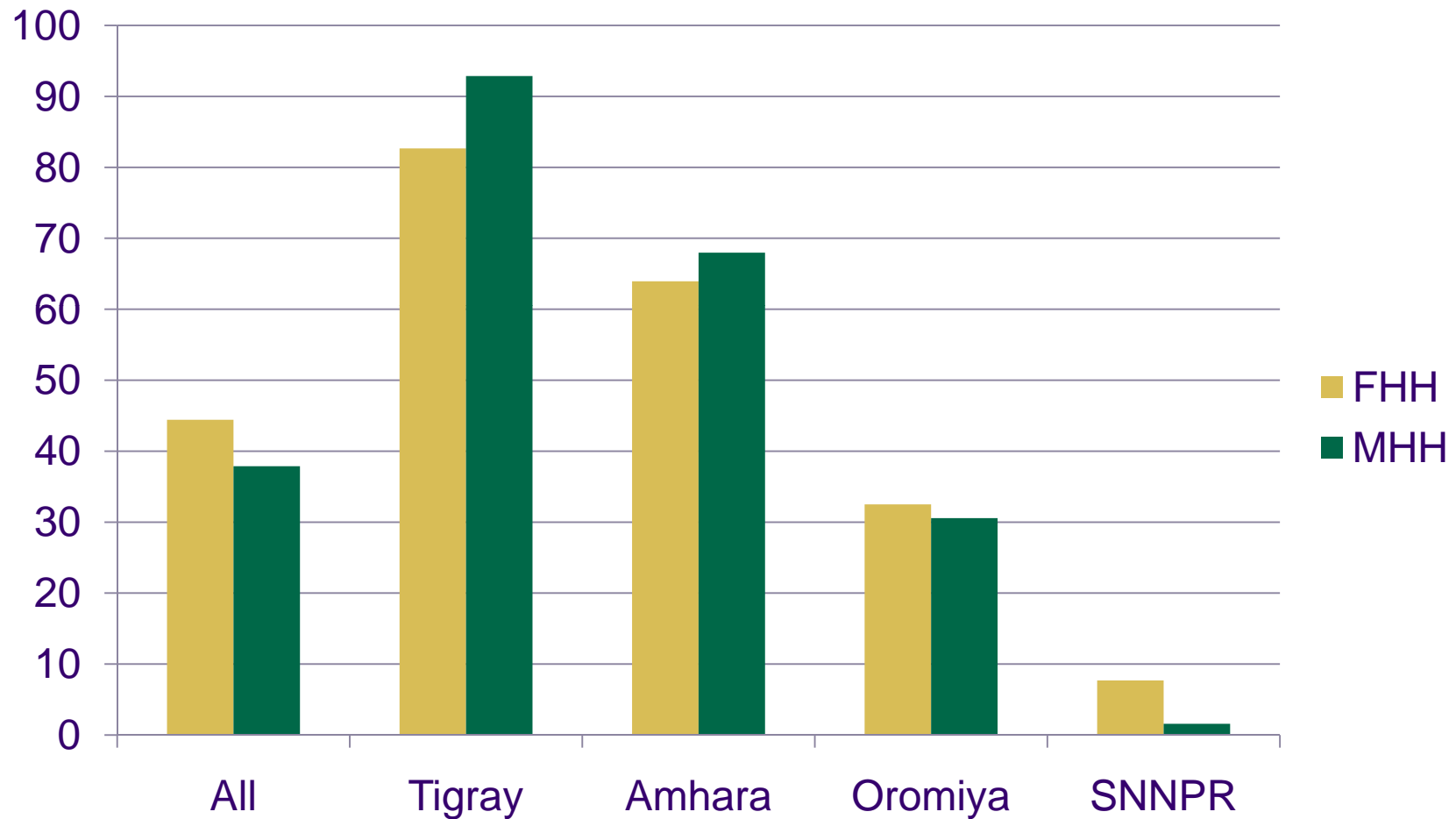
## % hhs attending meetings during land registration



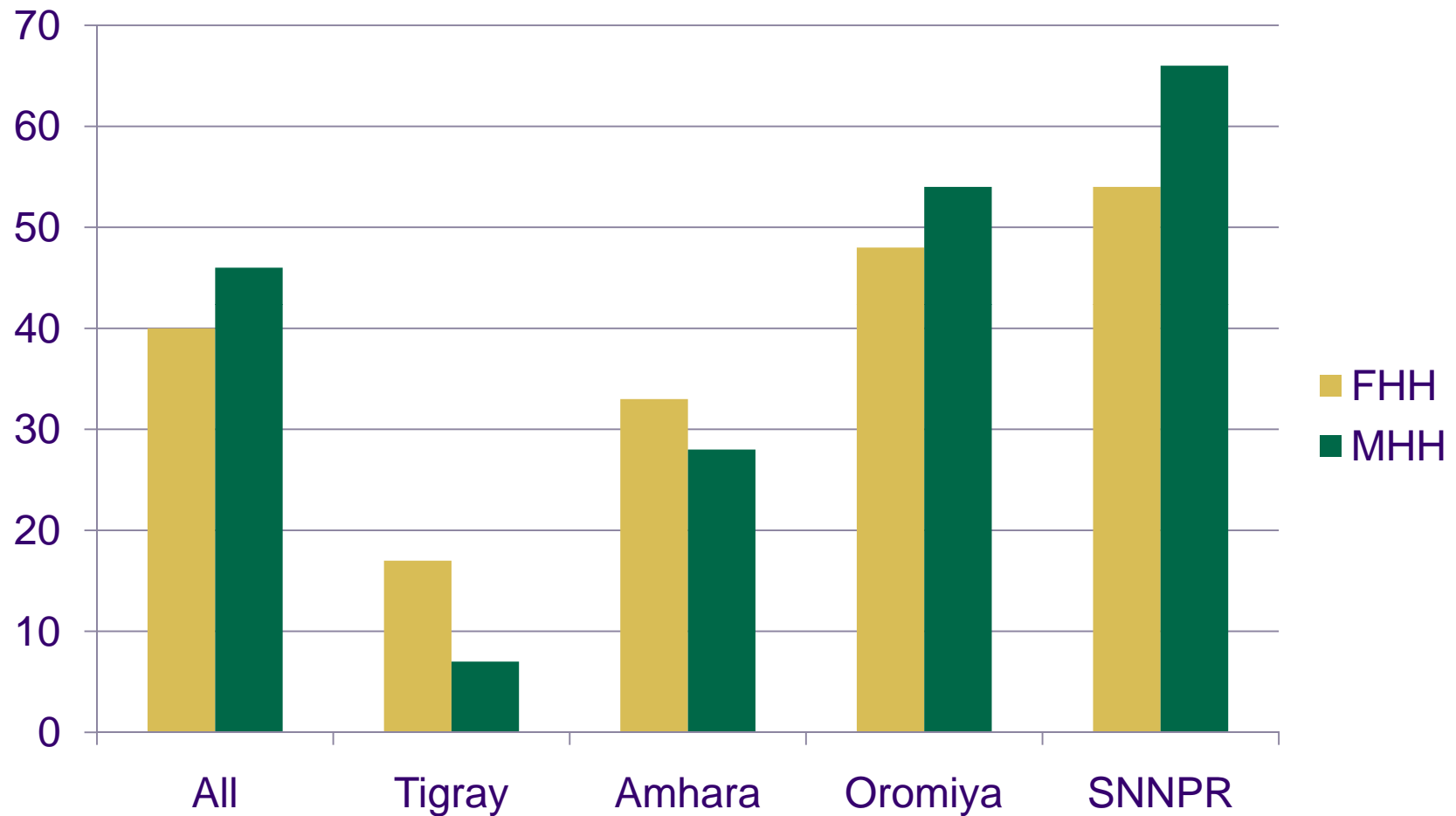
# Index of participation in land registration process



# Perceptions of division upon divorce in 1997, Land equally split upon a no fault divorce



# Changes in perceptions of division upon divorce: Moved towards equality of division of land, 1997-2009



## Summary of regression results on land registration (with PA fixed effects)

	Knowledge of land registration	Attendance at meetings	Index
<b>Highest grade in hh</b>		<b>Positive</b>	
<b>Plot area, 2004</b>	<b>Negative</b>		<b>Negative</b>
Lowest land quartile, 2004			Negative
3 <sup>rd</sup> land quartile, 2004			Negative
<b>Any female members in LAC</b>	<b>Positive</b>		<b>Positive</b>
<b>Member of iddir, 2004</b>	<b>Positive</b>		<b>Positive</b>

## Summary of regression results on family law (with PA fixed effects)

	Move to split land 50:50	Move to split livestock 50:50
<b>Plot area, 2004</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Any female members in LAC</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Positive</b>
<b>Member of iddir, 2004</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Negative</b>

# Concluding remarks--1

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- Our analysis confirms gender gaps in awareness and information about the land registration process
- Male headed households are on average more likely to have heard about the land registration process, attended meetings (and a greater number) and have received some written material with information about the process
- The presence of female members in the LAC encourages participation by female headed households and does not discourage participation by male headed households.
- Social networks also matter
- Land registration process does not seem to discriminate against the poor (in terms of landholdings)

## Concluding remarks--2

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- Awareness about the land registration process is positively correlated with the shift in perceptions towards equal division of land and livestock upon divorce, particularly for male headed households.
- Presence of female members in the LAC has a positive effect on the changes in perceptions towards a more equal distribution of assets upon divorce.
- Even after controlling for local norms regarding the distribution of assets upon divorce, the presence of females in an important village-level committee may provide support to women and also may be a source of information regarding the new family code.
- Interventions to improve gender equality can reinforce each other.

# Next steps

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- We need to explore whether stronger tenure rights for women, and stronger rights upon divorce, had impacts on household outcomes, both in terms of well-being and investment behavior
- Did the land registration/family law provide incentives to women to invest in soil improvements, tree-planting, land, and other assets?
- Did it affect other household well-being outcomes, such as investment in child schooling?
- Keep posted—there is more to come!