



Faculteit Bio-ingenieurswetenschappen

Academiejaar 2011 – 2012

A case study of local practices of Participatory Forest Management in Kaffa,  
Ethiopia

*Self formation between principle and practice*

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Masterproef voorgedragen tot het behalen van de graad van  
Master in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen: Landbouwkunde

MSC THESIS FNP

31-08-2012

A case study of local practices of Participatory Forest Management in Kaffa,  
Ethiopia

*Self formation between principle and practice*



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*(Picture: Agama Forest Cooperative, from left to right: member, secretary, vice-leader, chairman, cashier, member)*

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It is not in the nature of man – nor in any living entity – to start out by giving up, by spitting in one’s own face and damning existence; that requires a process of corruption whose rapidity differs from man to man. Some give up at the first touch of pressure; some sell out; some run down by imperceptible degrees and lose their fire, never knowing when or how they lost it. Then all of these vanish in the vast swamp of their elders who tell them persistently that maturity consists of abandoning one’s mind; security, of abandoning one’s values; practicality, of losing self-esteem. Yet a few hold on and move on, knowing that that fire is not to be betrayed, learning how to give it shape, purpose and reality. But whatever their future, at the dawn of their lives, men seek a noble vision of man’s nature and of life’s potential.

(Ayn Rand The Fountainhead)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It says that at the dawn of life, God created his kingdom. I believe that must have been true for all the gods are all living things on this planet.

I'm well aware about the fact that this thesis has become bigger (at least in pages) than expected, but it has created itself as such, foremost reason because I did not wanted to hold it back and wrote as I have never did before. An experience that can count for the final these last words of this thesis implicitly bring. Whom do I want to thank for this? *My self?*

Yes. Because thanking myself is thanking all others (and things) who have buttressed the creation of this thesis. Thanking myself is thanking the people who let me be Who I Am, my sister and "newly" brother. It is thanking the people who have learned me about family, the goods and the bads. It is thanking the people who have trusted me in their home and with their horses, creatures with whom I could not be today. It is thanking a woman who told me about ducks and swans and thanking a friend who is apparently so different and yet so the same. They who together defended, supported and inspired me.

It is thanking the rare occasion that you meet somebody on the globe who seems to understand what you speak about without knowing your history. This thesis was such occasion and I thank for the discovery and the support that it meant for this research. I hope it will flow in the other direction as well. It is also thanking two persons who have made it possible to graduate in the way I wanted. My promoter in Gent who gave me the freedom to look outside boundaries of our faculty and my promoter in Wageningen who expanded my imagination with so many new ideas that it dazzled sometimes.

In Ethiopia, at this very moment, Alemaz is probably working in the kitchen or the garden. And Aster is probably busy with her young son, wondering what he discovered this time. To thank myself cannot be without they who showed me eloquence, strength, courage and how to be a woman in life. It is also thanking each individual walking around in Agama who challenged and inspired me. And without knowing, gave me the opportunity to create myself as I am.

I thus thank myself and all the freedom in live which makes it possible to do that.

## GLOSSARY

ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
BFCDP	Bonga Forest Conservation and Development Project
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CFWCP	Community Forest and Wildlife Conservation Project
CPR	Common Pool Resource
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
DA	Development Agent
EFAP	Ethiopian Forestry Action Program
EIAR	Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research
EMA	Ethiopian Mapping Authority
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAWCDA	Forest and Wildlife Conservation and Development Authority
FC	Forest Cooperative
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FUG	Forest User Group
ICI	International climate initiative
JFM	Joint Forest Management
NABU	Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union / Naturschutzbund
NFPA	National Forest Priority Area
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRDC	Natural Resources Defense Council
PA	Peasant Association
PBA	Practice Based Approach
PC	Producer Cooperative
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PFM&RH	Participatory Forest Management and Rural Health
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Committee (of the Dergue regime)
RDPS	Rural Development Policy and Strategies
SNNPNRS	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' National Regional State

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# PART I: INTRODUCTION

# ONE

## A CASE OF FORESTS AND PEOPLE

For it is the nature of people to love, then destroy, then love again what they value most.

(Neale Donald Walsh)

### 1.1 SETTING THE SCENE (FROM DEFORESTATION TO PFM IN ETHIOPIA)

*“But we are born here and relate to the forest. Yesterday we lived, today we live, and tomorrow we pass the forest to other generation. So we struggle, we survive. And from any direction, somebody comes to destroy this forest, we together lose our life. So we don’t pass for anybody our forest.”* (Gezahagn, Agama villager, April 2012)

Ethiopia is probably better known for its agriculture, famines, droughts and politics than for its struggle concerning forests. Yet, forests in Ethiopia bear economic, social, cultural and environmental importance. They play a key - albeit undervalued - role in the national economy, by providing foreign currency earnings, mainly from non-wood forests products as coffee and to a lesser extent Arabic gum, frankincense and spices (FAO 2004a, Teshale Woldeamanuel, 2011). The export of coffee for example contributes to over sixty percent to foreign currency income. In addition, forests provide other environmental services as biodiversity, soil conservation and watershed protection which supports agriculture and hence, eighty-five percent of the population (FAO 2004b). The mountainous moist forests of South-Western Ethiopia for example are the treasure base for the *Coffea Arabica* gene pool (*Coffea arabica rubiaceae*), important for an *in-situ* protection of ‘wild’ coffee (Stellmacher 2007). However, the most tangible role of forests is situated

in the immediacy of the daily lives of Ethiopian people living in and around forest areas or forest patches. Daily visits to the forest to collect firewood, poles, farm implementation material, medicinal plants or to harvest coffee, spices and honey from beehives are well rehearsed practices. Expressed in figures, over ninety percent of the country's total energy for household cooking is derived from biomass fuels of which wood provides seventy-eight percent and more than ninety million cubic meter was produced in 2002 for fuel wood consumption (FAO 2004b). But it would be incomplete to represent forest practices as only conforming to economic calculations. Forests, common property resources, are part of the village public both as material and symbolic domain (Mosse 1997) through which social relations are articulated, produced and challenged and institutionalized co-operative action is initiated. As both social and ecological systems, forests co-produce localities (Appadurai 1997) and hence, the life-worlds of forest dependent people in Ethiopia. These localities however have become a matter of concern, both from a social and ecological perspective, as Ethiopian forest resources have been declining both in size (deforestation) and in quality (degradation) (FAO 2004b, Tsegaye Gobeze et al. 2009, Stellmacher 2007). Although annual deforestation rates have declined over time, still some 140 000 ha was lost between 1990 and 2010 each year (FAO 2006). This is in line with earlier studies for the Ethiopian Forest Action Program in 1994 that puts annual deforestation rates to be between 150 000 and 200 000 ha (EFAP 1994).

Deforestation and forest degradation have provoked various (inter)national policy responses that can be captured in the call for good forest and nature governance (Arts et al. 2012). Although the broad understanding of governance has led to many forms and a near ubiquitous spread, if one could chose a word to characterize the nature of institutional reforms across many different policy arenas, than that word would very likely be *decentralization* (Ribot et al. 2006). In contrast to the call in the 1970s and early 1980s for a more centralized control to address externalities associated with the use of environmental resources, the economic pressures on states; budgetary pressures in many developing countries; decline in aid flows; demands for a greater recognition for local communities; and an emerging body of scientific work on the capacity of communities to manage natural resources, have shifted beliefs towards decentralization reforms in the environmental management sector (Agrawal and Lemos 2006). In theory, decentralization should improve efficiency, accountability, resource allocation, equity and responsiveness of bureaucracies to citizen demands (Larson and Soto 2008, Ribot et al. 2006). Consequently, there has been a lot of international attention to local level solutions, based on community initiatives to sustainably manage natural resources (UNCED 1992). Government policies and programs, donor agencies and NGOs all have contributed to the discourse of co-management between state and community to

share responsibilities for natural resources and have emphasized a central role for institutions (Leach et al. 1999). Especially since an influential body of work on common pool resources (Ostrom 2009), the belief in the potential for community based natural resource management (CBNRM) as alternative to or in association with government ownership and private initiatives has continued to grow. Devolution to local communities of responsibilities is now seen as key feature not only for sustainable management, but also for poverty alleviation, access to resources and development.

A similar trend can be observed in Ethiopia as well, at least at the discourse level (Keeley and Scoones 2000). Explanations in the past focused primarily on the Malthusian narrative of overpopulation and consequent accelerated resource depletion. This narrative fuelled two contradictory policy discourses, a green revolution discourse urging for agricultural intensification and an environmental discourse for natural resource protection. While the former perceived forests mainly as fertile croplands or timber source, the latter attempted more to curtail the imminent forest loss. However local people's activities were labeled as threats for the forest and hence, the ever growing population with ever growing demands had to be prevented from using forest resources (Stellmacher 2007) whereas a more centralized control had to address environmental phenomena. Implementation of this state-centered 'ecology first' perspective did not bring the expected results though (Agrawal and Lemos 2006). Recently, a participatory policy stance, in relation to both agriculture and environment (Lakew Desta et al. 2005), has emerged, mainly through key events as the overthrow of the socialist regime and an increasing emphasis on participation in international development and donor requirements.

As such, new co-governance systems were also initiated in Ethiopia. In 1996 two international NGO's started the first projects in Dodola and Chilimo forest respectively. The aim was to stop forest deforestation and deterioration and its negative impact on the livelihood of people and to restore forest cover (Mohammed and Inoue 2011). The underlying principle of this new program, called Participatory Forest Management (PFM), was to balance forest resource conservation and utilization by empowering communities in which forest responsibilities, use rights and management are legally shared between community and the government. The main objectives were phrased as a contribution 1) to long-term conservation of forest ecosystems through new systems of forest management, 2) to sustain and or to increase income opportunities from improved resource management and livelihood diversification, 3) to build capacity of government staff and community to manage the forest sustainable and equitable and 4) to catalyze the adoption of PFM within forest policy and practice (Melaku Bekele and Tsegaye Bekele 2005). However, the PFM program did not start from 'scratch' and had (and still has) to deal with a legacy of enforced participation in massive

reforestation programs and ill-defined community rights over forests. Moreover, in the last four decades, Ethiopia underwent profound political changes from imperial to Marxist-military to democratic with a consequent drastic remodeling of forest property right regimes. These evolved from a strong privatization to increased tax revenues during the imperial regimes (1931-1974) towards nationalization during the socialist regime (1974-1991) followed by a lack of appropriate institutions after its collapse. During this latter period of power vacuum, the forest resources only belonged to the state *de jure*, because rural and urban unemployed and war returnees exploited them as *de facto* open resources which resulted in massive forest reduction (Alemayehu Ayana and Wiersum 2006, Tsegaye Gobeze et al. 2009).

Taken together, the situation of the forests (and people) in Ethiopia required action. According to initiating NGO's, this was preferable under the form of PFM. For Ethiopian policy makers, it could be a little less participation. Or forests. And for the local people, well, they would be the beneficiaries and thus only needed to be convinced.

## 1.2 RESEARCH PUZZLE: WHAT IS THIS CASE A CASE OF?

### 1.2.1 FROM BIG WORDS TO SMALL QUESTIONS

Introducing PFM in Ethiopia is at least a challenge. Introducing participation in a long standing centralized bureaucratic working culture used to rely on mass mobilizations to implement rural development policies (Negassa and Wiersum 2006, RDPS 2003) is one thing. Urging for conservation of forests in a country where agriculture-led development industrialization (ADLI) is at the heart of almost all socio-economic policies and centrepiece of the ruling party (EPRDF) ideological commitments is another thing (Mulugeta Abebe 2005). In addition, forest laws are hardly enacted on the ground, communities are using forests as open access resources and deforestation is said to be still ongoing (Melesse Damtie 2011).

But what does all of this mean? What is deforestation? Is it one tree felling a day by a farmer or massive felling for farmland by more and more people? And who is 'community'? Are they a group of people all having the same ideas and interests, waiting to improve their living conditions? And what can we understand under PFM and its implementation? What happens when people arrive in a village which is situated in a specific context, with the message that from now on, forest users need to be organized into one Forest User Group (FUG) in order to sustainably manage the forest? Are institutions really 'the missing link' (Stellmacher 2007) to regulate forest management and use? All

these questions seem to ask for an emphasis on the daily lives of people and the practices in which decisions and institutions concerning PFM are produced and acted upon. Therefore, to understand how PFM is enacted in practice and intervenes in the life-world of local people we shall narrow down our focus and briefly introduce here the case that will be at the core of this study: a case study of local practices of a Participatory Forest Management scheme introduced by the NGO Farm Africa in the Ethiopian village of *Agama* which would designate the village forest, known under the name *Agama forest*, to the Agama Forest User Group (later Forest Cooperative).

### *1.2.2 A CASE OF FORESTS AND PEOPLE*

Agama is situated in one of the few remaining forested areas of Ethiopia, Bonga forest, located in the South-western part of the country, administratively located in Yeyebito kebele<sup>1</sup> (or neighbourhood), Gimbo woreda (or district), Kaffa zone in the South Nations, Nationalities, People's National Regional State (SNNPNS) (See **Annex I** for administrative location of the case study area). Agama has been an example of contested forest-people relationships for decades. Through history, the forest has been so intrinsically part of the daily realities of local people that it became inseparable of their imagination. As it is difficult for a fish swimming in the ocean to picture a world without water, so it is difficult for Agama people to imagine a history and lives avoid from forest. The forest has been a place for consumption, income generation and spirituality as well as a space for local institutions, knowledge production and power relationships. The pervasiveness of forests is also visible in their second leg to stand on, agriculture (Stellmacher 2007, Zewdie Yihenew 2002). In a country where the main development strategy is an Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) (Pausewang 2009) without much attention for the realization of forest policies (Alemayehu Ayana et al. forthcoming, Melesse Damtie 2011), the undulating cultivation lands of villagers is one of agro-forestry and not one of plain monoculture. However, as much as Bonga forest gives meaning to its locality, it is also a biodiversity hotspot of global interest with *Coffea arabica* as flagship species in a highly deforested country (Melaku Bekele and Tsegaye Bekele 2005, Chilalo and Wiersum 2011). As such, it is inevitably claimed by a range of other actors who are part of the larger arena of forest governance in Ethiopia and beyond. Although Bonga forest was designated as National Forest Priority Area (NFPA) in 1987 by the Ethiopian government, the management has not been launched (Mengistie Kindu, unpublished). In view of this, a research project has recently

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<sup>1</sup> Kebele is a grassroots administration units intended for an average population of 5,000. It is the lowest administrative unit.

been conducted in Bonga forest by the Forestry Research Centre on the extent of forest conversion and historical land cover changes. Based on remote sensing data and surveys on the ground, the results revealed that natural forest in Kaffa zone was decreased by 21.2 percent during the period 1973- 1987, by 14.0 percent during a second period of 1987-2001 and further decreased by 3.3 percent during the third period of 2001-2007. In **Annex II** Landsat images picture the land use land cover change for the respective years.

As such, in Kaffa, the international NGO Farm-Africa, based in the UK, initiated what is now called the Bonga Participatory Forest Management and Reproductive Health project (Bonga PFM&RH project). This new project would bring to halt the deforestation in the area and contribute to forest conservation by developing community based institutions to govern the presumed 'open access' forest resources. In addition, the project aimed to increase and diversify the income opportunities of the selected communities, build capacity of local government staff and community to manage their forest sustainably and to catalyze the adoption of PFM within forest policy and practices (Temesgen et al. 2007). Leaving little space for conventional approaches of forest governance. Or so is the intention.

The intervention practices of this pioneer PFM project also entered the life-worlds of Agama villagers and as we will see, has become to mean quite different things to quite different people and groups. What follows then in this study is an attempt to account what Nietzsche calls *Wirkliche Historie*, real history, of this new form of forest governance initiated by an NGO and emerging in the setting of Agama village. Applying this approach to Agama, will require to dive in the substantive micropolitics without losing track of the procedural macropolitics, while recognizing that 'micro' and 'macro' are relational and are continuously flowing into each other through various interactions in time and space. An internationally sponsored intervention project as Bonga PFM project encompasses a wide range of spatial scales in terms of actors and localities involved (Nandigama 2009) which means that critical connections between microlevel and macrolevel cannot be ignored, especially in a country where the democratization experiment is more characterized by ethnic based elite struggles for hegemony and fusion between party and state sustained by an executive branch with long tentacles (Merera Gudina 2007) than by 'democratic politics'. The focus on practices grasps the dynamics of the intervention as an interplay between the day-to-day interactions on the one hand and the broader socio-political context on the other as these broader processes, as we will see, have long 'tentacles' in the context of Ethiopia. Practices then, are fundamental to study how newly created institutions and knowledge become entwined in the everyday forest practices of people and how resources are mobilized to reach project outcomes

(Clever 2002, Long 2001). By scrutinizing little things, we shall see that understanding the story of Agama is understanding central aspects of political reforms and societal trends. Thus, Agama is not only 'that monkey area' as one participant later will say about the village. It is also a metaphor of the practices in which new policy decisions and institutional arrangements are produced and acted upon and of how to make participation work in a context that is strong in top-down planning processes, but weak in the realization of inclusive approaches.

### 1.3 COMBINING FORCES: RESEARCH IN COOPERATION WITH A PHD PROJECT

This research is conducted within the framework of the PhD study on: *Governance discourse and practices: Understanding policy dynamics in the multi-actor and multilevel forest governance of Ethiopia*. The project covers more broadly the institutionalization process and the performance of multi-actor and multilevel forest governance in Ethiopia. The Participatory Forest Management (PFM) program of Ethiopia that was initiated around mid-1990s is taken as one aspect of the multi-actor forest governance to understand whether and to what extent the new governance (PFM) principles are translated into social practices. While the other chapter of the PhD study addresses how implementing organizations and officials enact PFM in practice, this specific thesis focus on the practices of local communities enrolled in PFM program. The aim is then to comprehend the PFM practices at multiple levels.

The starting point to answer the research questions in the PhD project are the PFM policy principles and institutions which are then compared with how real-life actors perform them, whereas in this research, point of departure are the local practices of community members enrolled in PFM. The aim is then to relate the local practices back with the PFM policy principles, encompassing micro and macro and practice and principle. As such, the cooperation has very much contributed to the establishment and the level of this research.

### 1.4 RESEARCH AIM

Based on the introduction, research puzzle and aims of the PhD project, following research aim can be formulated

*To get understanding in (i) how a PFM intervention entered the life-worlds of local people in Agama with (ii) particular attention to participation and empowerment, and in (iii) the relationship between*

*the policy model of PFM and the (forest) practices it generated and legitimized in the particular context of Agama, to render a critical reflection on the policy process by looking at what happens in the local arena of PFM and how it happens.*

## 1.5 A PRACTICE BASED APPROACH

Literature about forest governance in general and common pool resources as forests in particular have most often paid attention to institutional structures that guide human behaviour to manage their resources (Kjaer 2004). A strong belief that institutions, interpreted here as ‘rules of the game’ (North 1990), are the ‘missing factor’ to solve common pool resource problems (the state, the market, the community) has subsequently guided literature and analysis. However, we only need to think about our own daily lives to object an overall dominance of incentives and institutions in terms of guiding or changing our behaviour in certain preferred directions. Rather, institutions are acted upon, interpreted and so produced and reproduced in practices, in the interaction between structures and actors (Cleaver 2000, Bourdieu 1990). To study local practices of PFM in Agama, this research will therefore adopt a Practice Based Approach (PBA) which can be characterized by four facets (FNP 2012). First, PBA is issue-oriented which means that research is focused on specific empirical themes rather than being a traditional scientific discipline. The locality which will be centre of this research will thus be Agama and villagers’ ‘doings, sayings and thinkings’ (Arts et al. 2012) on forest use and management in general and PFM in particular. A second facet is that these ‘doings, sayings and thinkings’ can best be analyzed as localized, context-specific practices. Instead of starting from general theories, plans or trends, research starts from the ‘bottom-up’, based on empirical investigation of concrete social practices. This implies that theoretical assumptions (for example on human behaviour, institutions, participation) and ideals (for example PFM policy model and project designs) cannot merely be assumed, but need to be put to the test in practice. In this study, the extent to which these assumptions and ideals hold will be matter of empirical investigation in Agama using case study as main research strategy. Thirdly, issue-oriented research and empirical perspective requires a pragmatic approach to theory choice. The enormous array of beliefs people hold and actions they undertake that influence forest use and management cannot be categorized into one school of thought, rather different concepts are applied and integrated. In this research, concepts ranging from political theory, social psychology and development studies have been applied with occasional philosophical side-ways. However, the main inspiration was ‘practice

theory', the fourth facet of PBA, which takes 'social practices' as main unit of analysis to understand human action (Reckwitz 2002). In chapter two, more details are given on practice theory.

Taken together, to produce pragmatic, and context-dependent knowledge which is concerned with *verstehen* (understanding) and *erklären* (explaining), the study takes its point of departure in the situated micro-practices and real life-worlds of people living in Agama, doing work that is simultaneously as detailed and general as possible. Focusing on the daily practices which constitute our field of interest, participatory forest management in Ethiopia, can enable us to detect the 'forces that make life work'. It requires a shift from what should be done to what and how it is actually done, from a mere interpretation of 'truth' to how 'truth' is practiced.

## 1.6 ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

This thesis is organized in three parts. This first part starts with this introductory chapter and continues with the theoretical framework and methodological research design that have guided the research and writing process. The theoretical chapter will briefly touch upon institutional theory but the main attention will go to explore the concept of 'practices' and to a lesser extent the concepts of 'self' and 'power' and reflect upon the link with natural resource management. Finally, the research aim will be translated into more specific research questions. The third chapter of part one concerns the methodological design and will elaborate on the case study selection, the three phases of data collection and the process of creating a narrative which is the selected method in this study to present the data.

A second big part then presents the narrative which must be seen as both text and analysis of the data. Case studies are difficult to summarize in general guidelines or rule based theories as those rules are not necessarily part of the studied reality constituted by "virtuoso social actors" as Bourdieu (1977) has called them. Summarizing and generalization however needs not to be seen as the only ideal. As Nietzsche (1974) says about doing science, "Above all, one should not wish to divest existence of its rich ambiguity". Part two then, which can be seen as the pivotal part of this thesis, will present a thick description of the case study that comprises a prologue, four empirical chapters and a postscript.

A third part will relate the narrative back to the research questions formulated in part one and end with a wink to direct future analysis. It is explicitly named 'non-conclusion' considering the narrative is the actual result of the study and does not fit itself to be summed up. The answers on the questions should then also be read with the narrative in mind.

# Two

## THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

Man's first frown is the first touch of God on his forehead. The touch of thought  
(Ayn Rand)

### 2.1 TO TEST THE IDEAL AGAINST THE ACTUAL

For a study on institutional reforms and its influence on what people do in relation to the forest, it would be quite obvious to draw upon (neo-)institutional theory. However, their strong adherence to institutions to explain behaviour and belief in the 'right' institution to manage common pool resources (Agrawal et al. 2008, Bruns 2009, Ostrom et al. 1999) makes us wander away from this body of thought. To do this is not to deny their importance, scientists as Hardin and Ostrom have been very influential and contributed profoundly to the literature on forest governance (De Koning 2011). But rather it is to set a step from universal, invariable and context-independent theorizing to more contextually grounded schools of thought. It should be stressed here that context-dependence does not mean determinism. In Flyvbjerg (2001:43) words, it means an "open ended, contingent relation between context and actions and interpretations".

In an *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu presents a different approach to scientific practice, which "will disconcert both those who reflect on the social sciences without practicing them and those who practice them without reflecting on them (1977:7)." This reflection is deemed necessary to respond on an fundamental paradox of social and political science: a social science that seeks theories which makes explanation and prediction possible needs to exclude the concrete context of everyday human activity, but this very exclusion of context makes explanation and prediction impossible. According to Dreyfus (1982), ideal theory tries to be 1) universal, it must

apply in all times and all places, 2) explicit, it may not stand or fall on intuition and interpretation, 3) abstract, it must not require the reference to concrete examples, 4) discrete, it must be formulated with context independent elements, 5) systematic, the elements are related to each other by rules and laws and 5) complete and predictive. Especially this last criterion of prediction is problematic for social sciences. Flyvbjerg (2001:42) states that:

The problem in the study of human activity is that every attempt at a context-free definition of an action, that is, a definition based on abstract rules or laws, will not necessarily accord with the pragmatic way an action is defined by the actors in a concrete social situation. Social scientists do not have a theory (rules and laws) for how the people they study determine what counts as an action, because the determination derives from situationally defined (context-dependent) skills, which the objects of study are proficient and experts in exercising, and because theory – by definition – presupposes context-independence.

Without faith in the possibility of ideal theory in social science, the question of what can be put in place, other than relativism and nihilism comes forward. What are the consequences for the practical work? For the choice of methodology? It is in answering these questions that we can learn from the work on social practices.

Therefore, in a first section, we will go back to the one of the original authors, Aristotle, from whom the theory of practices has developed. We will see a short introduction in his philosophy about the human conduct and relate this to three intellectual virtues he distinguished – *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. This will then be linked to more recent authors, mainly focused on Bourdieu and his concept of ‘the logic of practice’. The second section then will elaborate on the conceptual framework to imagine practices. The discussion of the figure will first be separated into three parts. A first part will discuss the visible orderliness of the human world (bodily movements, things, artefacts, sayings). A second part will focus upon mental and emotional patterns, knowledge and introduce the concept of the self. A third part will focus on the concept of structures. After discussing these three parts, the concept of power will be located in the framework, analytically separated into three types of relational power (power as strategic game, creational power and institutional power). Finally then, we will formulate the research questions based upon the introductory chapter and the discussion of the conceptual framework. It should be mentioned here that the main concepts chosen to elaborate upon – practices, self, power – is based on the one hand on the empirics which put these concepts forward as important and on the other hand on the notion that the concept of power and the individual/self could contribute to a theory of practices and the understanding why people care about such thing as ‘the environment’.

## 2.2 FROM ARISTOTLE TO CIRCLES

### 2.2.1 IM ANFANG WAR DIE TÄT<sup>2</sup>

What will happen in our story about Agama, has been a matter of deliberation for a long time. Aristotle, was already concerned with the “matters of conduct” and how politics “legislates as to what we are to do and what we are to abstain from” (Nicomachean Ethics Book I translated by Ross 1994). Rather than a theoretical study, he considered that ethics need to be practical, aimed at becoming good and doing good rather than knowing for its own sake. Aristotle’s thinking on how a man can chose good or bad, be just or unjust, also started from human’s actions “for a man becomes just if he acts just.” It is so not merely the state of mind, nor the rules prescribing the act, but the actual doing of the act that is important. As Aristotle says “for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts (ibid, Book II:1).” Therefore we must examine the nature of actions, because these produce certain states of character. The question might be asked, what is meant by saying that men become just by doing just acts, since men who do just acts are already just, exactly as, if they do what is in accordance with the laws of grammar and of music, they are grammarians and musicians. But according to Aristotle (ibid, Book II:1):

Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or the temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them as just and temperate men do them. *It is well said, then, that it is by doing just acts that the just man is produced*, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no one would have even a prospect of becoming good. [emphasis added]

As with the recent practice turn in governance studies and the field of sociology (Arts et al. 2012, Reckwitz 2002), Aristotle turned away from the thought of his predecessors who started from first principles like ‘the Good’ as a universal thing which all good things have in common. Although he agreed that different things called good don’t seem to have the same name by chance, “it is perhaps better to let go for now, because this attempt at precision would not seem helpful for discussing how particular humans should act, in the same way that doctors do not need to philosophize over the definition of health in order to treat each case (Ibid, Book I:6).”

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<sup>2</sup> In the beginning was the deed. Translated from Faust.

Aristotle added to the intellectual virtues of *episteme* and *techne*, the virtue of *phronesis*, often translated with prudence or practical wisdom (Flyvbjerg 2001). Where *episteme* is concerned with *know why* and *techne* indicates *know how*, *phronesis* prioritizes the particular, practical knowledge and practical ethics. As he says (ibid, Book VI):

Nor is practical wisdom concerned with universals only-it must also recognize the particulars; for it is practical, and practice is concerned with particulars. This is why some who do not know, and especially those who have experience, are more practical than others who know; for if a man knew that light meats are digestible and wholesome, but did not know which sorts of meat are light, he would not produce health, but the man who knows that chicken is wholesome is more likely to produce health. ... Whereas young people become accomplished in geometry and mathematics, and wise within these limits, prudent young people do not seem to be found. The reason is that prudence is concerned with particulars as well as universals, and particulars become known from experience, but a young person lacks experience, since some length of time is needed to produce it ... Political science and prudence are the same state of mind (they are not identical, however. Phronesis is also found at the level of the household and the individual) ... Prudence concerning the state has two aspects: one, which is controlling and directive, is legislative science: the other ... deals with particular circumstances, is practical and deliberative.

Two things are worth noting in this context. First, one can learn the principles of action, but applying them in the real world, in situations that one could not have foreseen, requires experience of the world. Secondly, both the state and the particular, control and circumstance, regulations and deliberation, sovereign power and individual power are emphasized. What could be translated in modern social science as structure and agency. However, in the social and political sciences, a division has developed into two bodies of theories, each representing one of the two sides stressed by Aristotle. One body of thought, the rationalist thinkers emphasising the first of two sides, while the other has developed through Machiavelli and Nietzsche putting attention to the other side. Unfortunately, this misses the interesting point to understand praxis, as what happens at the point of intersection is the appropriate locus for *phronetic* activity (Flyvbjerg 2001). This has been recognized by several authors, as Bourdieu, Giddens, Foucault and Latour who returned to the concept of practices to move beyond dualisms of object and subject, structure and actor, power and knowledge, mind and body, nature and society (Arts et al. 2012). Bourdieu (Wacquant 1989) recognizes Aristotle as the originator of the *habitus* concept, introduced to shift the locus of inquiry from individual actors to the field of practice and to procure practical knowledge, analogous to *phronesis*. Knowledge which will prove valuable for other 'Agama stories'.

### 2.2.2 A LOGIC OF PRACTICE

As we have seen, Aristotle said that “for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them”. A grammar is no language, the rules for debating are not the debate itself, and institutions are not the actual social behaviours. Institutions are not the principle drivers of human behaviour or the only thing to rely upon to steer human action. There is a logic inherent in any action, but such logic does not follow a fixed or general model. Bourdieu (1977, 1990) has called this ‘the logic of practice’. Going from a practical scheme to a theoretical model, constructed after the event, “let slip everything that makes the temporality of a practice in process”. As with music, where every little change of structure, even a subtle transition of rhythm, involves a deconstruction that cannot be simply explained by a change in some axis of reference, practices are inseparable from temporality (Bourdieu 1977). To use another concept of Aristotle, one have to move from *ergon* to *energeia*, from *work* to *being-at-work*, to understand how agents master problems arising in new situations. Hence, logic is internal to the practice. Although structures, (institutions, discourses, power) can guide the agent towards and during practice, the moment he find himself in the specific tempo of the practice, the rhythm takes him beyond reference to external impositions. This does not mean that that all human action is chaotic or random. Bourdieu (1990:94) argues against this by saying:

To grasp the mythopoeic act as the constituting moment, through myth understood as constituted reality, does not mean, as idealists suppose, looking in consciousness for the universal categories of what Cassirer calls a ‘mythopoeic<sup>3</sup> subjectivity’ or, in Lévi-Strauss’s terms, ‘the fundamental structures of human mind’, which are supposed to govern all the empirical configurations realized, regardless of social conditions. Rather, it means reconstructing the socially constituted system of inseparably cognitive and evaluative structures that organizes perception of the world and action in the world in accordance with the objective structures of a given state in the social world. If ritual practices and representations are practically coherent, this is because they arise from the combinatorial functioning of a small number of generative schemes that are linked by relations of practical substitutability, that is, capable of producing results that are equivalent in terms of the ‘logical’ requirements of practice. This systemacity remains loose and approximate because the schemes can receive the quasi-universal application they are given only in so far as they function in the practical state, below the level of explicit statement and therefore outside the control of logic, and in relation to practical purposes which requires of them, and give them a necessity which is not that of logic.

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<sup>3</sup> The term mythopoeic means ‘myth-making’

Therefore we can say that “rules are no game” (Wilden 1987) and that humans become virtuosos within the practices they perform. As Aristotle said, “we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts”. Evidence for this is also found in experiments on human learning processes. Some years ago, an experiment in the United States was conducted on a group of paramedics (Dreyfus et al. 1988). They were shown videos of six persons performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to persons with acute heart failure. Of those six persons, five were inexperienced just learning CPR, while the sixth had long experience in this technique. The group of paramedics were also divided in three: paramedics with practical experience, students, and instructors. Each person was then asked the following question: “Who of the six persons shown in the films would you chose to resuscitate you if you were the victim of such an accident?” From the experienced paramedics, 90 percent chose the one experienced in CPR from the film. In contrast, students only chose for the experienced paramedic in 50 percent of the cases and the instructors even in only 30 percent of the cases. The question can be raised why the latter had such poor results. The answer from phenomenological studies on human learning indicates that people go through different phases or levels when learning ‘skills’, understood to range from the technical to the intellectual. From novices who hold on to context-independent elements and rules to experts’ behavior that is intuitive, holistic, interpretive, and synchronic, characterized by a flowing, effortless performance, unhindered by analytical deliberations. It means that, in learning a skill, there is qualitative jump from rule based, context-independent thinking as the basis for action towards experience-based, situational behaviour. For example, when an expert chess player was asked by Dreyfus where he feels that a move is right, he replied “in the whole body. In the pit of the stomach... (Flyvbjerg 2001:15)” Dreyfus further commented, “[a player’s] hand is just moving pieces as fast as it can and they almost feel as if their detached brain looks down at their hand playing chess.” So because the teachers had no practical experience of carrying out CPR, they attempted to identify a competent rescuer by looking for the one who best followed the rules. As teacher, they had no other reference than the rules they taught their students. For this reason, the inexperienced CPR students in the video were identified as ‘good’ because, as novices, they still closely followed the rules. They could not however, identify the experienced individual, whose behaviour had gone beyond rules and so beyond their ability to recognize his experience.

But what does this really mean? First of all, as human beings are all virtuosos in their daily life practices, a model of rational agents, pursuing utility maximalization, or equally, a model of bounded rationality, is inadequate to understand the total spectrum of human behaviour. Intuition and judgement, both internal to the virtuoso performer, cannot be externalized into rules and

explanations, it is part of the individual. Only analytical rationalization can be externalized. Intuition here is not mere guesswork or some supernatural capacity, as some critics would argue, but the thought behind the thought, a property that every individual uses in everyday life. As Freud (1982:116) says, it is drawing upon “sources which we have not yet opened up for science.” Several authors already recognized the need for expanding our thinking on human behaviour and to include context, experience and intuition. More recent examples are concepts as ‘situated agency’ (Bevir 2005), ‘institutional bricolage’ and actors as ‘bricoleurs’ (Cleaver 2002, De Koning 2011, Sehring 2009) which have been put forward to analyze forest governance. We use the word expanding and not restricting, because it is not the intention to leave out analysis, rationality and rules. Rather, to come to holistic results, we should incorporate both aspects of human beings and their behaviour.

A second issue is that it becomes not only important what we *think* and what we *say*, but also what we *do*. To stress the important question that follows from this, let’s see what Aristotle (ibid, Book I:2) says:

If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good. Will not the knowledge of it, then, have a great influence on life? Shall we not, like archers who have a mark to aim at, be more likely to hit upon what is right?

It means that it not only matters *why* people do what they do, but also *what* they do and *how* they do it. It means that it really makes a difference which activities, habits and related bodily movements we carry out in our daily life. This makes knowledge not only rational, but also bodily and intuitive which makes, in Nietzsche’s words (1974:85), “incorporating knowledge and making it instinctive” important to understand the *why* question of human behaviour. This also implies that by doing the same activities day by day, generation to generation, people can become conditioned to lead a certain way of life rather than another and take the idea that they have few control over their own life. On the other hand, it also creates the possibility to expand people’s imagination when they start to *do* things otherwise. That it is a narrow line between the two will become clear from the intervention process in Agama village.

## 2.3 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO IMAGINE PRACTICES

### *2.3.1 THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS*

Coming so far, a short summary from what we have discussed can be found in the words of Arts et al. (2012:22):

[P]ractice theorists argue against setting human agencies apart from the various factors such as rules, discourses, institutions or nature that influence them and favour a dialectical or dialogical perspective in which these factors continuously bring each other into being. More generally, they argue that social processes and human behaviour should be understood as located at the interface of institutions and actors, in the dynamics of everyday practices, and in the coproduction of knowledge and reality. Consequently, a practice based approach 'decentres' notions such as power, knowledge, rules or agency away from individual actors or separate institutions, and instead locates their existence and meaning in the field of practices.

What characterizes practice theory is its place for the social. The social is not in mental qualities, nor in discourses, nor in interaction. Rather, the social is placed in 'practices', the smallest unit of social analysis (Reckwitz 2002). Considering practices as a way to move beyond the dualism between actor and structure, as the locus for power, knowledge, rules and agency, might raise questions of how to analyze practices then in the first place. If 'everything' comes together in practices, how can we really distinguish then what we analyze? But this is only a theoretical mind game. It is not contradictory to say that structures are produced and reproduced in practice, in the interaction between structure and actor, and that practices have several dimensions which can be valued and analyzed. If we think about a picture of intersecting circles, then we can simultaneously see the whole composition of circles and at the same time discern the individual circles. However, pulling out one circle will transform the whole composition so that analysis of the individual circles can only be done to the extent that we are able to discern them in the composition of all circles together, without trying to tear one out. A composition we will attempt to make in the following paragraph.

### *2.3.2 EXPLAINING THE FRAMEWORK*

To explain how the relation between new PFM institutions and forest practices in the setting of Agama can be understood, following image is presented to organize and conceptualize our thoughts in order to develop more detailed questions.

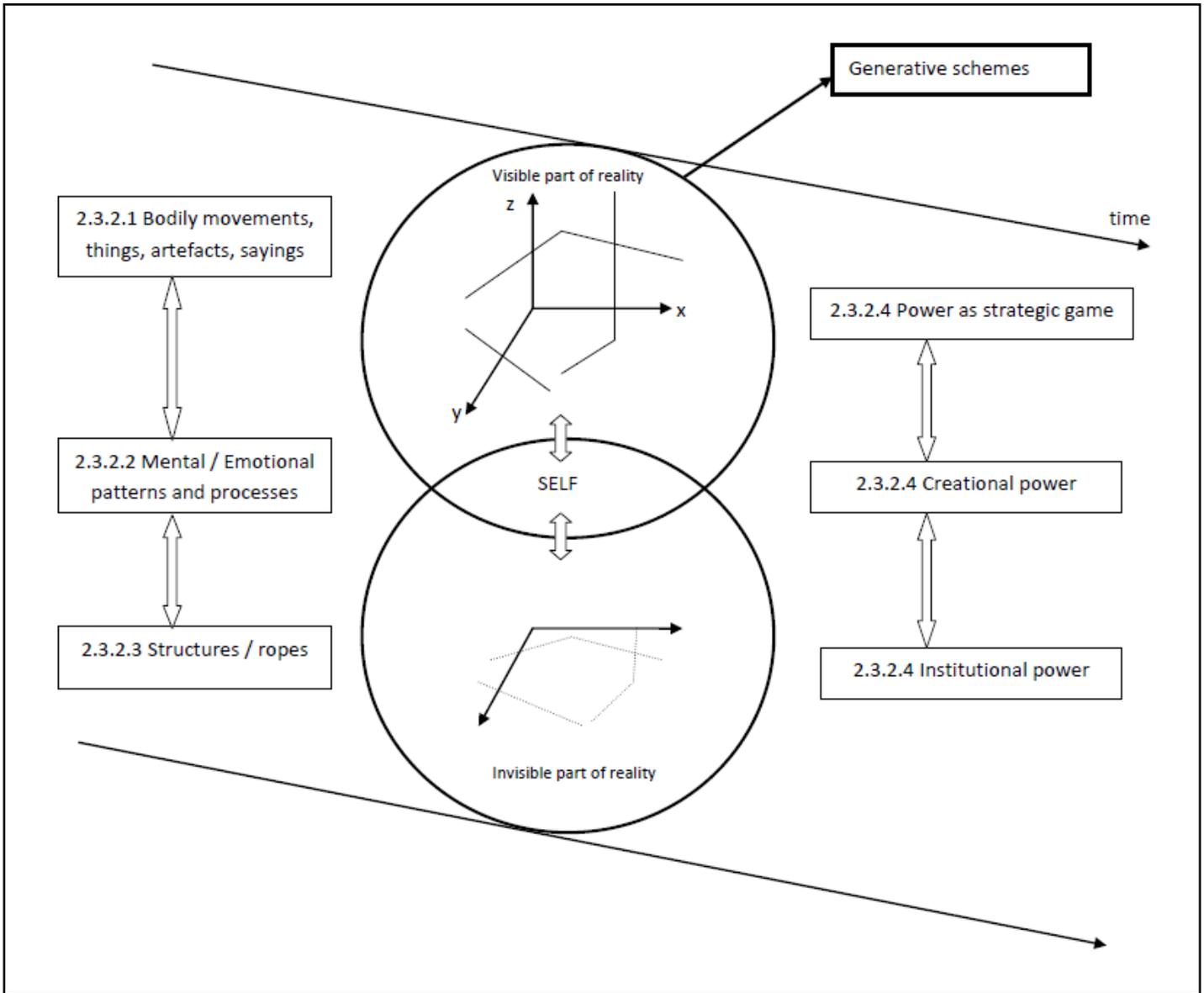


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of 'practices'

The framework consists of several dimensions - shortly summarized as the visible part of reality, the invisible part of reality and the overlap between these two parts – which all together form a field of 'practices' that are successively moving through time and organized by the generative schemes (contour lines of both circles). We shall discuss every dimension, going from the upper part to the lower part and then to the intersection.

### **2.3.2.1 The visible part of reality**

The upper circle with the xyz diagram is what gives the world its visible orderliness. It are the bodies, things and artefacts that move through space and time. Sayings (literally speaking things at loud) are also included as sound is also a vibration which is merely intercept by another human sense (the ear) and 'saying things at loud' is also a way to make thoughts more visible in the interaction with others. Practices are bodily activities (but not only bodily activities as we will discuss below): if we learn a practice then we learn to be bodies in a certain way. This encompasses both handling certain objects as well as 'intellectual' activities as talking and reading (Reckwitz 2002). Looking at the world around us (literally) points also at the indispensability of things and artefacts as component of practices. Carrying out a practice often means using things in a certain way – using the plough to farm the land for example – which means that both subject-subject as subject-object relations produce and reproduce the social order. As some studies on science and technology have reminded us (Strum and Latour 1999), a development project (as the PFM project in Agama) is not only constituted out of social relationships, but also involve things and other material resources which constitute relationships (documents, farming material, clothing, office building etc). This perspective also opens the way to look more deeply into how elements of the biophysical world have influence on social practices of the human world. Leach (1961) made clear in his study on tank irrigation in a Sinhalese village that social structures have also a territorial and ecological dimension and found that institutional arrangements are constrained by the facts of ecology. The environment (for example forest or agro-forested land in Agama) were people are situated in is thus also an important part to conceptualize social practices.

Sayings are part of discursive practices which are seen as one type of practices among others (and thus not a privileged one) in which the world is meaningfully constructed in language or other sign systems (Reckwitz 2002). Discourses will be referred to in part 2.3.2.2.

### **2.3.2.2 The invisible part of reality**

To clarify how we can study 'doings and sayings', while being aware of an invisible part of reality that structures them, we can do the following: imagine that we look at the daily activities of one actor with a bird's-eye view and we draw a line which represents the movements of actors through time. We could finish with an unbelievably complex and dense, but visualized, network of lines. If we think now of these lines as ropes that actors can use to decide what they do, say and think, then we can make the link between those ropes and the concept of structures, projected in the lower part

of Figure 1. The ropes get their particular shape and direction in the context they are produced and are at the same time reproduced by the actors following the ropes. It also becomes clear from the figure that the ropes are interconnected and influence each other, while guiding several activities at the same time. As Reckwitz (2002) puts it, “a practice is social, as it is a ‘type’ of behaving and understanding that appears at different locales and at different points of time and is carried out by different body/minds.”

Structures (discourses, knowledge, power, institutions) can be seen as constitutive of reality that are co-produced in context-specific practices. Metaphorically speaking, it are the ropes that construct the upper part of the figure, not merely representing the world, but actively constituting it when they are taken up by agents. When agents ‘take over’ a practice, they also take over its interpretative perspective which emerges out of the social interactions, historical contingency and mental/emotional processes in that particular practice (Thrift 2001), all which gives meaning to reality. This implies two things important for interventions in resource management. First is the parallels that can be drawn between power and knowledge processes. If we see them as ropes then it is clear that they cannot be possessed by single agents, but are relational and can entail struggle when more people are pulling the same rope. Thus, when development agents enter the life-world with their specific frame of meaning of how a forest should be managed, then knowledge encounters involve struggle between those development agents and the people they want to enrol in their project (Long and Long 1992), getting them to accept a certain frame of meaning which can become constitutive of their reality (and bring for example change in how they use the forest). Secondly, an element of unpredictability comes forward. When structures are co-produced in practices they are subject to the contingency inherent in practices and to the improvisation and creativity of the agents involved. Similar structural circumstances may give rise to different social forms because contingent events happen and because the difference in the way agents come to grips with the situations they face (Long and Long 1992). For example, two villages in the same neighbourhood in Bonga area can give rise to a different social organizing evolving around the village forests because contingency in events (keep in mind when reading chapter one of part II) and the specific strategies and rationales the people living in those villages develop.

A last thing which follows from our understanding of structures and should be pointed at, because this will be important to understand the empirical results in part II, is the understanding of local resource systems as compared to common institutional models. When the latter perceive use of common property resources (CPRs) as product of rational choice, they fail to include the fact that institutions are constituted in practices and do so in culturally and historically specific ways. Mosse

(1997) argued in his institutional analysis of irrigation tanks in Tamil Nadu that CPRs are not only repositories of material resources, but also of symbolic resources. Part of the symbolic 'production of locality' as Appadurai (1997) would say. He further argued that "attempting to account for the strengths and weaknesses of institutions of resource management in terms of balance of individual economic costs and benefits gives little recognition to the fact that material interests are often inseparable from social relationships (1997:472)" which means that the choices people made in Tamil Nadu were mediated by shared assumptions about things as justice, fairness and reciprocity. This means that local institutions to manage the natural resources do not only follow an instrumental rationality, but also have symbolic meaning and their production is mediated by a value-rationality as well.

### **2.3.2.3 The intersection**

The overlap between the structures constitutive of reality and the bodily activities and things is inextricably linked with the carrier of the practices: the agent. Reckwitz (2002) mentions that agents are body/minds who 'carry' and 'carry out' social practices and so 'consist in' the performance of practices. The agent is not autonomous but situated in a particular context in which he understands the world and uses know-how and motivational knowledge according to the particular practice. He stresses the point that a carrier of a practice takes over the bodily and mental patterns that constitute the practice and so are not a possession of the individual, but part of the social practice. We also saw that that no universal institutions can be found to explain human behaviour, but only generative principles that steer human action in a specific field of practice historically formed in time and space. However, agents are situated in a multitude of social practices which occur simultaneously or separated in time. This raises the question how we prevent the agents from becoming fragmented if agents' responses to situational circumstances, their capacity to improvise, are located in different practices across different time and spatial scales. It is here that the concept of the self becomes useful for our understanding of the agent. In social psychological literature, we read about the self (Hitlin and Elder 2007:178)

The self is both a structure and a process, and the interplay between the socialized, developed "Me" and the spontaneous "I" captures the process notion of this construct. The "I" acts, and those actions are reflectively absorbed and compared with the "Me." The "I," however, while situationally emergent also implicates our personality, and our moral intuitions that circumscribe what we are "really" like. Over time, our sense of self is developed in part by observing how we are predisposed to

act in novel, non-routine, emergent situations. The personal anchor of the “I” may refer to those self-aspects we use to discriminate among actions that may or may not reflect our “true self” (Turner 1976). ... We might suggest, however, an *empirical* direction this work might take. The “I” is anchored in feelings, senses of self that might draw on the burgeoning literature on emotions (see Turner and Stets 2006). Emotions offer a window into the criterion that individuals use to judge whether various possible actions “fit” with their self-conception (...).

Two things are important. First is the development over time of the self which provides an experiential continuity throughout a person’s life who is situated in a multitude of different practices. The notion of the self as continuous core of actor’s experience includes both the creative aspect of the I and the concept of role, or the socially developed Me. The experience that is accumulated throughout a lifetime is used in the performance of any role, using general experience to particular facets of the self which becomes the repository of that experience (Cohen 1994). In this sense, we can situate self-formation in the crossing point of the multitude of practices an actor is engaged in as these are the providers of experience. Even Reckwitz (2002) distinguishes the ‘individual’ from the agent as the “individual is the unique crossing point of practices, bodily-mental routines”, while the agent is the carrier of a plethora of different social practices. Looking at the self as such means that different practices, and their generative principles, can be linked together through the individuals who carry them out. This simple observation implies that social practices not only shape self-formation, but in reverse are also shaped by the selves who are repository for the experience gained from participating in certain practices. Because, if actors only take over the ‘bodily and mental routines’ inherent to a practice and not to the individual, then how to understand self formation as a coherent process anchored in the experience of certain practices? Practices do not only situate actors in space and time, but also provide emotional and rational feedback to anchor the self and to judge whether what and how they engage in practice aligns with an actor’s self-conception. As such, the self is formed within practices in a continuous process of comparing and adapting the underlying principles with aspects that reflect his self. Figuratively speaking, self-formation happens ‘between’ principles and practices. Generative principles that guide or pattern social practices do not follow a ‘masterplan’ as also argued by Bourdieu (1977,1990), but are constituted through the recognized principles – formed historically and socially in time and space, but individually reckoned – of the selves that are participating in practices. If reciprocity for example guides social interaction, then this is only so when this principle has meaning for the people situated in that interaction. Meaning is given then to those principles based on a reflection to what extent it finds resonance in the self, which in itself is of course shaped through the situated

experiences that form the continuous base of the self. Metaphorically speaking, we can prepare food together with ingredients that are contextually shaped, and divide it among many persons, but we do not have a collective stomach to digest it. Second observation is then that individuals are capable to develop their own conceptual framework of values and moral code when exercising the functions of the self – to think, feel, act and judge – in the practices he is involved which can not only guide action, but also motivate actions, and thus are not completely ‘taken over’ by the bodily and mental routines of practices or a logic inherent in the practices.

The locus for the self in the whole composition is important because it implies that inferences need to proceed from the individual to the structures and to the activities of people and not in reverse order. It is the self which provides an experiential continuity throughout a lifetime, not a series of discontinuous activities or pieces of ropes and which is the repository for the emotions and thoughts which feedback from carrying out a certain practice. We do not act completely random in our lives, there are commitments to certain ropes of activity, and we motivate and modify behaviour based on accumulated experience and feedback from the practices we are engaged in. We are situated within a certain form, the boundaries of both circles, but to give meaning to it, is a primary act that rests within the individual. Even in routinized daily activities and the performance of social roles, choices are made based on past behaviour and accumulated experience.

The importance of self-formation processes has been focus of attention in environmental management as well. Agrawal (2005) for example places attention to the variations in self formation and the involvement in different social practices in which self formation takes place. He argues that social and environmental practices emerging under different institutional and political circumstances are a mediating concept of the connection between context and self formation. From his study in a village in India, he concludes that “the practices of enforcement and regulation in which villagers have come to participate have to do with more careful government of environment and of their own actions and selves (2005:21).” But self formation is not only shaped within practices, it is at the same time the context of those practices, meaning that it influences *how* practices are carried out. Two actors participating in the same situated practices who are apparently similar in *what* they do, can still receive different feedback (emotions and thought) because of a difference in sense of their selves. Based on accumulated experience in a lifetime, individuals are able to build up a personal code of morals and values, differing across individuals not in terms of *if* they pursue their own values and interests, but *what* they chose to value and regard as interests.

#### **2.3.2.4 Three types of power (and empowerment)**

For a study on a development intervention to establish PFM in Agama, 'power' and 'empowerment' need to be conceptualized to analyze what happens at the interface (Long 2001). Too often, empowerment is perceived as a 'property' that some people or groups possess or not possess and relates levels of power with more or less fixed interests attributed to those groups. Development interventions that claim community participation often fail to reflect upon the fact that power is fundamentally relational (Foucault 1988, Lemke 2003) and cannot solely be attributed to levels of social status, institutional positions or material resources. Therefore we will now discuss the relational character of power, distinguished in three types and end with reflections on empowerment. Generally, power can be seen as both a capacity of individuals to 'mind their own will' and motivate actions and as a structural phenomenon in a social system.

##### *Power as strategic game*

First, in the upper circle presenting the activities of agents in time and space, power as 'strategic game' (Lemke 2003) can be identified. This type of power can be identified in the many daily interactions between individuals and groups as a nearly ubiquitous feature of interactions insofar it signifies structuring possible field of actions of others (Nuijten 2005). The process is mediated by authoritative resources (Cleaver 2000) of the actors involved that justify their institutional positioning or influence. These resources can be diverse, like official positions, networks, kinship relations, wealth or personal characteristics as eloquence, strength, inventiveness and even physical characteristics as body mass (Carney et al. 2010). However, it only becomes visible in the details of human interactions, 'the small things'. This can be clarified with the example of a play in a theatre. The individual actors are not only guided by the script and the words of the director, but also by their bodily activities and the interactions with the other actors. A blink of an eye, a wave of the hand, a frontal position, a difference in clothing, it all reveals the hidden relations of power that are present in the play and at the same time reconstitutes them.

##### *Institutional power*

A second type is a structural or institutional power which can be located in the lower circle. It refers to more systematized and regulated mode of power than the instantaneous exercise of power. It

shapes the conduct of agents and follows a specific form of reasoning which is materialized in discourses and institutions that mediate agents' process of giving meaning to the world, legitimizes certain acts and thoughts and enables or constrains agents' imaginative processes and works mainly through discursive rituals and administrative practices (Rose and Miller 1992). From the story of Agama, it will be clear that such routinized practices are important to understand how the image of an 'up there' and 'everywhere' state is constructed. Institutional power is furthermore related to Foucault's constitutive view on discourses. If power is in the discourse itself (Fisher 2003), then it is because it shapes the ropes and so the imagination of the actors using them, and determines the force that is exercised in the hands of the one holding them. By influencing the possible forms and pulling force on the ropes, they simultaneously influence (to the extent that the individual is not pulling back or releases the rope) the doings, sayings and thinking of the actors holding the ropes and carrying out the practice. As such, discourse and institutions are both constitutive of the orderliness of human activities (upper part of the figure).

### *Creational power*

Although individuals cannot change the structures or events that are collectively shaped, they do have the possibility to control their inner experience in relation to those outer structures and events. This brings us to a last type of power that can be located in the intersection of Figure 1 and is a 'creational power'. This type is related to the concept of 'existential agency' (Hitlin and Elder 2007) in a sense that it refers to a fundamental level of the capacity to self-act, inherent in social action and a universal human potentiality. Even in social interactions that are defined by relations of domination and subordination, individuals are able to exert a certain power (Goffman 1974). If they cannot chose *what* they do, there is still the possibility to influence *how* they do it by mastering their feelings and thought associated with the situation they find themselves in. However, considering this capacity gets socially channeled, it is not merely the capacity itself, but also the self-reflective beliefs we have about our capacities to act that are important. Bandura (2001) views this reflective belief about one's capacities as the core of human agency. As phrased by Hitlin and Elder (2007:177), "Rather than being concerned with "free will" as an end in itself, sociologists need to take into account self-reflective understandings of our abilities and capacities within specific domains to exert this will." Creational power is thus related to 'a sense of personal empowerment' which motivates and guides existential agency and influences the position an individual takes towards established power relations in his interaction with others.

It is obvious that those three forms of power are closely linked to each other. However, we can distinguish between the first two types and the last type based on the nature of the relationship in which power is constituted. Power perceived in the daily interactions and institutional power influence human conduct *through* human conduct. Although structures can have a *long durée* (Arts and Van Tatenhove 2004) transcending more than one lifetime, they do not act, but work through human action. In this sense, these types of powers are ‘indirect’ and ‘outside’, from the perspective of the agent. Creational power however is a ‘direct’ or ‘inside’ form of power, as it based on an intra-personal perception of one’s own capacities. Although always part of larger institutions and structural processes, ‘creational power’ expands agents’ imagination outside the boundaries of those structures based on personal experiences and provides a counter effect against the constitutive power of structures and operative power in daily interactions.

### *Empowerment*

The prevailing approach to decentralize decision-making powers and functions to communities and to implement those decision through community participation for ‘effective and equitable’ management of natural resources is rather characterized by simplistic notions of community and unrealistic views on power (Leach et al. 1997, Nuijten 2005). The idea to empower the ‘poor’ and the ‘marginalized’ to cast off their status as victims and to actively participate in the transformation of their life conditions has had since the 1960s extremely positive connotations for thinkers, activists, and reformers. As Dean (1999:67) phrases it:

“[empowerment] draws upon the participatory aspects of democratic traditions and preserves, while it radicalizes, the stress on autonomy and self-determination found in many variants of liberalism. It suggests that the value of political arrangements can be measured by the degree to which they enable all citizens to participate in decision-making processes. Empowerment is, in this sense, the normative correlate of the explanatory focus on agency. If human beings are, at least potentially, agents, then they need to be empowered to become so.”

Empowerment is thus essentially linked to participation in decision making processes, which has also been emphasised in strategies for community based natural resource management (Nandigama 2009). However, prevailing strategies focus on the empowerment of collectives, like communities or local organizations who should act together for a common goal. This collapses the distinction between the interests and self-beliefs of a group as perceived by the interventionists and the beliefs and interests of the members of that group. Beliefs in the capacity to self-act or interests of

members of a group are not of one piece and do not change at the same time (Agrawal 2005) and thus 'collectives' cannot be empowered as one whole. Different members of a social group may have different interests or prefer to work in personal networks or customary institutions than to participate in formalized collective action which clearly defined aims, democratic forms of decision making and that secure transparency and accountability (Mosse 1997, Nuijten 2005).

For the story of Agama, participation during the institutionalization of PFM is an intriguing question. Characterized by a history of autocratic systems and mass mobilizations, and confronted with a PFM project model that needs to be actualized in villagers' practices, asks for a critical reflection on 'participation' and 'empowerment' in the practices of PFM in Agama.

### 3.4 GOING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Although there are a lot of 'universes' of practices, always in motion and influencing each other, the aim of this research is to focus on the forest practices of Agama villagers and their relationship with the institution that was created through the PFM project. This means looking at the different dimensions of practices in time – activities, structures and individuals' thoughts, feelings and experiences – related to the use, distribution and management of the forest and how the institution of the forest user group influences or is influenced by the different dimension of villagers' daily practices.

It should be stressed that it is not the main purpose to describe the forest practices per se. Rather the focus is to understand and explain the relationship between the PFM policy model and the (forest) practices and events they are expected to generate and legitimize in the context of Agama. It does thus not only imply the forest-related activities of local people, but also the activities of governmental workers and NGO's with impact in the local context of Agama. Considering that the local forest practices are based on certain 'ropes', they can be used as an entry-point to examine how forest governance, in the form of PFM project, has affected forest practices (De Koning 2011, Wiersum 1995), because as we have said, when the PFM scheme is introduced in a community, it attempts to create a new rope along which participants can move themselves, mostly with the aim to change the forest practices of local people. But, creating a new rope is not inherently accompanied by an actual change in practices. A practice is only changed, when it is changed in all its dimensions: when the ropes are reconfigured along the design of PFM, when the structures are changed to the one of PFM, when the process in the intersection of the circles has internalized the

new rope, and finally, when it becomes visible in the order of doings and sayings in people's daily life.

Taken together, PFM is about two things: Participation and Forest management that should become entwined with each other. A closer look to what is happening in the daily lives of people in Agama, mediated by the specific historical and socio-political context, can help to explain how the project became something different than the design that was put on paper.

Finally, based on the research puzzle, research aims, cooperation with the PhD project and conceptual framework of practices, following questions can be formulated:

- 1) What happens when PFM hits the ground in Agama?
  - A) How was it introduced and institutionalized ?
  - B) How do people become to care about and act upon and in relation to a newly introduced regulatory institution?
  - C) What are the consequences for forest (and natural resource) management?
- 2) Particularly, how are participation and empowerment practiced situated in the historical and political context of Agama?
- 3) How has PFM affected the field of forest practices in Agama?

# THREE

## THE METHOD

Learning to see is habituating the eye to repose, to patience, to letting things come to it; learning to defer judgement, to investigate and comprehend the individual case in all its aspects. This is the first preliminary schooling in spirituality.

(Friedrich Nietzsche)

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

During a course on policy sciences, all of us, students, got the assignment to write a paper that applied a particular theory on a subject of choice. Considering the topic of my thesis, I chose to write on community based natural resource management in developing countries from the perspective of institutionalism and post-institutionalism. I experienced that I could write a well graded paper without having any practical experience on the subject matter, causing me to experience my grade as rather 'untruthful'. It made me wonder about the literature I was reading in preparation for the thesis, how most part of it was actually produced and which knowledge could be transmitted by mere reading it. Browsing through the literature I collected on PFM in Ethiopia, I was disappointed that I could not find much accounts of concrete, context-specific practices in which institutions and policy decisions concerning PFM were actually produced and acted upon. NGO reports provided sometimes examples off course, but these were more 'examples of best practices' than detailed and nuanced descriptions of the situation. Concerning the concrete practices on a local level, it became rather abstract, speaking only in terms of 'the community', 'farmers', 'participation', 'resource' etc. To say this is not to reduce the value of a lot of studies and the knowledge they produce, but rather to point at what happens with that knowledge. I questioned who actually reads those policy recommendations at the back of a study. And what is the value for the people actually living the

situation under scrutiny? A small crisis in conviction about any possible value of my thesis followed until one book, *Making Social Science Matter Again* written by Bent Flyvbjerg, 're-enchanted' my motivation. Flyvbjerg (2001) argues to balance the classical instrumental rationality with a value-rationality and to transform social science from a 'sterile academic activity' undertaken for "its own sake and in isolation from a society on which it has little effect and from which it gets little appreciation (2001:166)". Rather, we should come to a social science that contributes to society's practical rationality by looking at where we are going, whether this is desirable, who gains and who loses by which mechanisms and what should be done. Thus, a social science that serves as eyes and ears in our understanding of society's capacity for value-rational deliberation and action. As Nietzsche (1969) once said, "there is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective 'knowing;' and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity' be." One of the premises to perform such social science is to start from the practices and what is actually done to test the extent to which theory and ideals hold in the empirics. A premise that fits well within the aspects of our PBA (see 1.5).

In this chapter, we will start with explaining the choice of research strategy, a case study, and motivate why it fits a PBA and possibly also a kind of research as described by Flyvbjerg. Furthermore, the selection process of the case will be explained. A second section then will deal with the process of data collection and is divided into three parts based upon their separation in time. A first phase discusses literature research and preliminary interviewing, a second phase the field methods and a third phase document research and additional interviewing. The field methods will start with a brief discussion on the theoretical inspiration coming from Nuijten's (2005) method used in researching natural resource management, followed by a description of sensory participant observation, interviewing and translation, free diary, transect walks and forestry research. Section two will end with an overview of the data collection and triangulation process in the form of a figure. A last section will deal with the narrative method and why it is used to present the data, how the narrative was constructed and how accountability was taken into account. Theoretical inspiration mainly comes from Van der Zommel and Van Bommel's reflections on how to create a scientific narrative.

## 3.2 CASE STUDY RESEARCH

There is one story of the famous detective Sherlock Holmes asking to his companion Watson to examine a hat for clues. Watson looks at it and says “I can see nothing.” Holmes’ telling response is that, “on the contrary, Watson, you can see everything. You fail, however, to reason from what you see. You are too timid in drawing your inferences.” To see the clues on the hat when asking questions about the nature and variety of institutional dynamics in local forest management, a case study approach that could provide a tick description was chosen. As Yin (1994) says, case study is applicable to answer the *how* and *why* questions, particularly useful when we aim for a holistic approach that acknowledge different realities and local actors’ perspectives upon strategies that were ‘designed’ to change their very own lives (De Koning 2011). More research specific motivations for a case study are listed below.

First, applying a practice based approach asks for a method that can facilitate the production of detailed information on the setting in which the event takes place, the people and interactions involved (Arts et al. 2012). Moreover, the position of the researcher should also be taken into account. The idea that research is by nature interpretative and constructive is by now a widely accepted paradigm (Pink 2010). Knowledge is co-constituted, as combined product of researcher, participants, objects, place and their relationship (Latour 1996). Being in itself part of an ongoing struggle over ‘truth’, carrying out research to go and sell out truth in the world is a fallacy. Thus, we need a reflective turn, a consideration as researcher about our own role in the production of knowledge, not as “expression of a sort of epistemological sense of honor” as Bourdieu says (Wacquant 1989:35), but as “a principle that leads to constructing scientific objects into which the relation of the analyst to the object is not unconsciously projected.” For both characteristics, producing detailed information in a reflexive manner, important is to use “multiple sources of evidence” (Yin 1984:23) and sufficient time. A case study approach provides thus a flexible environment to study complexity, details and context, and space to reflect upon the research strategies in order to contextualize these to the setting of the case.

Secondly, as it was my aim to contribute to ‘value rational deliberation and action’, the required practical knowledge and situational ethics evolve best in in-depth case experiences (Flyvbjerg 2001). Nuijten (2005) also argues that we first need to understand the logics of the existing organizing practices and power relations in the specific socio-political context before we can think about how to improve management around natural resources. These logics cannot be reduced to predefined elements and rules, operating without interpretation. Central to all human action is Bourdieu’s (1977) ‘feel for the game’, which enables an infinite number of possible situations, which no rule can foresee. So studying cases in their proper context, both the local context that gives direct

meaning to phenomena and the larger national and global context that give phenomena general and conceptual significance, can (but not necessarily have to) bring about value rational deliberation among the public involved.

It should also be stressed that focusing on cases does not imply an exclusion of empirical generalizations (De Koning 2011). Generalizations is not necessarily predictive in character, it can also be explanatory, serving to demonstrate a range of different doings, sayings and outcomes, as well as the factors that influenced these outcomes (Miles and Huberman 1994). Based on empirical knowledge from cases, 'grounded' theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) can be proposed, enabling to see what can happen in cases in a different setting and so contributing to the practical knowledge of both researcher and his audience. Take for example two observers of a herd of horses. Both know about the existence of a hierarchy among horses when grazing on the same land. However, only one of them knows concrete examples of behaviour that is associated with these relations of domination. Then only he will recognize hierarchy when he is seeing it, while the former will have a hard time finding out why those horses act as they do. Cases can thus provide practical knowledge as a tool or reference to look at other cases and enables the researcher to develop, as in the Dreyfus model of human learning, expertise based on intuition, experience and judgement.

Finally, but not less important, this study is as mentioned also part of a larger research project, a PhD dissertation on policy dynamics and institutional performance of forest governance in Ethiopia, and an in-depth case study on local practices complements the larger study.

### *3.2.2 SELECTION OF THE CASE*

The selection process of the single case for this study has been a *mélange* of strategic choice and intuitive judgement. The first argument was that it needed to complement the PhD research in which my research was part of. Secondly, in my perspective, a case needs value and validity claims to contribute to the dialogue with other validity claims in the discourse of community natural resource management and development, both in the scientific community as, possibly, in the public sphere. We may ask however, "How does one identify a case that can have metaphorical and prototypical value?" This question is difficult to answer. Dreyfus, in answering a question of Flyvbjerg (2001:80) on how to identify paradigmatic cases, replied:

Heidegger says, you recognize a paradigm case because it shines, but I'm afraid that is not much help. You just have to be intuitive. ... [I]t is a big problem in a democratic society where people are supposed to justify what there intuitions are. In fact, nobody really can justify what their intuition is. So you have to make up reasons, but it won't be the real reasons.

However, a case selection may be based on individual intuitive reasons, a researcher still needs to find general justifications that are generally valid and needs to take into account the practical possibilities. It was then also the cooperation with the PhD project that provided the first logic to choose the area of the case. In different parts of Ethiopia, PFM projects are being implemented by different actors. Two areas, Chilimo and Belete-Gera had already been covered in the PhD, whereas two still remained, Bonga and Bale area. As I opted for Bonga, based on rational and intuitive judgement, Bale would then also be covered by the PhD project.

Bonga is the capital of the zone of Kaffa in South west Ethiopia, an area were still large forests are present with numerous communities living scattered in and around them (see Figure 2). The forest around Bonga is part of the two remaining continuous blocks of Afromontane forest vegetation in Ethiopia which play a major role in water-tower of the country (De Vries et al. 2012). The natural forest in Kaffa zone however is primarily known as the place of the origin of *Coffea Arabica* gene pool (Chilalo and Wiersum 2011, Stellmacher 2007) and forest coffee is still extracted from the wild (Gole et al. 2008). Coffee is one of the major NTFPs collected by rural villagers, in addition to honey and different types of spices, all which form a major contribution to the livelihoods of communities living in the area (Tsegaye Gobeze et al. 2009). After selection of the area, still a specific village in a specific kebele needed to be selected. A preliminary assessment was carried out in old PFM project sites (villages) by a colleague of the Forestry Research Centre in Ethiopia who was informed about the subject of the study and the context the PhD student and myself wanted to research. The information collected made us focus on two villages in two different kebeles that were very much similar. However, after visiting both and ‘sensing the air’, searching possible host families and options for translation, I decided, with support from the PhD student, to chose Yeyebito kebele which encompassed the villages that have become the main setting for this research. And, as we will see, it revealed itself to be pregnant with paradigms, metaphors and general significance, or what Nietzsche would call ‘cyclopean monuments’. The place appeared to have a name now. It was *Agama*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Yeyebito has currently eleven villages. My research focused on four of them: Agama one, Agama two, Agama three and Agama four which are mostly referred to as ‘Agama’ and therefore Agama will be used to refer to all four villages. Only when necessary the explicit village will be mentioned. An old name for the four villages was ‘Komba’, but this is not much used anymore by the people in Agama. My host family resided in Agama three.

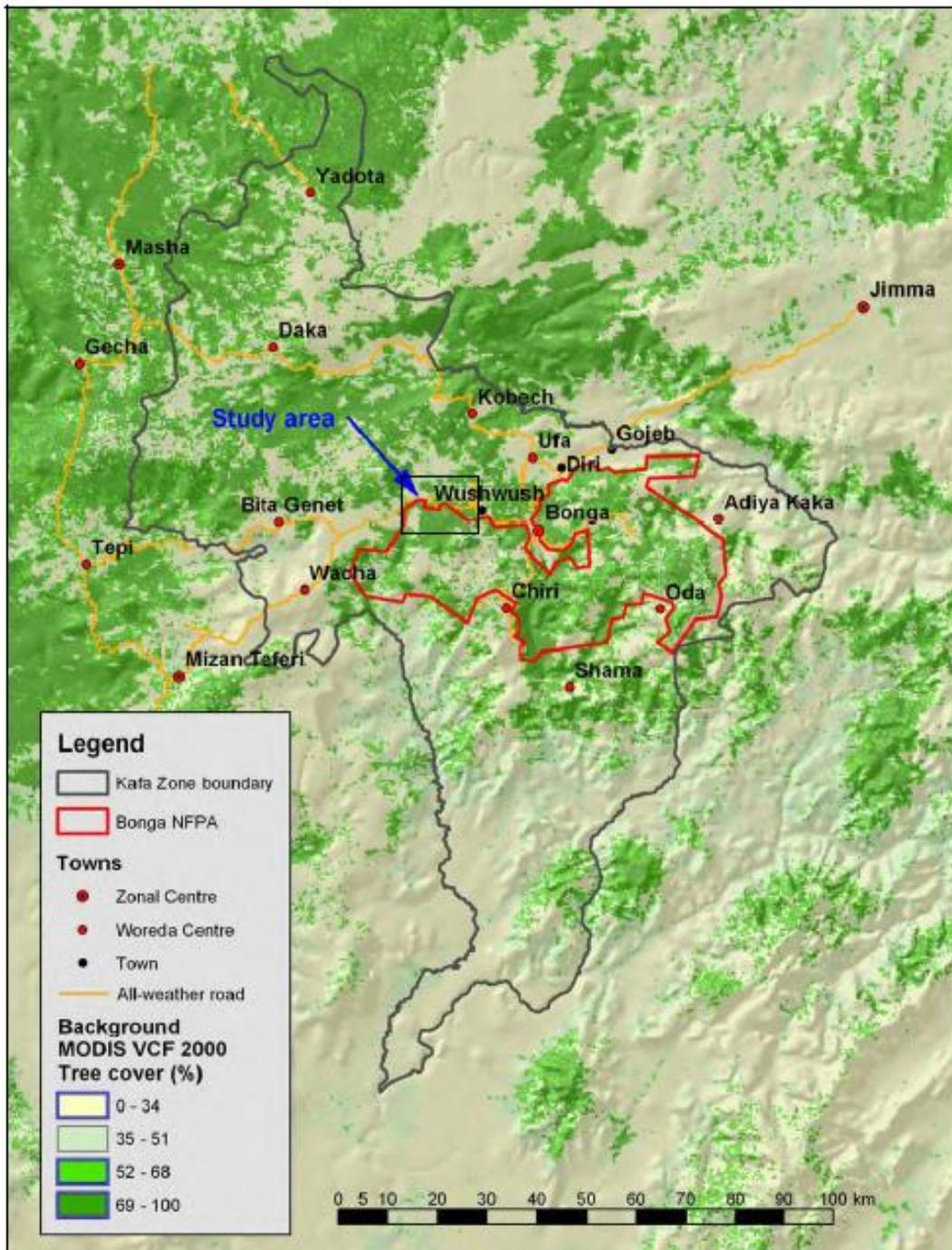


Figure 2: Forest cover and Bonga NFFPA in Kaffa zone with indication of the study area (Stellmacher 2007 based on MODIS Vegetation Continuous Fields Satellite Image 2000)

### 3.3 THREE PHASES OF DATA COLLECTION

My research process did not particularly follow a linear fashion, but rather all kind of ‘surprises’ in the process made me go back and forth between developing research questions and theoretical framework, study design, analysis and field data. Moreover, a case study provides massive amounts of all kinds of data that need to be structured and organized (Miles and Huberman 1994) in order to make a compelling story for the reader. Therefore, to explain the process of data collection, I will distinguish three phases, evolving in time and in content.

#### 3.3.1 PHASE ONE: NOVICE

##### 3.3.1.1 Literature research and helicopter interviewing<sup>5</sup>

The preparation already started in June 2011 when I started reading introductory literature on decentralization, environmental governance and the policy process in Ethiopia, while choosing the paper ‘Drawbacks of decentralized natural resource management: experience from Chilimo Participatory Forest Management project, Ethiopia (Mohammed and Inoue) as exam topic of the course Agricultural Sociology in the University of Ghent. Considering my research project was connected with the University of Wageningen, where also the PhD student was involved, I became Erasmus student at Wageningen University. My Dutch promoter and me consciously selected courses to get further acquainted with policy and social sciences and as such, September 2011 to January 2012 became the main period for browsing through secondary literature and holding regularly discussions with my promoter on papers (most of them mentioned in the references) covering a broad range of themes from decentralization and recentralization, participation, policy making, forest and nature governance, institutionalism, to ethical considerations of research in development context. Furthermore, once decided upon the area of study, I searched more detailed documents about Ethiopia and Bonga forest.

Finally then, 11 February 2012, I crossed land and sea to the horn of Africa to start the ‘real’ experience. The first two weeks were characterized by intense discussions with my ‘colleague’, the PhD student, which gave me enormous amount of information and insight in the policy making process, history and culture of Ethiopia; literature browsing in the Forestry Research Centre of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa; and participating in and observing of Ethiopia’s ‘way of living’. Moreover, I

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<sup>5</sup> Inspired by the FNP thesis of Elisa De Lijster *Nature Policy in a discourse struggle: in search for new symbols, stories and coalitions*.

participated in a terminal evaluation workshop in Addis Ababa on Participatory Forest Management program implemented in Oromia regional state and conducted four semi-structured interviews with actors who had a broad overview on the field of (forest) policy making and implementation processes and recent PFM developments in Ethiopia. As Bogner, Littig and Menz (2009) define it, they were 'experts' understood as people who have – starting from a specific knowledge that refers to a clearly defined sphere of problems – the ability to structure the concrete field of activities in a reasonable and practical way. These interviews were also excellent introduction to 'learn how to interview'. Aspects as probing, language use, self presentation during the interview, experimenting how to take notes and listen, place of the recorder, body language etc could be experienced and reflected upon. In other words, by actually carrying out the 'practice' of interviewing, I gained knowledge – mentally, bodily, emotionally - on how to perform interviews.

In overall, the first phase of the literature review provided me with theoretical concepts and examples of community based natural resource management in other countries. In the second phase, review of more specific academic and NGO accounts of the situation in Ethiopia provided further information, and gave preliminary insights in identifying the dominant actors and discourses on forests, community and how their relationship could and should be managed by NGO's, government and the community itself. Secondly, the first interviews in Addis had a dual purpose of both information and data gathering. Its informative function came from the capacity of the interviewees to give an overview of PFM in Ethiopia and reflect upon the main events, actors and problems. However, the information is also constructed from the perspective of the interviewees and as such, the views expressed during the interviews were simultaneously a source of data.

### *3.3.2 PHASE TWO: ADVANCED BEGINNER*

#### **3.3.2.1 Field methods**

A second phase started when I left the capital, Addis Ababa, to travel to Bonga, together with the PhD student and colleagues from the FRC to finally start my fieldwork. As explained before, the first step was to select one of the two villages where I could live the next three months to carry out my research on PFM practices. As with most of the practical arrangements for my fieldwork, this selection step was at the same time also a source of data collection on Ethiopian political working culture and bureaucracies. It was a first experience with the indetermination and fear from lower state agencies to take autonomous decisions, so that in the end only a letter of the federal institute

EIAR gave us the necessary documents and stamps which were my formal entry ticket to contact the community and live in the village.

### *The flow of action and ideas*

As I was interested to analyze situated institutional dynamics, forest practices, participation and their relations 'from the ground', attending to people's own interpretations and concerns, I was inspired by the force field approach to natural resource management summarized by Nuijten (2005). As a possible research methodology that starts from practices on the ground without favouring any formal models and rules beforehand she proposes to follow the 'flow of action' with a focus on conflicts and the 'flow of ideas' around a specific set of resources for a longer period of time. In 1990, Wolf suggested to do research by looking at the 'flow of action', to ask what is going on, why it is going on, who engages in it, with whom, when and how often. Nuijten (2005) argues that detailed studies of access and distribution of resources over time can reveal the working of institutions, organizing processes and power relations around natural resources. Important is to focus on conflicts because they point at the issues at stake and the struggles and practices that evolve around them. Also public events are important in the focus of the methodology. Official meetings can show more than only their formal function. It are dramas that can be used to explore the relation between language and action (Czarniawska 1997) and give clues what is happening 'behind the scenes' from the ironic talk, body language and small conversations. The focus on conflict can also be related to the interface approach of Long to analyze encounters between different groups and persons in planned intervention processes (Long 1999, 2001). According to Long (1989:3) interfaces are "critical points at which not only policy is applied, but at which it is transformed through acquiring social meanings that were not set out in the original policy statements". Such interactional studies can reveal more about the expectations and perspectives of different people involved and the different contexts and resources in the process of negotiation. A second methodological focus is the 'flow of ideas and reflections.' Reed (1992) argues that the creation and re-creation of stories are a way of ordering the world around us, and so they are central in any organizing process. Attention for social theorizing, reflexive talk and storytelling by the actors can so be used to show "how people's consciousness engages with the world precisely within the incomplete processes of everyday social practices" (Smith 1996 in Nuijten 2005:10). This is also mentioned by Cohen (1994) in his book on self consciousness, where he points out that we should start by paying attention to the way in which people reflect on themselves. Therefore in the field, we can look for theories that people construct about themselves, about their history and

society and about the things that happen around them. Equally, we can analyze how people express themselves, difference in expressions in different settings, standard ways of talking and topics that are avoided or made invisible (Silverman 1993). Based on these methodological guidelines, combined with my decision to live in the village and the research aims, the main methods for data collection that were chosen beforehand were sensory participant observation, in-depth interviewing and free diary. In addition, during the field phase, transect walks with forest guards were conducted and I had the opportunity to participate in a forest inventory research.

### *Sensory participant observation*

Sensory participant observation is based on the idea that ethnographers might become sensorially engaged through participation in the environment and practices that they share with others (Pink 2010). This means going beyond only interviewing and observing to what Okely (1994:45) describes as drawing “on knowledge beyond language”, where not only the visual is important to understand, but where knowledge is “embodied through sight, taste, sound, touch and smell.” The participation in the emplaced activities of others enables the researcher an “alternative route to ethnographic knowledge and better insights into those of others.” Pink explains that this idea implies that the researcher is “co-participating in the practices that constitute place with those who simultaneously participate in her or his research, and as such might become similarly emplaced (2010:64).” At the same time, the researcher is a constituent of place as an agent in its production. The latter was clearly evidenced in the beginning of my stay in the village. My mere presence caused surprise and unbelief among the villagers to see a *‘ferengi’*<sup>6</sup> doing what they do. As I witnessed by the questions asked by my host family, my physical presence was an incentive for people to view their lives through the eyes of an outsider, causing reflective talk about their society and culture, which gave me first clues about life in the village. Especially when it became clear I was there to research the Agama forest cooperative, a wave of thinkings and talkings about the forest cooperative’s went along the village. And off course, about me as well. Although I had a lot of ethical questions before going in the field, when I was there, I did not experience negative connotations with the fact that I was ‘different’. Rather, from my perspective, our interactions were driven by curiosity. I belief that sharing the social practices of the people in the village was the basic pillar on which I build my further understanding. Off course, next to participating in everyday activities, I also needed to make decisions on which actions to focus on. As such, all activities related to the forest

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<sup>6</sup> Amharic for ‘foreigner’, especially used for European and American people.

cooperative, both committee and members, and communal activities as political and social meetings under the tree were given priority. In **Annex III** a list is given of the main activities in which I participated concerning the FC and PFM. This is however very much selective (as every day was full of encounters, interactions, practices), but can give an overall idea of the more 'formal' research activities. At the start, as I also still needed to learn the language, I was more observer, but as the fieldwork continued, this evolved to being 'observer-as-participant' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) and in some cases discussant. The main observations were translated into field notes each day and covered mainly the interactions, relationships, statements, speeches and individual and social behaviour in different settings. Particularly important were the 'little things' (Foucault 1982), the words and movements that were made in forgotten moments. Still, an advantage for my research was that it was not my aim to actually study cultural or social behaviours or norms so that I was not inclined to search for the 'eternal answer' in practical deeds, as Bourdieu's (1990) critique on anthropologists, even though it was enormously important to reach comprehension of who the individuals were and to grasp the socio-political conditions of which they were partly product. This convinced me in my position that understanding and explaining are one.

### *Translation issue*

After almost one month in the field, I started to conduct interviews with selected people in the village. However, before we go to the discussion of the interview as technique, one question still needs to be answered. Considering I did not speak Kafi noono<sup>7</sup>, the local language, sufficiently to carry out interviews myself, I needed translation. Although criticism exists on using translation in interviews (Anderman and Rogers 1999), the story of the translator has evolved into one of the main 'surprises' (Agar 2010) in all phases of the research process. At the time we encountered in the town of Bonga and he agreed to help me with the interviews, I was unaware of the fact that he himself was governmental worker for the governmental cooperative office and had been working for three years in de kebele from which Agama was part. Although he was resident of Bonga, his aunt, at the same time my host family, lived in Agama and he was used to live there for short periods because of his job as facilitator for all cooperatives, especially the forest cooperative. As will become clear, he evolved from translator to key informant, gate-keeper and main discussion partner. As research is a co-production of knowledge between researcher and participants, then he became a

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<sup>7</sup> Kafi noono is an Afroasiatic language spoken in Kaffa-Sheka area. It can also be named Keffagna. In a 2007 census in Ethiopia it was spoken by approximately 835 000 people (of a total Ethiopian population of 73 750 9thirty-two) (Population Census Commission 2007)

significant part of that production. He introduced me in the village, mainly to people related to the forest and coffee cooperative, helped me to learn the language and considering we spend a lot of time together, was a continuous discussion partner on all kinds of social, cultural, political and economical aspects. As he was used to travel back and forth between his house in Bonga and Agama, he presented a bridge between inside and outside perspectives, which produced a lot of insights. However, the line between his role as translator for my research and participant in the community became blurry. For example, during some meetings of the forest cooperative, he was both participating in the meeting as the facilitator, while also associated with me as 'part of the team'.

It should be stressed though, that the difficulties weighted less than the opportunities associated with this 'surprise' of the translator becoming a main actor. First, an interview is always a social relationship in which the researcher and the respondent interact, influence each other and construct their own meanings and interpretations (Bourdieu et al. 1993). In most cases it is the investigator who sets the rules and is usually the one who assigns the objectives and uses of the interview, without any preliminary negotiations. In addition, every time the investigator is perceived to occupy a 'higher' place because of more intellectual knowledge or other resources, a social asymmetry is instigated. To control this property inherent in the interview relationship, researchers have tried to act on the structure of the relationship by consciously choosing the respondents and the interviewers. William Labov (1972) for example, in his investigation on the speech used by black people in Harlem, asked young black people to conduct the investigation themselves in order to reduce the cause of distortion by the asymmetric relationship in the interview. Similarly, because of the social proximity and the familiarity of the translator, the asymmetric effect between myself and the interviewee was, although not neutralized, reduced. Some respondents had experience with rapid social surveys, but never was this performed by somebody undergoing the same conditions as themselves, and in the case of the translator, being product of the same social conditions. As compared to one interview that I conducted alone (with the Development Agent of Yeyebito who spoke English and had a tense relation with the translator), working together with the translator gave deeper access to information 'behind the scenes'. Bourdieu argues also that interviewers "who are very socially very close to their respondents provide them with the guarantees against the threat of having subjective reasoning reduced to objective causes (1993:618)." Moreover the translator had (more) prior knowledge of the realities concerned which is an important criterion to bring out the realities that the research intended to record. Thus, the family and work relationships of the translator, accompanied with the acceptance of myself living in the same material situation, enabled us to overcome the obstacles of differences

in social situation, which could otherwise invoke a fear in the interviewee of being turned into an object.

Secondly, translating Kafi noono into English was not merely a case of transforming one word into another, it required a complete understanding of the social construction of the language as well. Being able to express in Kafi noono necessitates understanding of the cultural and social context and needs interpretation to translate into English, a language constructed in a completely different context. Kafi noono has a limited vocabulary and grammar, whereas the same word can mean different things, dependent on intonation and context. Moreover, the language has numerous 'response tokens' (Schegloff 1982) as '*liko*', '*tikikelu*', '*éé*',<sup>8</sup> each requiring its own approving nod, look or smile. Although I did learn the language and response tokens with the appropriate response to perform basic conversations and actions, obviously, I could not 'master' it in the limited time period of my fieldwork. However, because of the presence of the translator, interviewees could use their own vocabulary and conceptual framework because they were directing themselves to somebody who mastered the same vocabulary. For example, by lack of my understanding, if I asked a 'brutally' objectifying question (Bourdieu et al. 1993), then the translator could transform it into Kafi noono without the appearance of being threatening or aggressive. As we progressively conducted the interviews, the translator got more and more acquainted with the way I expressed my thoughts and the information I was looking for, and in reverse, I also got more understanding which information was hidden in his way of expressing in English, so that this 'transforming' process of questions expressed in English to Kafi noono, a practice in itself, became more and more finetuned.

Thirdly, one only needs to have conducted an interview to know how difficult it is to consciously focus on what is being said, not only in words, think about questions that might seem appropriate in the flow of the conversation, and all the while trying to follow a kind of theoretical framework. It needs both intellectual and emotional participation of the researcher (and the respondent) to let them 'flow' well in order to not provoke a sort of awkwardness in respondents (or in the researcher) and a monitoring 'on the spot' what is produced within the structure it is occurring. In other words, it needs a sociological 'feel' or 'eye' (Bourdieu et al. 1993). The fact that there was a translation step created more time for me to reflect upon my next question, and allowed me to observe the situation at hand, paying attention to body language and 'small' verbal signs. Moreover, it also gave me insight in the role of the facilitator in the community and the way he approached and

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<sup>8</sup> *Liko* can be translated as 'for sure!' ; *Tikikelu* as 'without doubt that is the case' ; *éé* is used in many situations and can be compared with 'yes'.

interacted with the people, paying close attention to the differences in his behaviour in interaction with different respondents, and between interaction with respondents and with his family. It could be argued that his familiarity and personal history in the village, as it was not value neutral, also obscured possible information, especially from respondents closely involved in past conflicts. However, due to the subtlety of Kafi noono language, it is possible to speak indirectly about the other person in the conversation. By using the word '*bonno*' (can be translated as 'he'), some respondents did speak about sensitive issues of the past in which they and the translator were involved. And the cases where people did not speak about or ignored the issues were in itself a source of data.

Finally, my research also deepened the reflexivity and knowledge of the translator concerning the forest cooperative and its '*malaises*'. In fact, he became so motivated that he personally searched for more information and raised new questions. As such, as every project has long term effects when intervening in the life-worlds of people, he became one of its visible actualizations.

### *Interviewing*

As said, after one month, interviewing started. This period gave me time to select relevant people to interview, but above all, time to reflect upon my relation to the subject in an attempt not to reproduce this relation in my interview questions and field notes. Also, in contrast to the random encounters of surveys, the interview became only one moment, even though it was a privileged one, within a longer array of exchanges adding to the respondent's sense making of the interview and its objectives. This also reduced the danger of '*imposing*' a problematic based on artificial questions coming from nowhere or based on artefacts (Bourdieu et al. 1993). The aim of the interview, as both means for data *collection* and site of data *production*, can be understood through a theory of place. According to Pink, the interview is a process through which "verbal, experiential, emotional, sensory, material, social and other encounters are brought together (2010:81)" which creates a place from where the researcher can better understand how the respondent experiences his or her life-world and his relation to it. As interviews are both a topic and a resource (Seale 1998), although the primarily focus may be on the content of the interviews, a reflexive approach on the way that meaning was constructed as part of the interview interaction is important (Elliot 2005).

For this research, informal, unstructured and semi-structured interviews have been conducted, depending on the interviewee, the information sought, specific place and time, and familiarity with the interviewee. Informal interviewing are characterized by a total lack of structure or control, where the researcher tries to remember conversations heard or events happened to build greater

rapport or uncover new topics (Bernard 2006). On the contrary, unstructured interviewing is not informal at all. In Bernard words, “you sit down with another person and hold an interview. Period. Both of you know what you are doing, and there is not shared feeling that you’re just engaged in pleasant chitchat (2006:211).” However, the difference with semi-structured interviewing is that unstructured ones take place all the time and go on everywhere, while semi- structured ones are scheduled, open ended and follow a list of topics defined beforehand.

A first group of interviews were done to focus on the historical context of the forest practices during the different regimes and how this evolved in the current form of forest management, the forest cooperative established by Farm Africa. I interviewed an elderly person, separation leaders of the forest zones and the forest cooperative management body, using semi-structured interviews, but with particular attention to narratives, in order not to suppress stories or interrupt narratives when they do occur. These interviews were particularly useful to develop my interview guide for the course of the following ones as they gave me an overview of the situation. Secondly, I interviewed a diverse range of villagers, different ethnicities, relation to the forest cooperative, age, female etc, again using semi-structured interviews with space for narratives, to come to grips with the existing situation of forms of organizing around the use and management of the forest, with their perspectives on the PFM intervention, change in forest management and use, internal and external pressures on the forest cooperative, daily forest practices, personal motivations and beliefs concerning forest use and traditional user rights. The interview guide is presented in **Annex IV**. Moreover, I had regularly informal conversations and unstructured interviews with the Development Agent (DA) of Natural Resources, living in the village. For example after meetings of the forest cooperative asking about his reflections or while accompanying him on his visits to the forest nursery. To a much larger extent, this was also the case with the translator. Except for the days he resided in Bonga, we had daily informal discussions, unstructured interviews about his personal history in the village, reflections on meetings and other social encounters in the village or on difficulties concerning his job which produced a vast amount of ‘stories’. Finally, as I was introduced in the village by the translator alias facilitator of the cooperatives, I observed a lot of informal conversations between the facilitator, alias translator, and people from the village. Translated during or after the conversation took place, this gave me lots of insights in the issues that were at stake, especially when people tended to ‘forget’ my presence and intensely expressed him or herself to the facilitator. Accompanying the translator on his work, I also had the opportunity to visit other forest cooperatives in the area. On two of these occasions, I interviewed the chairman of the forest cooperative in Wacha village, the first village where Farm Africa established a Forest User

Group in Bonga area, differing in ethnicity as compared to people in Agama, and to conduct a group discussion with the forest cooperative committee of Darra village, located in a neighbour kebele of Yeyebito.

As the interview is not only an opportunity to learn more about other's verbal narratives, but also about their embodied and emplaced ways of knowing (Pink 2010), all interviews were conducted in familiar settings, inside or in front of the house, on the cultivation land, or sitting in a meadow while herding the cows, depending on the time of the day, which, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), make people feel more at ease as compared to unfamiliar ones. However, familiarity cannot lead to deep understanding if it were not accompanied by attentiveness to others and an openness which is rarely encountered in daily life. The danger of a distracted and routinized attention to the stories told was in a way reduced by my presence, coming from a different 'world', making the ordinary extraordinary and the 'clichéd' human story an 'unique drama'. Each interview was mostly introduced by informal talking between the translator and the respondent, evolving towards the introduction of myself and the *raison d'être* of the interview. This was accompanied with the clear question for permission to take notes and if possible, to record the interview. Most people permitted mentioning that there was no 'fear to speak the truth'. As such, only six of the forty four interviews with people in the village were not recorded. Attention was also given to the visibility of the recorder which was always put inside my etui placed next to me rather than between me and the respondent, turning it away from a central point of attention.

In addition to the interviews in Agama village, I also needed to conduct interviews with people in the towns Bonga and Gimbo, since the villagers were not the only actors playing in the field of forest management. To validate information, I conducted individually additional interviews with NGO project coordinators, social forestry researchers in the EIAR institute in Bonga and governmental workers in the district Bureau of Agriculture and the zonal Cooperative Office. These interviews were not recorded, as I often felt that it would 'formalize' the setting too much, creating doubt about the aims of my questions and possibly ignoring sensitive issues.

Finally, it was my aim to create an opportunity for the respondent to explain themselves, in the fullest sense of the word. Although it is common to tell stories in everyday life, it is rare that anyone is given the chance to provide an extended account on their experiences, to construct their own point of view about the world and about themselves and bring it from the private to the public sphere (Elliot 2005). Ideally, an interview offers the respondent an "absolutely exceptional situation for communication, freed from the usual constraints (particularly of time) that weigh on most everyday interchanges" (Bourdieu et al. 1993:614) and to create an extra-ordinary discourse, which

maybe not yet has been spoken out, but which was already there, merely waiting to come into actualization. Sometimes, I experienced that the interview process induced a kind of self examination in the people questioned, sometimes leading to a 'joy in expression'. With the words from one respondent at the end of the interview: "I become strong, now by internally. That mean, I am very satisfied in my brain. And I give more attention for my forest. That mean, don't small thing, it is very good. Thank you very much. You come to ask, you come to visit, this mean by your activity, we go to forward one step. That mean it is good."

### *Free diary*

Free diary, which already started in phase one, is a tool known from ethnography (Bernard 2006) and, was used to reflect on my personal impressions and feelings during the stay in the village. It was a place to run when 'things get though' and personal doubts, fears and loneliness seem to appear on the horizon. In addition to the field notes it produced a substantive body of (subjective) data and has proven itself a useful source in developing my conceptual framework of practices.

### *Transect walks*

Walking with others, sharing steps, style and rhythms, can produce 'closeness' in the social interaction and more understanding of walking routes as forms of place-making (Ingold and Vergunst 2008). There was clearly an evolution in the easiness of 'common movements' as I was used to move in another way in a different environment. Walking is a near universal activity, especially in Agama where only feet are a means of transportation, I obviously shared a lot of walks, sometimes runs, with other people. The transect walks however particularly point to the walks with the separation leaders (forest guards) and the translator through Agama forest and part of the neighbouring state forest. This method was valuable to gain geographical impressions of forest use and control, as I experienced how far people need to walk and climb to gather products. In addition, information could be obtained about traditional user rights, important tree species, medicinal plants, size and productivity, while often new 'stories' came to the surface about the management of the forest and the forest cooperative.

### *Forestry research*

Although my research was completely qualitative in nature, I did have the opportunity to participate in a quantitative forestry research that was carried out by the Ethiopian Forestry Research Centre in

Bonga area. During my stay in Agama, the research team came to Agama forest two times, with a period of six weeks in between, to gather data in established forest plots on forest regeneration and carbon stock in vegetation, litter and soil. Participating in this data collection was an opportunity to discuss with foresters on the condition of the forest, but also to exchange views on social issues related to forests. Moreover, the coming of the researchers to the cooperative forest in Agama, was in itself an event that also revealed some areas of contestation, struggle and conflict around the forest.

### *3.3.3 PHASE THREE: COMPETENT BEGINNER*

#### **3.3.3.1 Documents and additional interviewing**

The final phase in Ethiopia was again introduced with a movement to another place. After spending three months in the village, time came to turn back to Addis Ababa for six weeks more with the intention to read, compile, analyze, structure and write. Although the phase of data analysis 'officially' begun, this overlapped with additional data collection, in particular additional literature browsing and interviewing, since transcribing the interviews and discussions with my PhD colleague on our field experiences, raised additional questions. As such, I gathered among others important policy documents, especially the Rural Development Policy and Strategies (2003), a PhD dissertation on access to forest resources and forest based livelihoods in Kaffa (Zewdie Yihenew 2002) and newspaper articles. Secondly, I conducted five semi-structured interviews with 'expert' actors who were related to the particular case of Agama and mailed additional questions to actors in Bonga as well. A continuous source of knowledge throughout the period in Addis has also been the valuable discussions with my PhD colleague, always reminding me the bigger picture which prevented me from losing myself in the complex maze of ropes stretched out in Agama.

#### **3.3.3.2 Triangulation**

First used in navigation, the concept of triangulation has found its way in mainstream social science as a metaphor of investigating aspects of a single study combining different techniques and from different sources in order to ensure validation and representativeness of the study (Miles and Hubermans 1994). Checking one set of data against another is not only done at the end of the fieldwork, but happens continuously and almost automatically during data collection. Although

often associated with applying a mix of different techniques, Flick (2004) expanded the concept and defines four types of triangulation:

- 1) Methodological triangulation (use of multiple methods and techniques)
- 2) Source triangulation (use of various data sources)
- 3) Investigator triangulation (use of several different researchers)
- 4) Theory triangulation (use of multiple theories to interpret the data)

In this research, triangulation consisted of methodological, source and theory triangulation, summarized in Figure 3.

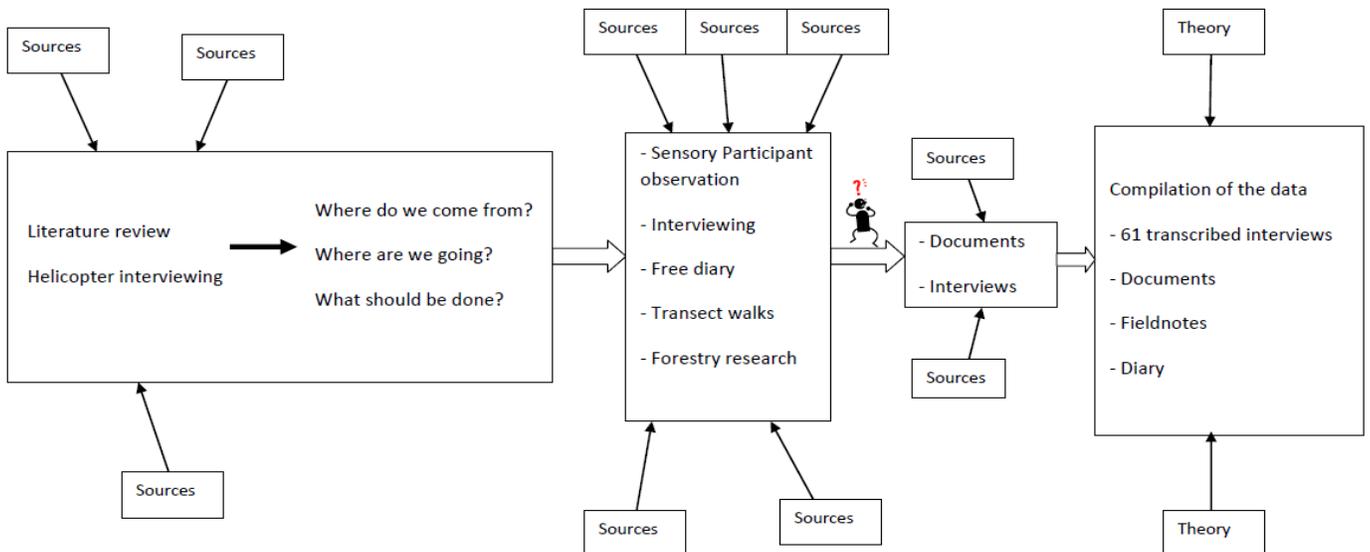


Figure 3: Data collection process and triangulation

### 3.4 CREATING A NARRATIVE

#### 3.4.1 ASKING HOW? OR DOING NARRATIVE

When I returned back from the field, my desk was filled with sixty-one transcribed interviews, a pile of documents, papers and articles and four notebooks filled with field notes. Somehow, I had to

make sense of these data and transform them into a narrative, the final form of representing the data. Practices cannot speak for themselves (Van Bommel and van der Zouwen 2012), but need to be made visible and articulated by the researcher who studied them. Practice research has so a narrative aspect by retrospectively verbalizing practices that did not exist previously (Brown 2006). Other arguments can be made for using narratology in data representation. Mattingly (1998) for example points out that narratives not only give meaning to experiences we have already lived through, they also can give us a forward glance, helping to envision alternative futures and anticipate situations before we encounter them. Meaningful narratives can thus prevent the production of a so what result (Flyvbjerg 2001, Gabriel 2010). Narrative is also mentioned to be an ancient method and one of the most fundamental forms of making sense of experience for human beings, or 'story-telling animals' as MacIntyre (1984) puts it. As argued before, a practice based approach does not start from theoretical assumptions, but with an interest in a particular phenomenon (FNP 2012), creating a story with a scientific plot (Geertz 1989:7) can help then to get "an honest story honestly told."

### *3.4.2 THE HERMENEUTIC SPIRAL*

Constructing the narrative was a highly iterative process. Although I started with the development of a theoretical framework before going into the field, the final theory and concepts only emerged in the course of my research. The construction of my case, was a ongoing, continuous process of going back and forth between analysis, research questions and conceptual framework, so that both analytical questions as conceptual framework several times were re-conceptualized before finally written down in the introduction part of this thesis. In this sense, the iterative character constructed a narrative by comparing data with theory. Because little is known about what researchers actually do when they construct meaningful narratives (Van Bommel and van der Zouwen 2012), my steps are shortly summarized, starting after the transcription of the interviews.

- 1) After transcribing the interviews, I had noted down some important concepts in the margins of the transcribed texts, as agency, participation, empowerment, top-down governance, path dependency. First, I searched additional literature and reread older papers on these topics and noted down the links that I could make with the field data.
- 2) I read all the transcribed interviews again after which I spread all the paper data and literature on one surface, organizing it according to origin and content (theory – methodology – transcribed interviews Bonga, Agama, Addis – case documents – field notes - others)

- 3) Spend time on the same surface, going back and forth between all the documents to make an imaginary overview
- 4) I structured all my findings chronologically in two timelines starting from 1960 up to now. One timeline for the broader macro-processes and one timeline for processes in Agama.
- 5) Starting from the premise of a possible mismatch between practice and theory, then I built an empirical plot out of the findings and a theoretical plot out of the theory and concepts that could be linked together.
- 6) Start writing (accompanied with further data analysis) and fine tune the entwinement between empirical and theoretical plot. Rereading and rewriting.

### *3.4.3 ACCOUNTABILITY*

Writing a narrative is not merely describing certain realities, the scientific narration also contributes to the construction or maintenance of certain realities (Callon 2007). And as it has the power of the scientific argument, validates or legitimates one perspective on the world rather than others. Narratives are thus inherently performative (Van Bommel and van der Zouwen 2012), which asks considerations about accountability and responsibility of the scientific author against the actors studied and the readers of the narrative. Writing was balancing between the creation of a meaningful, truthful, compelling, and scientifically convincing narrative while all the time averting a plot that is failing to carry meaning or that is doubted on his truthfulness. Because I knew that some critical people, from their professional background or involvement in the situation, could read my thesis, their voices, were continuously in the back of my mind, stimulating me to adhere to 'meaning' and 'truthfulness'. Secondly, for the actors studied, at the end of each interview in the village, I asked them if they wanted to ask me a question. For a large part, people asked me "you come to here and sit with us together and gather ideas. Thank you. But what is the advantage of this information? Always I give information, but never we get response. What is the reason for this? What about your answer about this question?" Trying to find an answer on this question and preventing the same question for my research occupied me all the time during this research, making me feel responsible for each word written. A narrative however asks to display a lot of details and information entrusted to the researcher. For reasons of confidentiality I have therefore opted to not explicitly mention names of people or list an overview of conducted interviews in Annex. Rather I will use general names as 'chairman', 'kebele manager' etc. as I believe this is sufficient to understand the story.

# PART II: A SCIENTIFIC STORY OF POPULAR PEOPLE

# PROLOGUE

Any authentic work of art must start an argument between the artist and his audience  
(Rebecca West)

To introduce the narrative, let us see what Wittgenstein says about case studies in doing philosophy  
(Gasking and Jackson 1967:51)

In teaching you philosophy I'm like a guide showing you how to find your way round London. I have to take you through the city from north to south, from east to west, from Euston to the embankment and from Piccadilly to the Marble Arch. After I have taken you many journeys through the city, in all sorts of directions, we shall have passed through any given street a number of times -- each time traversing the street as part of a different journey. At the end of this you will know London; you will be able to find your way about like a Londoner. Of course, a good guide will take you through the more important streets more often than he takes you down side streets; a bad guide will do the opposite. In philosophy I'm a rather bad guide ...

In part II, I will take the reader to the streets of Agama. To the practices of the villagers, the NGO workers and the governmental implementers. I will take you to the office of NGO workers, we will investigate the practices of governmental implementers, the midst of a heated forest cooperative meeting and climb over the mountains of Agama forest controlling beehives, coffee trees and spices in the forest. Actual practices are studied before their rules, at the front and backstage of the intervention of Participatory Forest Management in Agama village. In addition to the voice of case actors and case narrators, there will be space for the voice of the reader who is hopefully motivated to dive into the minutiae of the case, in search for an answer on "what is this case a case of?"

In chapter one, we will set the scene with a concrete example of how the PFM intervention has impacted on the lives of some villagers in Agama which will already reveal some issues to be discussed in subsequent chapters. In the remainder of the discussion we will focus upon the first

encounter between Farm Africa and the village and the events that preceded them, placing the events in Agama in a politico-historical perspective to understand why a seemingly participatory act could not be experienced as such. Furthermore we will see that knowledge is not always accepted, coming from direct interactions with local people or from within an organization, when it does not fit well with an operational logic to guide practices in a development project.

In a second chapter, we will continue with the example from chapter one to come to the main puzzle of the chapter, namely how a project designed for participation and forest management became mainly focused upon purely cooperative activities as income generation? We shall discuss how PFM was introduced in Agama and attempted to be institutionalized by following a design that did not allow for structural adjustments when it did not fit localized needs. We will further dissect the idea of ownership and empowerment to illustrate the main proposition of the chapter that a participatory project can claim participation *and* reproduce asymmetric power relations at the same time in practices that are practically compatible, but logically contradictory. In overall, the chapter will reveal the main issues in the locality of Agama when confronted with PFM focusing on the *how* rather than on the *what* in the practices that followed from the intervention.

In a third chapter, we will look at the situation from a broader political perspective to understand why PFM was not only rootless when Farm Africa phased out in Agama, but did also not have any wings to sustain it as governmental agencies who needed to support the Agama FC were embedded in practices whose logic is not that of participation nor that of attention for forest conservation or sustainable use. At the end of chapter three, we will have seen how PFM has 'hit the ground' in Agama village from the moment Farm Africa started their first activities up to what happened when they phased out and left the situation for the governmental agencies who signed the PFM agreement with attention to how participation and empowerment were conceived and practiced. It will lead us to reflect upon the question if good policy is implementable or not? Based on a contingency in events, the coming of a particular cooperative facilitator to Yeyebito kebele, we shall be able to ground our reflections and answers on this question in the empirics of Agama.

In a fourth chapter then we shall formulate answers on above question which will require us to reformulate the question of chapter two to "when and for what reason did some Agama villagers come to care about, act in relation to and think about their actions in terms of the regulatory cooperative principles?" The approach we shall use to answer this question will differ from the conventional one and is inspired on the 'sociological enterprise' undertaken in Bourdieu's book

'Weight of the World'<sup>9</sup>. Because the answer is so intimately related with the life of the facilitator, we shall present his story as a short ethnography in the form of a transcribed interview that serves both the goal of narrative and analysis. His story in juxtaposition with the previous three chapters and positioning us in a different point of view can provide an entrance point for the individual reader to the reflections and thoughts of the facilitator. The text must thus not be viewed as a single interview, but rather as a short ethnography in which the personal leads to the sociological and which aims to construct the emblematic from the idiosyncratic, or the symbolic from the contingency in events. The question could be raised why this particular interview is chosen from the many conducted in Agama and beyond. The answer is that this interview is from a different kind than all the others because it was based on a different understanding of the interviewer-respondent relationship. The interview was conducted after three months of close teamwork, living in the same conditions while temporary connected by the same questions, so that the familiarity acted upon the very structure of the relationship and where, by design, "the interviewer-ethnographer enters openly into the sociological equation (Bourdieu et al. 1993:ix)." We will provide first an interpretative framework to place the interview in time and place after which the story will follow. The remainder of the chapter will discuss how the approach of the facilitator to reestablish the FC differed from the conventional one, leading to willingness among certain villagers to constitute themselves as FC committee and recognize a mutual interests in cooperatives and their activities. Zooming in on the story of the facilitator and his interactions with the people in Agama will lead us in a last section to some reflections upon policy models in general and PFM in particular and the process to implement them.

Finally we will end the story with the description of a last event in Agama, situated in its particular context and with a wink to the future.

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<sup>9</sup> See Bourdieu et al. 1993. *The Weight of the World*. California: Stanford University Press for more arguments to publish transcribed interviews as short ethnographies.

Figure 4: The broad vicinity of Agama forest (which is here named Koma forest as the map dates back from 1989) (EMA 1989 in Stellmacher 2007)

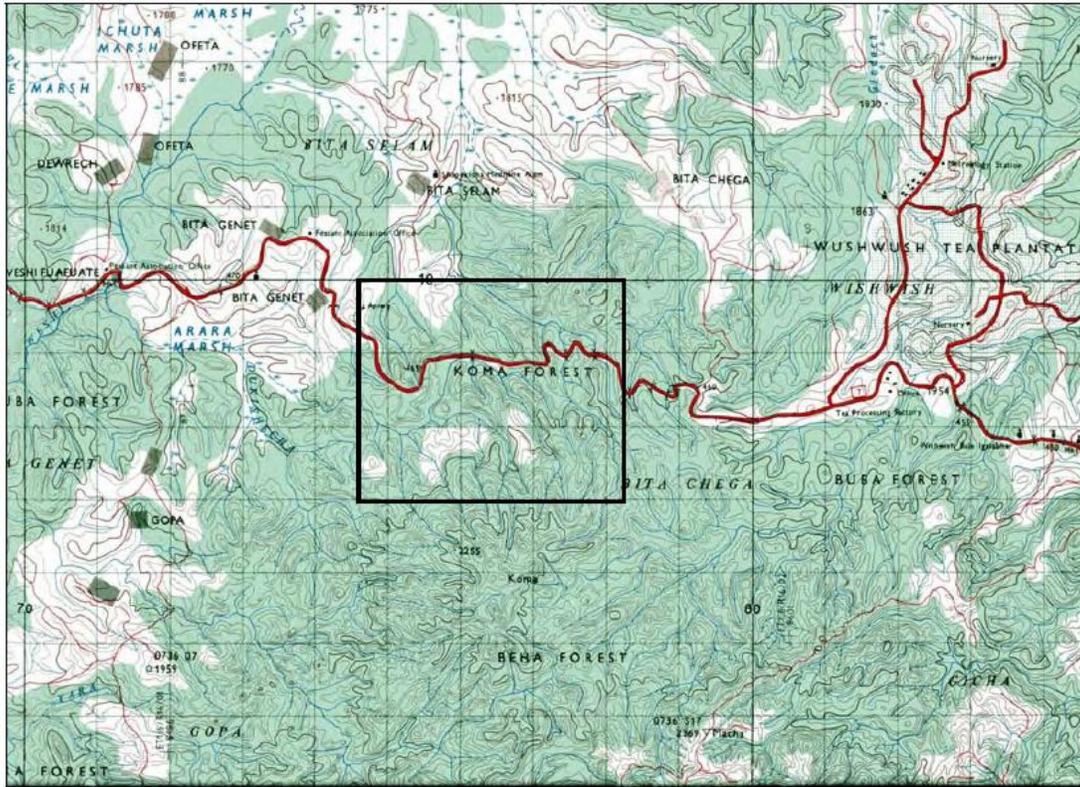


Figure 5: Sketch from Agama village and Agama forest with its six zones (Kabah, Cangatarra, Kidah, Bushasha, Kama and Goksha) (adjusted from Stellmacher 2007)



# ONE

## The unfolding of a project in a not so empty space

Long years must pass before the truths we have made for ourselves become our very flesh  
(Paul Valéry)

### 1.1 A BOUNDARY ISSUE

In Agama, Ethiopia, on a warm day in March 2012, a cooperative facilitator who is working for the woreda Cooperative Office, is waiting for the Management Committee of the Agama Forest Cooperative to gather for a meeting. However, after one hour waiting, sitting impatiently under the big tree in front of the kebele administration office, only one person is quickly descending the mountain that leads to the kebele office. It is the secretary of the committee. Rearranging the documents under his arm, he announces that a ‘crime’ has been reported and he needs the facilitator to accompany him to this particular farmer. The chairman of the committee has apparently gone to Addis Ababa for ‘some’ business, as the secretary utters, while ignoring the reason of absence from the other committee members, so that the meeting is quickly transformed into an investigation of a new forest destruction case. Somebody, his name is avoided, would have seen a Manja farmer<sup>10</sup> setting fire in the forest, but this would have happened accidentally when burning harvest residues on his cultivation land. Since the international NGO Farm-Africa intervened in the village to halt forest destruction through institutional change, the Forest

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<sup>10</sup> Kaffa ethnic group has two main subcastes: the Kaffa main group and the subgroup of Manja. Manja are seen as the original forest people, traditionally more involved in forest-related activities as beekeeping and firewood collection and less in agricultural activities as compared to Kaffa people. In literature, they have been referred to as “the most marginalized group in Ethiopia” (Hartmann 2004:2). The facilitator explicitly mentions ‘Manja’ at the beginning of the conversation.

Administration Plan (FAP) attributes responsibility to the Agama Forest Cooperative (FC) to protect the forest from any human made 'destruction', deforestation or other land change transformations. Both members and committee, with support from the government, are required to preserve the 1200 hectares of natural forest and associated tree density of 1000 per hectare and to administer and prevent reduction in species found in the forest (Stellmacher 2007). And so action is required.

That this will be nothing less than a Hercules task will become clear from the case that starts on that day in March. It will reveal how history, political influences and individual interpretations make this task a challenging one, how practices on different spatial scales become connected to reshape the initial PFM project, how many actors become involved, and that from the very outset, the stakes were high. However, at that day, only two actors, the facilitator and the secretary, are present in a small village, occupied by their discussion on how to approach the farmer they are heading to.

After climbing up the mountain and arriving at the specific house, the family first carefully argues that their father is not at home. However, convinced by the importance of the case when looking at the wooden poles and gravel from out of the forest in the garden of the family, the facilitator uses his position to ask for the farmer's presence, considering no farmer can be far from house during cultivation time, after which both secretary and facilitator find themselves a spot to sit and wait. Just at the moment the flies become too irritating and the facilitator wants to stand up, the Manja farmer appears, bare feet and in working outfit, contrasting with the clothing from his visitors. He refuses to take place on the same bench, rather he starts to smoke a cigarette, a rare luxury, looking expectantly from a distance. From the discussion that follows, it will become clear that the case is not merely an 'accidental forest fire', but a purposeful clearing of official forest land, which actually started already four years ago. Together with the separation leader<sup>11</sup> of Cangatarra who suddenly appears, they quarrel on the precise location of the boundary between forest and farming land, as demarcated in the time of Farm Africa. According to the facilitator, secretary and forest guard, the boundary passes diagonally through the farmer's land, clearly making a big part of his cultivation land illegal. The farmer first argues against this, but finally ends the discussion with admitting he has done a mistake, not without appealing to his social status of 'poor Manja family'. The facilitator warns the farmer with a 'take care' message, predicting that sanctions will follow, and under counterarguments of the farmer, he and the secretary take off, taking their documents and writing material, which they never used, with them.

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<sup>11</sup> Separation leader refers to 'forest guard'. In time of Farm Africa, six forest guards were appointed, one for each zone of Agama forest. In Agama FC they are commonly referred to as separation leaders (translated from Kafi noono) and thus will be named as such in this study.

The mere possibility that this small localized event could occur, involves much more actors and events, covering broad spatial and time scales. In order to understand how this event could occur and what will happen afterwards, we first need to frame it in a time perspective of some seventeen years ago, when in a small office in Addis Ababa, 410 km away from Agama, the pillars to construct this event started to become real. We will discuss the main reasons to introduce PFM in Ethiopia by non-state actors and see how the practices organized by NGO's to enroll governmental actors in PFM were important to come to a mutual interest of forest protection and community involvement. However, while NGO's were busy with legitimizing PFM as a policy model, the people who were perceived to be the primary 'target' of that model were busy creating their own lives, influenced by political and historical events. To understand the struggles that arise from the divergence between the model and the context, we will discuss in a second section what was happening in that time in Agama and which events – political, historical and social – shaped the context in which PFM was introduced. In a third section we will then zoom in on the struggle when Farm Africa undertook its first activities which will reveal that knowledge was more dictated by general notions of rural communities and forests; and that when practical knowledge did appear, it became constrained by power. Finally, drawing upon one historical event, we will see that these first practical activities of the PFM project did not bring recognition of mutual interests in forests between project staff and the villagers which will bring us to the conclusions of this chapter and will raise questions to introduce the following chapter.

## 1.2 THE BEGINNING OF PFM

In 1992, a small group of people are contracted by the international NGO Farm-Africa to work for the Community Forest and Wildlife Conservation Project (CFWCP), implemented in four sites within a range of 150 km of the location of their main office in Addis Ababa. Although there was no actual intervention on wildlife issues in those four sites, it already had the objective “to establish agreement between local institutions at the respective sites, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection and Farm Africa to protect land and rationally utilize the natural forests existing at each site (CFWCP 1993).” After some years working and gaining experience on those sites however, the urge grew to become 'bigger'. As one of the project staff remembers:

Yes, that time, it was a community forest management project, started in 1992 by Farm Africa, but after some years of working, we felt that we could do more than that. We needed to gain more

experience and put the project forwards. So in 1995 we wanted to scale-up our experience. You know, big forests were being threatened, and we were brave at that time, we felt that we did something courageous, not many people were working for the forest back then.

In Ethiopia, fast depletion of forest resources had already been mentioned in the Imperial period (1931-1974) and even gained high political attention during the socialist regime (1974 – 1991). Especially because of the famines in the mid 1980s and the publication of highly influential studies that quantified the deforestation rate (FAO 1984), an environmental rehabilitation discourse had gained policy attention in Ethiopia (Keeley and scoones 2000). However, former conservation measures to rehabilitate forests were radically different as compared to the objectives of this new participatory approach. The conservation measures came in the form of massive reforestation programs and participation was understood as ‘mass mobilization’ where local participation was more forced than voluntary. In addition, foresters were motivated by a protectionist stance, perceiving local people more as part of the problem than as part of the solution. What were then the events that, at least at the discourse level, could create space to introduce PFM in Ethiopia? According to the Technical Manager of Farm Africa, it was all about:

[T]he context, that was the main driver. You have a very high population and an increasingly limited resource base, so the competition is increasing and increasing. And the traditional forest management, a sort of protectionist approach was failing and increasingly unpopular with local people. So there were many problems with that approach. Whether it was the corruption with the forest guards or the very high incidence of forest fire. Forest were almost seen as an enemy of the people, because they were excluded from it. So it was really turning the forestry sector upside down. (...) Involving people in management of resources, is for the context of Ethiopia, an obvious solution to the competition over resources. It was also based on experiences from elsewhere, such as Nepal, where there was understanding that people need to use forest resources. So that were the drivers really. A practical solution to deforestation and the demand for forest products.

Although the deforestation discourse certainly contributed for the introduction of PFM, still the question remains how non-state actors became involved, considering the highly authoritarian political culture of Ethiopia. Before the fall of the socialist regime, the growth of NGO's was mainly in response to the major droughts and ensuing famines, limited to work on relief aid supply as they did not fit in the regime's attempts to foster a strong, centralized socialist state (Negasa Deressa 2002). But when in May 1991, Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, president of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, took off with his plane from Addis Ababa to Nairobi and never came back, ending seventeen years of military Marxist rule, a new regime was installed that claimed to promote

democracy, self-determination and decentralization. It was just a matter of time for NGO's to further expand in Ethiopia. Furthermore, an international trend towards participatory approaches and associated claim of donors for 'community-based', 'participatory', 'joint' or 'people-led' development project applications helped to strengthen the participatory discourse. However, PFM only started to be catalyzed when persons were influenced that could actually carry out reform in their policy decisions. The former head of Oromia forest department explains his perspective on community involvement before PFM was introduced in Ethiopia

I happened to be at the start of something. Like for example ... I have been working as a forester in one of the big forest areas in Munessa Chachamane, Ethiopia, and there was a lack of land and conflict between a state forester and the people. As a forester, we were planting on very good fertile farmlands these caprices and pine species. As a forestry development activity, while the farmers were losing their farmland. That was during the Derg regime and all land was from the government. I remember one expat working with us, he was a Swiss guy. And he said why don't we give five percent of this revenue to the community? And we all ridiculed that. Why? What is their contribution? The land belongs to the government. It is the government who planted it, we who tend it. For what reason do we have to give this revenue to the community? We couldn't, we couldn't believe it. And then the forestry service was very strong then. It was a command economy, a military government. And for us, it was really very difficult to see beyond, beyond...

*Interviewer: It was really so strong?*

Yes it was very strong then. The forestry service was stronger during the Derg period, and the forestry development had also a good time then. All the plantations you see now, like for example in Belete Gera, in Jimma, even in Bonga, all over the country, plantations were developed during the Derg regime. And that was, the forestry college was also new ... [T]hey were teaching on the monoculture and everybody went out establishing plantations. And the land belongs to the government, the farmers haven't land, so nobody has heard about PFM.

However, his thinking about the importance of community involvement in forest management began to change when he became Head of the Forestry Department and further when he was introduced in the PFM discourse. Both changes implied participation in different (environmental) practices leading to experience that did not always confirm him in his previously held beliefs. He explains how he came to revise his previous thinking, saying and doings:

Then I became the forestry department head, I started to feel the problem. Especially after the change of the government. In most of the community meetings which were run by the administrator,

communities were complaining on foresters. They were accusing them [that] they took our land and planted, so the government did not like forestry, even at the local level. Then I became forestry department head, I see the problems everywhere. And at the regional level, I was the department head. These things were also globally [reflected], the development of PFM in 1994, when the Indian JFM was becoming popular and also the CAMPFIRE was popular in Zimbabwe. So Farm Africa invites us to see this community participation working [on an exchange visit in India], and then I was very much convinced, immediately we wrote a letter to Farm Africa to initiate PFM projects. I remember for that study tour they invited 4 regions, the Amhara, Tigrayan, Oromia and the South. And the team was consisting of the forest department heads and also from the council from the regional councils. So that initiation, because I also had that experience and then looking into the situation. and also looking into closely, different dimensions of the problems, the farmers, considering those fertile farmlands into forestland and the settling, all those things make you think in which you can really do something. So I just happened to be on that spot, just on the crossroads of the issue on which everything is turned around, I happened to be in the middle. So from that I just got the interest of PFM. And that also maybe because I was convinced from the start and I personally feel, that if it fails, somewhere I also have failed. ... [Thus] when the government was changing, deforestation accelerated very much. And we as foresters, as managers, the new government was not supporting us, there is talking about decentralization and we couldn't properly manage the forest resources. So we were at a cross road. With the new system we can't enforce environmental laws. So it was in 1994, there was a workshop organized by Farm-Africa, there was a community and forestry wildlife project, in which we discussed on options how to halt deforestation. And in that workshop, joint forest management was suggested and discussed. And then in early 1995, ... the study tour to visit India, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, to CAMPFIRE and joint forest management projects.

These practical actions – the international workshop and the exchange visit – were important opportunities to enroll new actors into the PFM scheme. The travel to India, together with the federal minister of Natural Resources, the minister of Agriculture and senior officers from four regional bureaus of Natural resources (Tigray, Amhara, SNNPNRS and Oromia) had an influence on the daily perceptions and decisions of those particular participants and as such the “state was also convinced they had to do something” in the words of a natural resource management consultant.

Soon after the workshop and the exchange visit, the project staff of CFWCP was permitted by the regional government of Oromia and SNNPNRS to pilot PFM in two areas: Chilimo and Bonga. It should be stressed however that giving permission was the only thing that happened at the time. Designing and implementation of PFM projects was fully taken up by NGO's and bilateral agencies<sup>12</sup>,

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<sup>12</sup> The NGO's at the start of PFM were Farm Africa and the German bilateral agency GIZ

which created a situation where governmental workers, policy makers and communities simultaneously needed to be convinced of the new approach. The Technical Manager explains their strategy to simultaneously ‘pull on two ropes’ this way:

We started to lobby, federal government, ministry of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources. Over time, you know, influencing policy is sometimes a sensitive issue. The government doesn’t necessarily think that it should be told how to run its country. So you should be careful I think. But the main strategy of Farm-Africa was showing people on the ground that it worked. A forest like Chilimo for example, there was clear view that Chilimo was going to be finished as a forest. Deforestation after the fall of the government was extremely rapid and almost all people were saying: well if you can save that forest with PFM, it could work anywhere. Looking at the evolution of PFM, we all started in relatively low value or high risks forest. They didn’t give us the best forest. They wanted to see if it works first. Chilimo, very close to Addis, the pressure, high population, good access. So, there was a kind of critical period if PFM would work or not.

It is worth noticing here, that even though the government regime was officially transformed to a democracy, influencing policy was still perceived as a sensitive issue, which will many times be exemplified later on in the process. But finally, in 1996, Farm Africa could begin its activities in Bonga under the Bonga Forest Conservation and Development project<sup>13</sup> to introduce the idea of Participatory Forest Management, a project that lasted up to 2000 and was called the first phase of PFM. Or as a project newsletter describes it, “it was a period to build trust among the community and the government about PFM and its merits. It was also the time to enlighten the idea of PFM to government institutions (PFMP Newsletter 2003 issue 1).”

## 1.3 IN THE MEANWHILE IN AGAMA

### *1.3.1 A MURDER WITH HISTORICAL ROOTS AND FUTURE CONSEQUENCES*

At the same time the ‘enlightment idea’ was approaching Bonga, the people in Agama were confronted with an event that would become an example of a confrontation between traditional forest access rights and governmental interpretation of that rights. The facilitator recalls the event as such:

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<sup>13</sup> We will refer to the first phase of this project as Bonga PFM project

On an evening in 1998, some people gathered silently in a house located in Agama forest. They were making plans for the next day. It were plans that would shock the community living in Agama forest and eventually would lead to its dismissal out of the forest. On that evening they planned to murder a family living in Kama area. The reason was that the head of the family, an outsider, collected too much wealth and married a woman he was not supposed to marry. Traditionally, people living in Agama forest, gathered a lot of honey, coffee and types of spices and they became very rich of that. Each family had its own farming land and forest plot, where they constructed beehives in good trees, collected wild coffee and spices. But that particular man was expanding his land and becoming so rich, that, you know it's society, they start to talk about that. Especially when he married that female. It was not good. So that little group of people, you know some of them (...) committee member of the forest cooperative, broke in the families house and, after a series of violent actions (...) murdered the couple and their children, leaving the massacred bodies behind. Due to the farness and inaccessibility of the area, it was only after four days that authorities were informed. So when they discovered, the government immediately said [to all thirty-two families living in Agama forest]: "leave out that forest, or when in the future something bad happens, we will not protect you." I remember that time, everybody spoke about it for days. But eventually, all the families, some thirty-two, were forced to move out of the forest. And they got some land to live here, with the other people in Agama<sup>14</sup>.

Although the most obvious fact of the story could seem to be the murder, it cannot be seen as an isolated event. The content of the story - the holdings of forest land distributed among the thirty-two families, the hostile reaction against the 'outsider' and the supreme power of the government to remove people of their land - reveals a context determinative for the understanding of the concepts of PFM in Agama. It indicates a well-functioning power relation between local villagers and state employees, and reveals how the forest, regulatory rules and associated practices can be used to construct an image of an all encompassing and vertical state. The significance of this relation for the implementation of PFM will become clear when we analyze it in the time perspective of several decades, even several centuries. As Mulugeta Abebe phrases, "the traditional values and institutions appeared to have encouraged neither open opposition nor reasoned criticism of government authorities, nor the policies they unilaterally adopted." Thus, in the following section we will use a kind of historical perspective which Anthony Giddens calls the *Longue Durée* of institutions to create

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<sup>14</sup> Fifty two families spread among Agama village have traditional use rights in the forest, but only thirty-two families were living inside the forest especially. The other households have always lived adjacent to the forest and have a plot inside the forest that they manage and use from. Next to these 52 households, there are also other people, settlers or newcomers, that use from the forest, but only minor products as firewood and farming materials. Normally, they don't use use honey, coffee or spices as they don't have locally recognized forest resource use rights.

the overall framework in which Agama is positioned, especially paying attention to the institutions influencing forest access and use of forest resources. For the reader who stays with the minutiae of history, a better understanding in the subsequent account of PFM in Agama village, which is more analytical in nature, will be the result.

### *1.3.2 PLACING THE MURDER IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT*

#### **1.3.2.1 THE EMPEROR TIME**

The context in which the murder happened can be traced back to historical Kaffa. The division of Agama forest in traditional forest plots is not a mechanical result of one generation. Rather it is an ongoing agreement among the people, in a continuously renewed, rediscussed and reconfirmed negotiation. The kingdom of Kaffa had always been characterized by inequalities in land use rights and complex tenure arrangements. A wide range of ethnically diverse people and heterogeneous cultural systems characterized the kingdom of Kaffa which was consequentially organized into minority 'high' clans and majority low 'clans'. Members of the high clans were at the top of the social structure, with the prerogative to own and administer land resources and governance positions (Zewdie Yihene 2002). On the other hand, the lower clans, most of them indigenous to the area, were destined to be farmers and servants of the nobility. Especially a clan known as 'Manjos' were at the foot of the social ladder (Huntington 1955), justified because of their despised feeding practices and "questionable human descent" (Lange 1982).

*Tato*<sup>15</sup>, the king, was at the head of the elaborative administrative structure with centralizing tendencies and a strong military, trained to satisfy the territorial drift of the Kaffa kings. As Lange (1982:198) mentions in his historical study on Kaffa, "annexation of [new] lands meant enslavement of their inhabitants and exploitation of their natural resources; the resultant economic reality translated into unparalleled prosperity and power for Kaffa owners." However, north from Kaffa, another, larger empire-building project was ongoing: Emperor Menelik was busy expanding and consolidating the Ethiopian empire state, extending its borders to the east, west and eventually also, to the south. Surrounded by European colonial ambitions, Menelik's intention was no less than the re-establishment of the country to its 'old glory'. Following his predecessors, Ethiopian emperors often made extravagant claims, Menelik himself surpassed them all by declaring to the

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<sup>15</sup> Kafi noono. Still used today to refer to 'the government'.

European power his intention to re-establish the ancient frontiers of Ethiopia up to Karthoum (Teshale Tibebu 1995). And so it happened, by an accident of history<sup>16</sup>, in 1897, after a violent struggle of twenty years, the kingdom of Kaffa fell into the hands of emperor Menelik's generals (Bahru Zewde 1991), a defeat that is still alive in songs and heroic folk tales (Pausewang 2009). What followed was a profound change in the social and politico-economic context of the southern kingdoms, giving root to the dichotomous north-south relation of the country's politics in a far larger multi-ethnic and multi-religious polity of the new Ethiopian empire-state (Merera Gudina 2007), which would become dominated by the Amhara elite for almost hundred years.

With the conquest of Kaffa, northern rulers came to settle on land they were granted, enslaving the indigenous population, and encouraging local elites to join the new ruling group. However, while Abyssinia<sup>17</sup> had been a relatively homogenous state with deep Christian roots (Markakis 1993), the newly acquired territories in the south were far more diverse, inhabited by a large number of ethnic groups and religions. Accordingly, by alienating lands of the subjugated societies and imposing on them the Abyssinian culture, new sources of conflict were created, still visible today even among Agama people. A first process was known under the term *Makinat* (literally pacification) which involved an evangelization of the local population and the institutionalization of a new system of political class, culture and language on the indigenous population (Merera Gudina 2003). Only those who demonstrated their loyalty to the empire by absorbing a specific set of cultural credentials were able to join the ranks of the powerful. These 'requirements' included fluency in the Amharic language, adherence to Orthodox Christianity and the adoption of Abyssinian norms and codes. Especially baptism in orthodox Christianity was a criterion to test, secure and mark the loyalty of southern elites (Gebru Tareke 1996), not by matter of choice, but as Vaugn (2003:113) remarks, "it was sanctioned in ways it was made essential." For example, the subjected people were encouraged to take Christian names, in order to be 'civilized'. The 'Gebre-Egizabehers' or 'slaves of God' and the 'Gebre-Mariams or 'slaves of Marry' presently found in Agama village, still bear the traces of the 'nation building' process and the conquest of the South (Merera Gudina 2003).

A second process was the extensive alteration of the land tenure and property rights. In a document written in 1930, administrator Tedle Haile suggested three remaining alternatives for dealing with the southern peoples: enslavement and expropriation, assimilation and indirect rule (Bahru Zewde 2002), all which were strongly pursued. Those areas who had resisted incorporation

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<sup>16</sup> The introduction of new guns into the European army put large quantities of cheap and used guns on the Ethiopian market, ready to use by Menelik's army in his submission of people of the South (Gudina 2007)

<sup>17</sup> Refers to the current Amhara and Tigre regions that are populated by respectively Amhara, Tigrayan ethnic groups.

in the Ethiopian state, as Kaffa did, were exposed to the introduction of the *malkagna-gabbar* system, transferred from the north as a form of feudal arrangement. The conquered lands were given to Menelik's generals, providing them with a source of wealth and military strength. Although they were allowed to sell and exchange land titles, the absolute rights were still vested in the state who could at all time confiscate and reallocate the land. In the south then, the traditional northern role of the *malkagna* (patron) came to be known under the name *neftegna* or 'man with a rifle' which is up to present used for descendents of Amharas that settled in the south of Ethiopia (Stellmacher 2007). In Kaffa, being endowed with Afromontane forest, the advent of the conquerors was mainly spurred by the desire to extract some of the commercially valuable forest goods as honey and coffee (Zewdie Yihene 2002). On the one hand, this new official tenure system put constraints on the production of forest products of the locals, but on the other, the changes in official tenure did not entail eviction of the farmers from the land as the new group of landed nobility did not cultivate the land themselves. According to their military rank, they were given a number of *gabbar* – a number of local peasant households - to work on their lands (including forests). The *gabbar* were allocated single plots of lands in turn for a full range of services, as taxes and tributes in kind and labour, while threatened with eviction or imprisonment in case of failure to meet those demands. This new land tenure strategy had implications for the constellation of different groups vis-à-vis the state and its power. As the *neftegna* paid tribute to the Emperor, suppressed revolts and mobilized people in time of war, they were considered as extended arms of the Amhara regime, based in Addis Ababa. While this affected the day-to-day life of many farmers in the south until the mid 1970s, the influence on perceptions of history and society stretched far beyond that.

During imperial times, one *neftegna* resident of Bonga was owner of all land around Bonga area, including Agama forest. He appointed a district officer, the *chiquashum* to manage his belongings, but this officer again enthroned local representatives, the *gacheukurro*, who were responsible for all the zones found in Agama forest. The *gabbar* were given use rights for agricultural land and also for some forest areas, for which they in return needed to pay in kind. Today, the Agama people are composed of descendants of former *gabbar* who held use rights in Agama forest in Emperor's time. For example, the chairman and the vice-leader of the FC who often differ in opinion, have a different perception on how their predecessors used the forest. The chairman of the FC explains:

This forest, starting from my background, means, in the previous year [during the imperial time], this Agama forest was controlled by six popular persons. In that time, that forest [was] captured by [those] popular persons, only by personal satisfaction. (...) Just, as a bourgeoisie system this forest

was controlled by somebody. In that time, the government rules, guide that capital system. One person never passes that area, never through that forest, except by permission from that person. Otherwise, no other person comes to give or take any activity around that forest. (...)

*Interviewer: This was a private person?*

That is a private person, now from these bourgeoisie persons, Ato W. for example, Agama 3 settler person, still lives there. (...) Mean, in that time, when one person died from that area [Agama forest], from that bourgeoisie family, ... [they] put that died man around that area. No church in that time. Still now that area is there. And anybody come to pass that area or cross that area. That is my family died place, why do you come to here they say. So such kinds of activities take place in that time.

While the vice-leader's family transferred another story, one where "during Haile Selassie, just [that forest] become our property, or captured by our families, as owner of that forest." As we shall see, this difference in background influences the perception of the change in ownership by the intervention of PFM, creating tension between the chairman and the vice-leader, as also distrust in the capacities of the chairman by some people in Agama village.

Another feature of this 'mixed' official and traditional forest management, was the contradiction between traditional forest practices and the new attempts of the centralized government to establish an institutional framework to promote environmental, and in particular, forest protection. We can find three proclamations – State forest proclamation, Private forest proclamation, Protective forest proclamation – going back to 1965 with the purpose 'to protect, conserve, develop and utilize forests in accordance with modern scientific principles' (Melesse Damtie 2011). Important to notice here is that although private forests could be owned by individuals or a group of persons, they were still under strict control of the Ministry of Agriculture. Accordingly, no person could remove, utilize, process or destroy any forest product from private forests unless he received a forest exploitation permit from the Ministry. However, Stellmacher (2007:104) argues that measures to protect the forest were never implemented into practice, leaving the forest much reliant on local interpretations of forest management. Asking about the environmental awareness with reference to the present time, the chairman of the FC replies:

In that time, that forest controlled by popular persons, only [for their] personal satisfaction. No [awareness] about the widespread importance for the world or different type of balance of climate. (...) In that time, all this land was captured by natural forests, from that, [only] honey for that bourgeoisie. Concepts only think in their brain, on the use of that honey. Without honey, no any other concepts about the forest in that time.

Thus, the conquest of Kaffa into the Ethiopian empire had some profound consequences for social, cultural, political and economical life which persevered over time and shaped the context in Agama for the (forest) tenure system. But more was waiting to come. An event was developing which would again reshape the scene of Kaffa and its inhabitants.

### **1.3.2.2 THE DERG**

#### *Land to the tiller*

In September 1974 the Ethiopian student movement in Addis Ababa was to publish its last issue of their magazine, *Struggle*, the editorial heading 'Power to the Peoples (not just people)' already revealing the revolution to come. They argued that the "heroic Ethiopian masses" needed to send "the lion to the zoo", as to "throw the crown into the museum and eliminate the blue-blooded blood suckers" (Balsvik 2007:44-45). Clearly, a message that could not be misunderstood concerning the destiny of the monarchy and the political elites. Few weeks afterwards, students and the left wing of the military carried out what they had proclaimed: they 'sent the Lion to the Zoo', making way for the armed forces, police and territorial army to take over power and install a Marxist-Leninist regime for the next seventeen years. The new power group, popularly known as the Derg (the Amharic word for 'committee' or council) deposed the emperor, annulled the constitution, dissolved the parliament and officially declared the foundation of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) in place of the imperial government. However, rather than the 'democratic Republic' that was fought for, the military government used 'military methods' to solve the country's societal problems. As one observer summarizes (Merera Gudina 2003:8):

... Mengistu, the man who emerged as the sole operator of the Ethiopian state machine: ended the *ancien regime* by a proclamation; with his fellow travelers transformed himself overnight to a proletarian revolutionary by a proclamation; established a socialist government by a proclamation; nationalized the country's key economic sectors by a proclamation, destroyed the country's best brains without the court of law as enemies of the people and revolution by a proclamation, organized the supportive mass organizations: farmers, workers, women and youth associations by a proclamation; carried out all the developmental policies including the cooperativisation, collectivization, resettlement and villagization programmes by a proclamation; created his Workers Party of Ethiopia and elected himself its First General-Secretary by proclamation; instituted the national parliament, and in effect elected its members by a proclamation; established the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and elected himself its first president by a proclamation. There

were too many proclamations to include them all here. What should be stressed... however, is that the military method employed by Mengistu and his crew not only failed to solve basic issues such as political and economic development, but also miserably failed to solve military issues, which were within their profession. What they managed to do with all these earth-shaking proclamations was to cause incalculable damages to the country and its people by failing a popular revolution that promised the broad masses of Ethiopia: freedom, social justice, peace and prosperity in a just and democratic state.

Part of those proclamations, one which was truly earth-shaking, was the Land Reform of 1975 that nationalized all land holdings. As such, all land, whether farmland, grazing land or forests, became state property, a law that holds until this day. It abolished all former land tenure arrangements – including the *neftegna* system - and awarded all ‘land to the tiller’, which meant the assignment of land tenure rights to farmers. It was the onset for further fundamental transformation in the rural social life of the countryside. Enormous numbers of university and high school students, convinced of the Marxist ideology to transform their country, were sent under the *Zemetcha* program to the countryside in order to implement the changes to be brought by the revolution (Balsvik 2007). Their main tasks encompassed a literacy campaign and organizing the rural people into mass organizations, the Producer’s Cooperatives (PC’s) and the Peasant Associations (PA’s), which became essential instruments to implement (agricultural) policies (Mulugeta Abebe 2005). There were great expectations on the part of the rural people, especially in Kaffa, reclaiming the land that had been in the hands of the big landowners, perceived as northerners that conquered their lands (Vaughn 2003, Zewdie Yihenew 2002). Expectations that matched the *Zemetcha* activists’s perception of their main mission: dividing up and handing over of land to the poor ‘masses’. But how could it have been imagined that the landowners would give in to the proclamation without resistance? As Balsvik’s (2007:61) research on student revolutions in Ethiopia mentions,

The tension in the countrysides, the zeal of the *Zemetcha* students and the resistance of landowners, supported by many of the local police and administrators who were set to control the processes on behalf of the government and who often had invested in land themselves, often led to life-threatening conflicts. The landowners were armed, but the campaigners were not. There were different categories of landowners. There were the really big ones, the absentee landlords who where in Addis Ababa, and the not-so-big Amhara or Tigre landowners, but there was also the category called the *balabats*, rooted in the indigenous elite who had consented to become administrators and instruments of northern domination over a subjugated.

The response of the 'poor masses' was thus partially dependent on their social status, which is still reflected in the perceptions on history of their descendants. For example, one farmer (non-member FC) in Agama telling about his background, comments:

[My family] did not participate, in the proclamation of the Derg. In that time, [we are] immediately controlled (...) by the government and sent [order] to each of the citizens from each of the local bourgeoisie. Regional bourgeoisie are there in Haile Selassie's regime. There are famous locals, who control Ethiopian resources, Ethiopian wealth, any other like of land were controlled by some groups. In regime of Haile Selassie, all land [was] controlled by a single person (...) [But] by coup d'état, Derg become to power and follows socialism (...) rules. In that time, all land, all resources become distributed for all people, all Ethiopian persons get farming land. In this case, local boss or local chief, by force [they] take his land and distribute for all people. In that time, our local become distributed for all persons [Derg] say. Derg controls by force and take this area, Agama 3 (...) Now my family's [burying] place, by unknown case, is controlled. And still now, Ethiopia, does not give respect for its died people, [all that land was] sent to the other person.

This did not only influenced his attitude towards the governmental rule, which he saw as "autocracy systems" and "opposed to society", it also affected his attitude towards the establishment of the forest cooperative, in which he did not wished to join, because "they only give attention for their personal satisfaction." On the contrary, the FC chairman, descendent from a 'servant' family, thought that

it has more advantages, the Derg, from the proclamation [that distributed] the land to each of the people individually. [Land was] not (...) captured by a single person [anymore who] was wealth[y]. Most of the people become to poor so forest land was separated for the people. The resource is people's, not only for one or five persons. So all land used by proclamation in that time, in the governmental level, immediately separate the land and the forests, or users, all persons, relation from the forest people, all people use this forest. In that time, they become to use from the forest by ownership. Just come in their brain, think [they] own the forest, appear in the people. However, in that time, we don't have awareness [about the forest conservation] like we have in this time.

Two things should be noticed here. One is that, under the current regime, this particular person was previously also chairman of Yeyebito kebele, although rather by appointment than by choice, and one of the main supporters of the intervention process by Farm Africa to implement PFM, while the other farmer always talked about the deficiencies of the government and the mistakes of the FC. To point at this difference in perception on history of those two persons, is not to state that history is completely determining the current behaviour of villagers towards interventions of governmental

and non-governmental actors in their daily lives. But to some extent, the stories transferred from generation to generation combined with own experiences with previous interventions do have an influence when 'another' organization is coming to their village, with 'another' claim to provide them emancipation. Secondly, the land reform of 1975 also had influence on the way people were using Agama forest. The PA's were officially given full control to distribute both agricultural and forest land. Moreover, membership of the PA was a precondition for any right access to land resources in that particular PA. However, the actual practices differed from the policy formulation, which is revealed in a research in the late 1990s, covering six case studies including Yeyebito kebele, about access to forest resources in Kaffa (Zewdie Yihene 2002). From interviews with former PA leaders it became clear that they, as compared to agricultural land, only played a limited role in the distribution of forest or tree resources. There was a general understanding that the people would continue to use the forest areas to which they had some affiliations prior to the Derg, according to customary channels and family-centered mechanisms. In some of the case study areas, the younger and more politicized PA officials did make some attempts to institutionalize formal tenure, but they were soon blocked by claims of locally recognizable forest use rights. According to Zewdie Yihene (2002), the informants recounted that the farmers considered the forest areas around their land holdings as their own private property, which can also be found in the above answer of the Agama farmer, despite their advices to the people that the forest was that of the government who limited farmers' use rights to beekeeping and coffee production. On the other hand, from the perspective of the demand for forest holdings, households that had not direct access to the forests around the village had always been 'desirous' of requesting the PA to involve itself in forest allocation. However, as they needed to identify vacant forest land by themselves, "absence of suitable vacant forests to report to the PA's" was the main factor that discouraged them from requesting the PA to provide them with forest lands. Thus, by the 1980s, all forest trees, including those in Agama forest, had well entrenched individual users.

In the early 1980s however, the physical limits of the forest became more recognized by the PA's office. For example, in Yeyebito, the officials attempted to confine the traditional use rights to only those individual forest trees that were used to mount beehives on. According to the informants, this was a direct reaction to the advice the PA office got from local experts of the Ministry of Agriculture regarding the new forest regulations. It is remarkable that this new impetus in local practices 'to protect the forest' followed the enactment of a new proclamation, to Provide for the Conservation and Development of Forest and Wildlife Resources. In addition, an autonomous forestry organization – Forest and Wildlife Conservation and Development Authority (FAWCDA) – was

established, characterized by intensive plantation activities and a protectionist attitude (Alemayehu Ayana et al. forthcoming) towards communities living in and around the forests. However, these new forest laws left sufficient space for local interpretations. In the case of Yeyebito kebele, PA officials still gave local people the prerogative to continue using forests in accordance with family and village conventions, while having no intention to intervene in the utilization of forest products other than trees for beehives, which was understood to go beyond their mandates. As a result, the traditional systems of forest use partially withstood the legislative powers of the 'land to the tiller' movement.

Thus, despite various changes in property rights and government regimes, traditional arrangements have at all times been part of the forest tenure structure in Agama (and beyond). However, we should not only pay attention to policies which actually aimed at changing the tenure structure. Other policies, issued during the Derg regime, with profound impact on the social and cultural setting of Agama indirectly impacted upon the traditional arrangements and negotiations of forest access and use rights as well. A negotiation which is still ongoing today and would profoundly impact the interactions between Farm Africa implementers and Agama villagers and among villagers themselves in the future process of establishing PFM. Before we turn to the first activity of Farm Africa when coming to Bonga area, a redemarcation of forests, we will first briefly discuss these policies and the practices they generated. As such, it will become clear that 'participation' and 'forest demarcation' were two very much separate things for villagers in Agama.

### *Three other big policies: villagisation – resettlement – forest demarcation*

In the years after the *Zemeshu*, the PA's had become the most important agrarian institutions for the implementation of agricultural reforms. A good understanding of the PA's, also necessary to understand the administration of villages under the current regime, was written by Stahl (1989:28):

Peasant Association (PA) is the basic rural institution in post-revolutionary Ethiopia. Initially created for the purposes of defeating the landlords and abolishing the feudal system, the PAs are now semi-official administrative units at the grass roots level. The PA is a territorial organization encompassing 800 hectares or more. All peasant households living in area should be members. ... The average peasant membership is 150 – 300 households. All arable land areas in regions under state control are covered with a network of PAs. ... The PA members constitute an assembly which gathers a few times a year. It elects a chairman and an executive committee which run the daily affairs of the association. In addition, the assembly elects a judicial tribunal which functions as a local

court adjudicating minor legal matters. There are sub-committees attached to the executive committee to deal with matters such as defense / security, administrative affairs and development. Government ... get in touch with the peasant population through the PAs. Information on new directives and proclamations, development campaigns, public works are transmitted to the population and implemented by the PAs. They also mobilise the labour for free planting and soil conservation programs.

However, as Harbeson (1988:204) remarked, the “Representatives of the elective peasant association pyramid were included in the hierarchy of centrally directed officials but only as a minority without leadership responsibility. The structure of the hierarchy at the regional, provincial and lower levels clearly revealed the military regime’s expectation that peasant associations would serve primarily as instruments of its authority at the lowest level rather than a principle vehicle of peasant’s initiative and political expression at the grass roots.” As such, the PAs were the main tool to institutionalize *villagisation*, officially unleashed by the socialist government to regroup the scattered rural households into clustered villages in order to improve their life through modernizing agricultural production patterns, rational land use and the delivery of social services as health, education, water, electricity, infrastructures. The scheme became disputed though, not because of the objectives stipulated in government’s documents, but because the ‘voluntariness’ of the scheme was questioned, dictating the forms of social organization, but failing to deliver the necessary social services (Mulugeta Abebe 2005). Whatever underlying political objectives might have been, the impact it had on the use of forests in Yeyebito was undoubtedly real. Villagisation entailed often substantial increases in distance between the new homes and forest fields, causing difficulties for the day-to-day management of the forests and reduced the household’s production of coffee, honey and spices, as this period was remembered as one with very low forest production activity<sup>18</sup> (Zewdie Yihene 2002). In response, most people searched trees or forest patches near their homesteads or, considering the increased competition, established sharecropping arrangements. That the scheme was not very popular was witnessed in the de-villagisation process immediately after the overthrow of the Derg, where people illegally sold their plots and moved back into the forest or their former land holdings.

Another major rural development strategy of the military government was the *resettlement* program. During the drought of 1984, the program was designed to relocate rural people from severely affected regions (north) to regions in the south and west which had received adequate

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<sup>18</sup> It should be noticed that the removal of the thirty-two households out of Agama forest, now under the guise of security reasons, had similar consequences for their use of forest resources.

rainfall. Alula (1990) distinguishes three perspectives to the resettlement program. From an ecological point of view, it was a means of reducing population pressures in the drought prone areas, while from an economic perspective it was supposed to increase the productivity of under-utilized fertile lands and last, from a social point of view, it was a strategy to give land to those without it. To have an idea about the extensiveness of the program, anthropologist Alula (1990:124) further explains:

Resettlement was the largest and most complex operation in the history of the state, requiring the coordination of almost a dozen governmental ministries and authorities. As action program to resolve the crisis resulting from the famine was formulated (...) The resettlement component accounted for 123 million birr<sup>19</sup>, or a quarter of the planned expenditure on emergency development. A committee comprising high-level officials selected settlement sites on helicopter tours often lead by the Head of the State. The whole venture was organized with great haste on a campaign basis by the newly former Workers' Party of Ethiopia which took over direction of the program, and sent out cadres to organize the settlements, much in the same way that a decade earlier, students were sent to rural areas to spread the message of the nascent revolution.

As such, all over the country, people with different religious and cultural backgrounds were confronted with each other, which had direct consequences on the use of (forest) land. The scale of the impact on forest access rights was however dependent on time of arrival of the 'newcomers'. While in neighbouring areas to Yeyebito settlers came in 1985 and received access to already distributed forest holdings to hang beehives, collect coffee, spices and construction material, settlers in Yeyebito who came in 1987 did not receive the same political attention. Subsequently, they did not receive forest patches upon arrival, because of their limited availability. Settlers in Agama village mainly came from the Kambata region, 300 km east of Bonga, speaking a different local language and important, bearing a different historical relation to forest use and management. As will become clear later on, the movement will be at the root of a *long durée* conflict between the traditional users of Agama forest and their potential competitors, the Kambata settlers.

Another huge scale program under the Derg regime can be understood from the perspective of the environmental 'legacy' with which they started, namely the catastrophe of droughts and famines in 1972-73 which caused a growing awareness of the need for better natural resource management in the country. On the one hand, as depicted above, this was reflected in the nationalization of all land in 1975, officially converting all forests under state administration. National state bodies were

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<sup>19</sup> Birr is the Legal currency in Ethiopia. In the 70s and 80s 2.09 Birr was traded for one dollar. Currently, one dollar is equal to 17,9685 Ethiopian birr (exchange rate 23 August 2012).

supposed to account for forests larger than 80 ha, the state forests, while the PAs were charged with the responsibility to conserve natural resources in their jurisdiction, including forests smaller than 80 ha or village forests. On the other hand, the establishment of the FAWCDA was another indicator of the government's inclination, at least in theory, to better natural resource management. This authority launched the National Forest Priority Area (NFPA) approach, which according to Kidane Mengistu (2002:12) was "the most ambitious and area wide forest conservation strategy in Ethiopia so far." The proclamation of 1980 distributed "enormous discretionary power" to FAWCDA to designate, demarcate and administer any forested land which was made possible by a seven fold increase in the annual budget (Alemayehu Ayana et al. forthcoming). As such, a total of 42 state forests were demarcated as NFPAs, covering 2,2 million hectares of forest, bordered with concrete pillars. However these optimistic attempts for conservation were shadowed by the forceful approach to demarcation of forest lands, mostly incorporating private agricultural lands and communal grazing areas, and the fact that the demarcation was not followed by management plans or actual implementation of any conservation measures (Stellmacher 2007).

In the context of Agama, the policy became real in the demarcation of Bonga forest as Bonga National Forest Priority Area (BNFPA) in 1987. As documented from interviews conducted by Zewdie Yihenu (2002) with PA leaders at the time, the delineation was never consultative, leading to arbitrariness and division of contiguous villages and their forest domains into BNFPA and non-BNFPA. According to the agreement signed between PA leaders and natural resource personnel, all agricultural activities were to be prohibited inside the BNFPA. However, the Ministry of Agriculture only provided forest guards to protect plantation areas, so that most people were not concerned much with the designation as they did not need to change their forest practices. It should be pointed out though that the Ministry of Agriculture was aiming to evict the farmers who were already living within the borders of the BNFPA as part of the villagisation program, which followed the demarcation in Bonga area. As such, at least for some people, demarcation attempts were associated with subsequent removal out of the forest, sometimes leading to the actual destruction of boundary markers.

Thus, the demarcation exercise seemed to be more an external pressure, imposing its reality on local forest use, than a supportive regulation for sustainable forest management. We can ask why it is that difficult to find alternatives for top down approaches to forest policies and their implementation. One reason off course is the broader political context of strong centralized administrative structures within which the demarcation took place. In addition, I will argue that

intervention processes, both from government and non-governmental organizations, tend to concentrate on the visible aspects in their arena of implementation, struggling with the 'invisible ropes' underlying the activities of the people they intend to influence.

## 1.4 PFM MEETS AGAMA

Focusing upon the more visible aspects, the more 'dramatic intervention' as a former Farm Africa project staff phrases, is exactly what Farm Africa did when they came to Bonga area. After arrival in late 1996, they assigned top priority to: a *redemarcation* of the forest territory. As they need to convince both local people as governmental workers of their project, they started to discuss with the zonal government about the merits of a redemarcation. It should be recalled that the designation of BNFPFA during the regime of the Derg in 1987 was only nominal and that local people never made a distinction between BNFPFA area and non-BNFPFA. Thus, at the time project staff of Farm Africa entered Bonga area, a time where the regime already changed to an official 'democracy', most of the boundary markers were disappeared or dismantled and in some areas state forest had been converted to agricultural land (Stellmacher 2006, Zewdie Yihenew 2002). For a project on forest management, it seems logical then to define clear, or visible, boundaries on the forest areas they want to protect. However, we will see that in the context of Agama, the practices produced by the redemarcation exercise became to mean something different than 'participation' and 'for the protection of the forest'. Avoid from context, the policy model became rather a framework to interpret the events than an actual guide for the actions of the project staff and governmental workers. Moreover, when practical knowledge did appear and was offered to the project staff, it was ignored. I will conclude then that a tendency to focus on the 'visible' aspects of reality separated PFM from the local institutional setting, following its own rationality.

### 1.4.1 THE REDEMARCATION SET-UP

In many project documents of Farm Africa we can read that the first aim of the Bonga PFM project is to protect the forest from destruction. In the minutes of a transcript of a presentation to the evaluation team (Amare Getahun et al. 2007) the goals are described in matter of importance :

1. Goal
  - Reduce deforestation/contribute to forest conservation

- Develop 22 PFM plans
- Develop partners' capacity
- Increase livelihood of target community

From the onset of the project, the first aim was thus to protect the forest, while participation is expressed in 'develop 22 PFM plans', and cannot be seen as a goal in itself. As UK based organization, Farm Africa originated in the international turmoil towards a participatory discourse in natural resource management and likewise, before actually experiencing participatory forest management, they were convinced of its merits. But how could this be carried out in practice in the top-down working relations and more hierarchical traditional values of Agama?

If the first aim is protection, then this cannot be more clearly visualized by literally bordering the forest with marks, as material 'defense' against intruders alias destructors. Therefore, Farm Africa negotiated with zonal departments which resulted in an agreement that the department would assign a team of technical experts to perform the boundary redemarcation, while Farm Africa promised to facilitate the election of community representatives to guarantee a participatory undertaking. In that time, one member of the project staff was granted by Huddersfield University to carry out a PhD research which he decided to undertake on the theme of access to forest resources in Bonga area. At the time of fieldwork, he was thus still affiliated to the project in the form of financial backing and participation in routine activities which provided his research the benefit of an inside look to the actual practices of the PFM project. Concerning the 'participatory demarcation', he had two remarks. In an interview he first says

Although the forest is from the state, *de facto*, the community is managing it. So in that time, they were giving a wrong signal to the people, namely you are using it illegally. This is an incentive, to cut down trees.

Later, we will see that 'the community' itself became enrolled in the protection discourse, transforming language about forest practices from 'use' to 'destruction'. Second remark is that participation became more theory guided than based on practical knowledge. In negotiation with government officials, the project staff underlined the need to represent every interest group in the redemarcation, which had to include women and Manja representatives. But inclusion of representatives from so-called 'minority groups' is not a guarantee for participation. The former researcher/project staff member explains (2002:146):

The major point of reference for the redemarcation exercise was the spatial dimension of the original BNFFPA, whose demarcation had its own fundamental flaws. (...) Thus, as in the past, the redemarcation exercise paid little attention to the similarity of use rights enjoyed by the communities adjoining the BNFFPA territory and the equity issues that would arise in the enforcement of the newly instituted tenure regulations in the re-demarcated sector of the forest. Moreover, the message that this would send to neighbouring non-BNFFPA areas in terms of their insulation from forest use restrictions that BNFFPA users' face seemed not to have been thought through. (...) It was established that a good proportion of (...) members of community groups never had any direct interest in the forest areas which they were meant to negotiate with the technical staff. For instance, women and Manjos (...) were found to have resided in the non-BNFFPA sub-kebeles and had no material interest in the demarcated forest areas. As some members of the professional team fielded for demarcation observed, the above community representatives had never set foot on some of the redemarcated forests and knew very little about respective villagers' use rights (...) From field observations and verbal reports of Bonga forest conservation and development project<sup>20</sup> field personnel it has become increasingly clear that the redemarcation exercise started to be dogged by the same forms of local defiance, including wood poaching, farmland clearance, and felling of boundary marker trees, that accompanied the original state forest demarcation process.

Thus, participation in the redemarcation exercise was more concerned with its form, the representation of minority groups, than with its content, creating a platform for discussion about the matters at stake. The approach to forest demarcation became a repetition of past practices and raises the question if “the carving out of state forest areas as a tenure category was the preferred option for co-opting the participation of the user community in forest protection and management”. In a next paragraph we will see that it was not. First however, we need to discuss further what happened when the researcher introduced his practical knowledge and reflections on the contradictions between the policy model and the practices it generated.

#### *1.4.2 BACON ON HIS HEAD*

One of the important recommendations in the dissertation was the necessity to go beyond the “untenable association” of the concept of the community with an aggregate of households found in a kebele. He stressed the diversity among kebeles and even among villages in “spatio-ecological interests” and “local organizing capabilities” and argued for an approach that was more focused on

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<sup>20</sup> Bonga PFM project as referred to in this story

context and less with official legitimacy. The question that raises then is why the recommendation for more appropriate local organizational involvement was not taken up in the sequence of the project actual PFM implementation. As the researcher still worked for six months in the project after the primary data collection phase, it is hard to imagine that his findings were never discussed among project staff. In an interview he says

They wanted to follow a step by step approach. My advice, based on my study, was to look at the institutions first. And not only the user groups, but all the institutions. In my PhD you can also read it, they needed to develop both the traditional and the formal institutions. They are maybe apparently different mandates, there is in practice a good relation between the two. It should be possible to combine them. But they were predetermined in their mechanical approach, in cooperation with the Bureau of Agriculture. Also, after a while, they completely started to focus on one village only, where everybody was Manja.

Even after the publication of the PhD, there was resistance to acknowledge its content. On the question how feedback was inserted into the organization, the researcher replies

When I had my PhD, new people came to work in Farm Africa, foreigners. I think they felt threatened by my proposal. It were young people, you know. So it was not an inviting environment. I tried, but they did not really accept my ideas. So I left the PFM environment and got opportunity to work for the UN.

This clearly puts Francis Bacon's dictum on its head<sup>21</sup>, it is not knowledge that brought power, but power which defined knowledge, influencing the course of the PFM project. The gains to hold up a reality of participation and define a clear-cut strategy, were bigger than acknowledging practical knowledge which exposes the 'dirty corners' of reality. Therefore, power was used to constrain knowledge. Rather, in everyday politics of the project, Plato's 'noble lie' was relied upon; that is, the lie which would be told to citizens of his model state to support its moral and political order.

Another example of this can be found in the start-up phase of the PFM project. At the same time Farm Africa was demarcating the forests in Bonga area, the zonal department of Agriculture launched an initiative for a 'zone wide forest governance'. For that matter, they established forest protection and development committees (FPDCs) at all levels of the administrative hierarchy (zone, district, kebele) which needed to 'enhance forest governance' compatible with both state ownership and local forest use rights. The document (KSZ-DoA 1998) which clarified their organization

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<sup>21</sup> Phrase used from Flyvbjerg's book *Power and Rationality: Democracy in Practice*.

allowed representation of chairpersons, religious and government department leaders at the zonal level, section heads of various departments at woreda level and embraced kebele officials, extension agents, *iddir* leaders<sup>22</sup>, elders and school principals at the kebele level. The committees however received little organizational assistance according to archival sources and became never operational. Thus, at the same time a PFM project was established in Bonga with the main aim of forest protection and conservation, similar attempts, at least in administration offices, were undertaken in the Zonal department of Agriculture. But, as it was the project's rationality to 'build capacity of government staff' and 'catalyze the adoption of PFM within forest policy and practice', existing context specific initiatives were not focused upon and the two initiatives remained isolated by their own rationalities.

Keeping Bacon on his head in mind, we can look now to the impact of the forest redemarcation exercise on villagers's perception. In the annexes of the PhD dissertation (p397), a small detail in the summary of fieldwork process, but revealing a significant 'reality', we read:

[M]any believed that the present work was a job-related assignment given to the writer by the forest conservation project which the researcher had been known to be affiliated with. There were some unpopular initiatives the above project embarked on at about the start up of the research. Thus, local people's perception of the present writer as "just another project personnel" was more of a liability than an asset for the research. However, the writer's extended stay in modest accommodations in the research villages, the visits he made to places considered remote for outsiders, and his stay in the research areas evn during major cultural festivals of national significance, helped him to be seen in a different light than as a salaried worker.

Regardless of the personal motives of the researcher in writing these lines, he is correct. The PFM project meets resistance when it enters Agama village. From whom, how and why this resistance happens and what questions this resistance conceals about participatory development work is investigation of the following chapter, which will also necessitate the historical perspective discussed in this chapter. First, however we will discuss why and how the regulatory practices of the demarcation were not a good start to motivate the villagers to change their thinkings and doings in the direction of an environmental protection along the lines of the PFM project.

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<sup>22</sup> Iddir is a locally organized institution in which often all people are member. It has a long history and has several organizing functions (for example to organize farming activities and burials). See Annex V for an organigram of the Yeyebito *iddir*.

## 1.5 A CONTINGENCY IN TWO EVENTS

Just before Farm Africa showed up in Agama to redemarcate the forest, the murder happened in Agama forest followed by the removal of people out of the forest. Following the 'flow of ideas and reflections' in Agama village, we find that for some people used to live in the forest, the two events were related with each other, the demarcation being a preliminary step to their removal. All, including the person who was kebele chairman at that time, labeled the movement as 'forced'. They had the benefits of hindsight, so their answers were also based upon how they perceived the evolution of their life after the movement. In all but one interview, it was worsened. A women explains:

I am born in a neighboring woreda of Gimbo, Chenna, [were] I grew with my family. After that I married and came to here, [living in] the forest, especially Gokessa, one of the six separation zones. And I [gave birth to] 7 boys and girls in that area. And after that we come to here [Agama village] by governmental force, left from that forest area and come to this village. In that time we get benefits from the forest, from the honey, from the spice, type of coffee. Different types of gain from the forest. Now we have a crowded life. This is the case.

On another occasion, her neighbor, similarly comments on his background story as:

My birthplace is in the middle of Agama forest, especially my family was there, in that area. And I grew and develop to mature age in that area. (...) In that time, just similar to an accident, a bad history meet my family (...) By that case, by governmental force, we leave out of that forest area, Bushasha. And our properties, permanent and temporary property, (...) damaged, without any payment, without any compensation, we come again to sit in Agama 3 area. Just as 15m, as a prison form. Without any income, payment, any meal or diet. Only drinking water and [just] stay the whole day. (...). It is not good. Still now, nobody asks, any visit, we live in struggle. In this case, I have a crowded life. Also, we got from our forest a lot of income, benefits. We were a rich men in that time, we were very rich men(...). Now we are under from any other society, from popular family. We become poorest and bad living conditions are there as I guide my life.

Also other traditional users, who have always lived adjacent to Agama forest but have traditionally recognized use rights in the forest, mentioned the movement as 'forced by government' and not good both for the living situation of the removed people as for the conditions of the forest. The latter was implied because the distance between the homes and the forest plots increased, creating difficulties for the day to day management and protection against outsiders.

A very different version of the same event was given by the former Team Leader of the Bonga PFM project. According to him, the movement was voluntarily decided by the social institutions of the village, without influence of any governmental or non-governmental body. Because of the tremendous fear that followed the murder, people decided to move out because of better security when living outside the forest, and thus people could not claim compensation. He also saw it a positive evolution for their living circumstances as the movement to Agama village was closer to the main road and would provide them more easily with services, if these would ever come to the village, than in the middle of the forest. A third version, provided by a part-time project implementation worker who is positioned between the local people and his supervisors – the bureau of Agriculture and Farm Africa – accordingly situates the movement as “it was voluntarily and at the same time force.” He affirms that it was not obligatory, but only people who agreed to move out received land and moreover, were guaranteed protection against similar events in the future. However, he also mentions, as a small detail, that “it was simplicity of administration.”

These contradictions and inconsistencies in the versions of different people and groups of people is not merely a ‘discourse struggle’. For the families in Agama village who needed to leave their forest land, the event influenced their daily practices and they created a story which still occupies their thinkings and sayings. Up to present, they claim compensation and are waiting until someone “can give them their rights”, while the story is continuously recreated to cope with the effect of time. For example, one person told that the government had now finally started to identify the families entitled for compensation. That this is unlikely to happen is clear from the official versions of the event, which closed the case together with the movement of the people out of the forest, and which surely is not part of the daily reflections of governmental workers.

It should be stressed though that the main argument here is not that a homogenous social group, the traditional forest users, all hold the same story ‘against’ and official version from two NGO workers. There was no direct communication about this event between the latter and the villagers and the different views on the movement so did not cross in time or space. Moreover, the story was not only individually reckoned, but also socially shaped. Two examples can be found to back this. The only villager who perceived his life to be improved after the movement was a peasant which was said to be “not aware of many things” and who “doesn’t know a lot of things that happen in society.” He also finished the interview with a “simply I live, I can’t explain for you in detail, I’m sorry.” Another example, during a private conversation while making dinner, a female said her life was better in her new house in Agama village for personal reasons. However, during an interview later on, with her husband listening behind the door, she replied that

Goksha has more advantages for me, not only for the society. Still now we use from that forest ... So our life relates to the forest, not here ... I appreciate about living in the middle of the forest area.

A categorization of persons on the basis of an externally observable difference may be a first step in an analysis, an attempt to grasp the enormous array of beliefs people hold on themselves and the events in their life, but to end analysis there would fail to attend to the many different ways people constitute themselves and do so differently over time (Agrawal 2005). However, we can say that there was a gap between the experiences and thoughts that constitute the 'selves' of villagers and the image the institutional design sought to consolidate. And this gap is as contingent as it is political. When the redemarcation closely followed the eviction out of the forest, "a default coincidence"<sup>23</sup>, and brought new knowledge to the evicted families and their neighbours in Agama about the necessity to protect the forest against destruction, it must entail internal struggles to define their own position in relation to the aim of the redemarcation and the changes in practices it was supposed to imply. In Agama however, most positions were based on experiences that linked boundary demarcation with enforcement, removal, and deep changes in life without power to change them; not with participation and forest management. Past forest related interventions were more a visible evidence of state power rather than an attempt to improve forest management with inclusion of people depending on the forest. Thus, when a NGO does the same based on other claims, the question raises to what extent villagers recognized a mutual interest in forests and were willing to work upon themselves to become the environmental selves as they were imagined by the policy model.

## 1.6 PRACTICES, SELF AND POWER MATTER

Regardless of the background in Agama, the redemarcation was a first example of the tendency to focus on the most visible aspects of reality, the 'symptoms', in the PFM project generating practices that were not primarily related with the concept of participation and forest management for Agama villagers. We saw on the one hand how Farm Africa attempted to enroll decisive (and so not powerless) governmental workers in the scheme of PFM by organizing practical activities that provided concrete examples of how PFM could work in practice. These practices provided an opportunity for some participants to reflect about their selves in relation to forest management and to arrive to a new sense of what is in their interest. The practical activities which involved the first

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with the forestry researcher in EIAR in Bonga who was former part time fieldworker for Bonga PFM project.

contact between the PFM project staff and the villagers however, who needed to consent rather than give official approval, did not provide such opportunity. Since the aim was to protect the forest, it was literally bordered, almost as a sign of power for local people, ignoring the historical meaning of this act or the opportunity to include practical knowledge when this arose inside their organization. And this was the situation in the preliminary phase of the project, before the actual PFM activities were introduced in the village. We shall see in following chapter how this situation reemerges throughout the entire lifetime of the project. We shall see how general notions of the forest and people and their relations, a situation which 'required action', leads to practices that are not responsive on the localized needs and problems. Rather, when reality doesn't seem to 'fit' the design, practices become guided by an operational logic which do not necessarily motivate local people's willingness to contribute to environmental regulation or institutional change. The project, founded upon participatory idea, so became structure affirmative in its effect: rather than challenging routinized practices or relations of power at different levels in the chain, it was a tool to reconstitute them. I will argue that this entails a change in our view on practices in any participatory project: to make practices intelligible, it is not only important what is done, but also how it is done.

# Two

## ADDING A NEW ELEMENT TO AN OLD STORY

What in us really wants ‘truth’? ... *why not rather* untruth? And uncertainty? Even ignorance?

(Friedrich Nietzsche *Beyond Good and Evil*)

The way knowledge was defined during the first phase of Farm Africa was not only located in the offices of project staff and governmental workers. How this knowledge became part of the Agama villagers will become clear from an account of the second phase of the Bonga PFM project. After long winded negotiations with state bodies, personal and organisational restructuring, the practical implementation phase was reached in 2001 and now renamed as Bonga Participatory Forest Management and Reproductive Health Program (Bonga PFM&RHP)<sup>24</sup>. After the redemarcation exercise, as clear signal of their first aim ‘we protect the forest’, attention included now more the participatory aspect, reflected in the aim of ‘develop PFM plans’. However, the project’s rationale was to give first priority to improve the livelihoods of local people through development activities, again focusing on the more obvious, rooted in the conviction of supporting the ‘poor masses’.

This chapter will continue with the example that opened the scene in chapter one which will show that the issue is not so straightforward as it seemed. This concrete example will lead us to a rack for our further discussion, in the form of eight agenda points, from which one point will reveal the main puzzle for this chapter, how a project designed for participation and forest management became mainly focused upon income generation? In an attempt to find an answer, we shall see in a next section then how a participatory project can claim participation *and* reproduce asymmetric

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<sup>24</sup> It could be an interesting question to research why the project name changed and took into account a health component considering the main attention of Ethiopian policies goes to agricultural development, education and health. Although, we will keep on referring to the project as Bonga PFM project, it should thus be kept in mind that the name officially changed.

power relations at the same time in practices that are practically compatible, but logically contradictory. To illustrate this with concrete examples, we will discuss two examples in a third section, focusing on the issue of ownership. Finally, we will dissect through which practices the PFM project was brought to Agama villagers and see how this ambiguity remained possible which will bring us to the main points of this chapter and questions to be discussed in the following two chapters.

## 2.1 THE BOUNDARY ISSUE CONTINUED

### *2.1.1 ANOTHER VISIT AND A MEETING*

At the end of March, in the dawn of the morning, nine people of Agama village gather for a program. Since the chairman of the FC management committee returned, a second visit to the Manja farmer is scheduled. The team of the facilitator and the secretary is strengthened with the chairman, vice-leader, cashier, permanent member and control committee of the FC, together with the Development Agent of Natural Resources (DA) of Yeyebito kebele. After the traditional greetings, the row of people moves itself up to the land of the 'destructor'. On their way however, the chairman halts and starts a heavy discussion with a man working in front of his house. Apparently, this Kambata peasant has taken wood from the forest to build a new house without asking permission to the management committee and now he refuses access to the chairman and entourage to control his property. After shouting some warnings, the chairman takes off, heavily discussing with the facilitator, while the DA is whispering with another committee member. When they finally reach the farmer's land, the complete team embarks on the middle of the steep field, waiting until he arrives, as he undoubtedly already knows that they are present. The owner arrives, better prepared than last time, and, while the FC committee is rather expectantly looking, the DA and the facilitator immediately start the same discussion again, about the exact boundary between forest and farm land. In addition, the question who exactly cleared the forest is also a matter of debate. The discussion takes a long time, gradually involving more input from the committee members, except for the only female who is not used to express herself through this channel, going from tense to making jokes to tense again, eventually ending in the agreement of the farmer to come to the new FC office to sign a document that same day. So all return back, heading to the office, but at a crossroads they stop and, although channeled through the facilitator, a discussion starts again. Some members decide to go home, there is still other work, while the chairman argues, that they need to come to

the office for the case of the farmer. In the end, everybody goes his own way, with only the chairman, secretary, permanent member (also aunt of the facilitator), DA, and facilitator left to continue the way to the office. Upon arrival, reflections are made on the visit. These reveal that this particular case already dates back four years ago. The farmer was removed from his previous land in another woreda, by case of an investor, and came to settle in Yeyebito. But more is to be said. The kebele chairman of that time sold the land illegally to the farmer, in the full knowledge that it was actually forest land, but nevertheless accepting the money he was offered. Last year, the case was sent to woreda court, but after bribing the eye-witnesses, the farmer could continue his cultivation work. According to the reflections of the facilitator, the situation of the farmer puts him in a difficult position, pending between his personal thoughts and what the government expects from him.

M. is a good man, I like him, really. But that is in my brain, thinking you know. That is not what you can do if you are cooperative worker. If something goes wrong with the cooperative, they first look at me.

Afterwards, the remaining people hold a meeting and as some of the agenda points already point to issues dealt with in this chapter, the minutae as recorded by the literate secretary, are shortly summarized:

- 1) Discussion about ideas among management body: different ideas. Want to come to agreement on these ideas. Conflicting ideas concerning organizational issues (for example presence on the meeting).
- 2) Unknown person from Agama 2 people: call iddir together to discuss the case and to identify the person who destructed the forest.
- 3) Kebele: six controlling areas: very hard to guard this areas, to block accessibility for all persons.
- 4) Recording of the files: income and expenses
- 5) How to reorganize the nursery of the forest cooperative? Agreement on this among the members.
- 6) Receiving account from each of the creditors (members), persons did not come to negotiation with the cooperative (after 21 March 2012: start suing the court, woreda). They borrowed money from the cooperative and did not pay back.
- 7) Visitors: how many to ask for visitors when they go to the forest. Common payment?
- 8) NABU: DA defended Nabu (is straight), facilitator: members are still sensitive about this subject (they caused a lot of cases).

Although these eight points cover a huge amount of 'cyclopean monuments', we will elaborate upon point six, as this is related to the strategy used by Farm Africa to start the implementation of PFM, and as we will see, to the strategy of making people enthusiastic for the project targets.

### *2.1.2 THERE IS NO INCOME!*

An issue that repeatedly is coming back in all meetings of the FC is the issue of: money. After the visit to the Manja farmer, the discussion concerns the fact that at least fifteen people, most of them relatives from the committee, still need to pay back the money they borrowed from the FC. Before Farm Africa left, the Forest User Group was transformed into a Forest Cooperative, making it possible to lend credit to its members, and received a starting fund from the project to make this possible. In that time, some people used this opportunity to buy sheep, hen or other materials, but the money they lent never found its way back to the FC's account. However, since the arrival of the facilitator in the kebele, the demand to pay it back has got a new impetus. This could be attributed to the fact that Farm Africa project staff residing in Bonga, although they are not officially cooperating, urged the facilitator several times 'to fix it'

Yes, S. asked me to sue those people, bring it to court. Just said, do that. I'm a human being, but ye, the facilitator will do it yes.

But also very much to the fact that the facilitator wants to create the necessary income for the FC which is currently, although contrasting the statements in the Forest Administration Plan (FAP), not happening. In fact, the lack of income generation for the FC from its activities, is both from members and committee a frequent response on questions about problems with the FC and its duties. The lack of income is perceived as one of the causes for conflicts between members and management committee, as one member describes:

Always [we] keep [the forest] and come to meeting to negotiate or not negotiate. What is the advantage of keeping this forest? So in this case, [there is] no good relation between committee and members. Because of committee by itself is separated by ideas and again members want income. That income is not there, so no good relation.

And for the lack of participation in the activities of the FC and adherence to the by-laws because

The cooperative form is settled by three agreements: conservation of the forest ... development of the forest and utilization or forest management result [forest products]. Now, only two are reality: conservation and development. Third one is left, so there is no income. Members ask the management committee, and management committee asks woreda, by governmental case, but they don't give answer. After ten years of asking, they stopped their activity. As such, the management committee becomes weak by this woreda participation and they stop struggling for benefits.

Sometimes, people observe forest destruction, but they keep silent, because they think: what is our benefit? All this creates a gap between members and management committee. There is no income!

This aspect of income generation always rises in an interview on PFM and the FC, although in different shapes and contents depending on the perspective and experience of the respondent, nevertheless it is always there, as a cloud overshadowing the playground. We can ask why there is no income generation, what causes the FAP to fail in practice, above piece of text already gives some indications, and further question what the consequences are for the forest management and conservation aspect, but first, we need to ask a 'little' question, "flat and empirical" as Foucault would call it, which nevertheless will reveal itself to be particularly important. Because, how did it happen that a project which was mainly concerned about forest conservation and participation left an organization and associated practices that seems to be mainly concerned with the issue of income generation? To answer this question, we will take again a time perspective of one decade, and look what happened at the interface when PFM project staff and Agama people met. We will need to deconstruct the idea of 'bringing participation', pay attention to the subtleties of daily life practices that produce and reproduce well established relations of power and think how the attention diverted away from the forest resource.

## 2.2 REVEALING THE CORE

### 2.2.1 *WHAT PROJECTS KNOW HOW TO DO BEST*

When Agama was selected as PFM site by Bonga PFM&RH project and the actual implementation phase started, priority was given to development activities. A community nursery was established which distributed seedlings<sup>25</sup> to people living in the kebele in order to provide 'alternative' livelihoods which are non-forest based. Also sheep, hen and bee rearing programs were introduced. This reflected not only the aim of the project to diversify livelihoods and increase income opportunities, but was also a tool for 'rapport building' with the 'community'. For the people of Agama however, the project became to mean different things than the stated objectives. It not only diverted attention away from their actual forest activities, but they also reshaped the project to their

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<sup>25</sup> Fruitseedling (mainly banana and avocado are still present in the village gardens), coffee seedlings and indigenous tree species. The aim of the project was to distribute those seedlings to "all people of the kebele" as mentioned by the former Community Assistant of Farm Africa and thus not only to the (at that time) future members of the FC.

aims and strategies, which were different than the intended project results. As one woman in Agama three answers on the impact of Farm Africa on her life:

We appreciate, it is a good story for us; take for example, the hen, sheep, different type of support we get from Farm Africa. But still now, our society [is rather] careless, in this case we don't save or carefully manage that support items. We don't use benefits from that support. By our carelessness, come to die case or different type, means, fail that project. Immediately sell and eat, to solve seasonal problems. No other case.

*Interviewer: Because they need money?*

Yes, they need money and immediately take and sell. And take money from the selling, to solve personal problems.

The way interventions enter the life worlds of actors and become part of their resources and constraints, how external interventions become to mean different things for different people, how interventions change through the interplay of local structures and processes, deconstructed into various elements that are applied to various situations is knowledge that can be found in a plethora of literature of the social sciences (Cleaver 2002, Cleaver and Franks 2005, Long and Long 1992, Mosse 1997). Also Farm Africa PFM staff recognized flaws in the model and added in brackets to their objective of supporting improved livelihoods: forest and non-forest based. But if we look more closely to the reasons why the program was changed, more is hidden that has relevance to understand the rationale to implement PFM. In a document published in 2007, the former Program Manager of Farm Africa wrote (Zelalem Temesgen et al. 2007:1):

Through the observation of practical implementation and field-based experimentation a number of points of learning have been drawn. FARM-Africa and SOS-Sahel PFM projects have predominantly focused on promoting non-forest-based livelihoods often referred to as alternative livelihoods. The reason for this again seems to be due in part, because non-forest-based livelihoods (alternative livelihoods) are what projects *know how to do best*, and in part, due to a misconception that those alternative non-forest-based livelihoods will reduce pressure on forest resources. (emphasis added)

Similarly, the former Technical Manager of Farm-Africa PFM program mentions in an interview

Farm Africa's forest projects started in 1996 and initially they were looking at a model where you give an alternative for cutting down the forest, it was food for work, they were employed for doing tree planting or tree nursery. But actually, that first four of five years, didn't have an impact. Because it wasn't dealing with the key issue, which is, people need to use these resources. And, you know, people are very poor. ... So I might do the tree planting job, but somebody else is still going to sell

firewood. ... There was a better understanding of the dynamics of livelihoods and the diversity of incomes. That alternative model is fundamentally flawed. What you got to do is getting people into the resource.

Two things should be noticed. First, pragmatic, context dependent experience of project staff in the implementation phase of the project has brought more knowledge about the reality they attempted to influence. However, only the more obvious conclusions have penetrated to project documents and discourses, while the beliefs that create a *long durée* power relation between participatory project implementers and the receiving people, are not touched. During the interview, the technical manager is summing up the evolution of PFM, when he almost unconsciously asks for affirmation from the interviewer for the basic belief of “*you know, people are very poor.*” Similarly, in the document, the Program Managers writes “*what projects know how to do best*”, as they have most experience with development activities. Another frequently coined phrase is “*helping our poor people*” as one former PFM fieldworker in Agama utters during a conversation. These fixed images of the people the project staff was supposed to cooperate with, reproduced an asymmetric relationship, one of donor and receiver, even before the actual PFM activities started. It does not mean that the Agama villagers were subjugated and the PFM workers the dominants, but rather, an inherently powerful constellation was created, constantly reproduced in their interactions pushing people in the role they know best to play. The previous secretary of the FC explains:

The members always wait income or benefit from Farm Africa, in a supportive form. All satisfaction appear in that time. In that case, still now, ... the members don't say the forest or cooperative activity, still now. [They call it] the Farm Africa activity, Farm Africa working they say, the society. Maybe the management committee ... calls for the activity of the [members], per week [activities] were there. In that time, we go to the Farm activity or Farm work they say. Farm means by itself that organization! The society believes that by name, because of, [they] don't believe the activity or [in] participation of the cooperative activity. By supportive activity, always believe or always wait support. When that Farm Africa left, not good sign, not good shadow (...)

*Interviewer: So the main challenge is that people don't take initiative themselves?*

Yes, [they do] not believe. Now is only wait. Again they interpret in their mind, ... Forest means Farm Africa they say. That is a bad activity ... Always wait benefits from the government or NGO.

How a project that was supposed to empower people to manage the forest created the reflection of “*people always wait benefits from a NGO*”, is a first hint for the way the role of Farm Africa was perceived and became associated with. To enlighten the issue completely, we will now turn to the

negotiation of the FAP facilitated by Farm Africa in the starting-up phase of the FUG in Agama village.

### 2.2.2 THE PROBLEM AT THE INTERFACE

The first stage of the PFM project was a so called 'investigation stage' in which the forest utilization pattern is examined in order to identify primary and secondary users who are allowed to be member of the FC. Agama forest has a long history of local institutions that legitimizes the forest ownership of fifty-two households living in Agama village, among whom the thirty-two households that were formerly living inside the forest. All those families have Kaffa or Manja ethnicity believed to be indigenous to Kaffa area, and are the only people who have customary right to hang beehives, collect coffee and harvest spices inside Agama forest. Yet, the Kambata<sup>26</sup> people, who came to Agama in 1987 as consequence of the resettlement policy of the Derg, are also using firewood and construction materials, but they are not perceived as owners of forest plots. When the PFM project came however, it argued to transform those individual holdings into a group holding, with equal rights for all users, including Kambata families, covering about two hundred members. This was recalled to cause a big obstacle to carry out the project and enroll people to participate. The manager of the kebele, participant in the negotiations, says

I participated, I know. But the indigenous people, the 52 households, they challenged a lot. This is our forest, no newcomers in our forest they say. So the activities stopped for one month. Then, Farm Africa came back and discussed with the two separate groups. The indigenous people could use their forest plots and in future, gradually change idea and bylaws they say. I asked a lot of questions that time, especially about economic situation, but indigenous people did not allow.

The strategy used to bypass the conflict was again based on the relationship of donor and receiver. A former woreda Agricultural office natural resource management expert and part-time fieldworker for Farm Africa explains:

Forest destruction was not the problem in Agama... In that time, the challenge was that we needed to go from individual holdings to group holdings. So farmers did not like that. .... But Farm Africa gave awareness, more and more and helped in farming activities. To move people away from dependency

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<sup>26</sup> People from Kambata region, administratively part of Sidama Zone in the most eastern tip of SNNPRS and is characterized as one of the most densely populated and impoverished regions of Ethiopia. They form the Kambata ethnic group and speak another language (Cushitic Kambatigna). When Kaffa and Kambata people communicate, they practically always use Amharic. In Yeyebito, all Kambata people live in Agama four and have their own *iddir* (see annex V)

on the forest. Advantages were given to the farmers, and gradually they started to participate. So the aim was to make everybody participant, also people who did not have land in the forest.

Thus, when Farm Africa staff entered Agama, they were confronted with a long standing social conflict rather than with the expected forest destruction. For the villagers, problems concerning the forest were not perceived as the forest resource itself, rather it were societal problems. The forest was part of their daily life as the background of a theater scene is for its actors. Thieves, quarrels about boundary issues, sharing labour etc. were more prominent issues than to explicitly focus on the forest itself, which was part of the discussion but as setting of the conflict, not as cause. On a question about the Kambata conflict, which lasts until today, a Kaffa farmer and member of the FC answers that

These kind of problems, society by itself [has] internally problems. Simply by somebody or some reasons, that simply don't solve these problems. Because society is relate to live here. These problems [do] not [originate] externally, but internally. This social life is here, one side, participation in forest conservation on the other side. In this case, we are where. These are continuous problems, not to solve in one day, but gradually maybe.

The project then needed not only come to a new understanding of the environment, but also needed to mediate in the situated conflicts, something for which the design was not adapted to. The matter however is not the design in itself, rather how it is carried out and responds to the context it faces. And that response was missing. No structural adjustments were made in the strategy to empower local communities to manage the forest resources for their sustained livelihoods and conservation values. They were still organized, albeit with some difficulties, into one Forest User Group. When talking about participation during the negotiations, the former Community Assistant Development Officer says

As I told you, there are plan preparatory committees. The exact number I don't remember, but there are 10 to 15, there are women there, also from Manja representatives. And also others. Even from the youth, there are representatives. And we discuss with that plan preparatory committee. And also we give the resource assessment with the community. We support them, but (...). After demarcation, we give participatory resource assessment. After know that, we all together, sit together, discuss and [the agreement] is the outcome of that resource assessment.

Thus, by referring to *what* has been done and *why*, setting up representative committees for participatory resource assessment, the intervention process was categorized as participatory. However, from the reflections of the Agama villagers on their ownership and the practices of a

new environmental NGO in the village, it will become clear that *how* things are done, reveal well established relations of power that are consciously and unconsciously reproduced in the daily interactions of Agama people's life. Taken together, to understand how PFM works in practice, we do not only have to look to the forest related activities – how people use the forest – but also to the process that was designed to change those activities. Therefore, I will argue that the idea of practices being participatory is buttressed by referring to what has been done, while at the same time, how it is done, through ritual practices that bear a long social and political history, reproduces the same power constellation which the participatory project was meant to break. We will see that an ideology of participation simultaneously justifies and masks what is carried out in practice, maintaining a dualism between the *what* and *how* of practices. And when an idea, actors or organizations come that are able to dismantle this culture of practices, resistance comes. But this is matter for the next chapter. First now, we will look how two conflicts exemplify the contradictory logic of project practices framed as 'participatory', 'empowering' or 'for the people' while at the same time they are acted out in a structure affirmative manner.

## 2.3 TWO EXAMPLES OF THE SAME THING

### 2.3.1 DECONSTRUCTING OWNERSHIP

To deconstruct the idea of empowering communities by legally recognizing their forest use rights, we need to look at the conflicts that influence the sense of villagers' ownership concerning Agama forest. A first issue is the contradiction in perception of ownership feeling among residents when they compare the situation before and after the PFM project intervention. From their responses, two types of ownership can be distinguished: one sense of ownership, 'traditional ownership', is related to traditional user rights of the forest, which were rooted in society even before Farm Africa came, while another type, 'legal ownership', is associated with the intervention of Farm Africa. Both types are used and referred to intermittently, depending on the interaction or situation people face. For example, for the villagers (thirty-two households) who were evicted out of Agama forest, one person summarizes the general thinking

Only the forest is ours. We get benefit from our forest, yesterday today, our forest. By this case, sometimes only by obligation come to participate some activities.

*Interviewer: And do you feel owner of the forest? That the community is really owner now?*

Forest generally, Farm Africa or government or anybody come to here, [it is] our forest. Still now, our forest. Our plots are there. So the others, we only come gradually to observe [meetings] or we [only

partially] want [such kind of activities]. Forest means mine, or our asset. In this case, sometimes we participate, sometimes we miss.

Similarly, another person says

From my observation, I come from that middle of the forest, but no destruction occur at that time, before Farm Africa. We keep, conserve, and manage as ownership system. Now a lot of forest destruction occurs after Farm Africa come to settle.

These can be seen as exemplifier answers from people previously living in Agama forest. They refer to a strong keeping and ownership of the forest, while now, with the forest cooperative who legally 'expanded' the ownership

Now we go to the forest just as a thief, you know. Not confidentially we go to our forest. Just as a thief, secretly we go to visit our village and some benefits we gain from the forest ... So still now, conflicts about forest destruction and different types of influence, come to the forest by this non related members [Kambata]. Still now, always we complicate with governmental policy by these persons. Mean, ... Immediately, direct and indirect, [they] go to destroy that forest.

And the vice-leader of the FC similarly reflects

At the previous year, we live in that area, the forest area. I have my boundary, only use from my boundary. The next, somebody has also boundaries, and the same like, all people live in that time, they use [forest resources] by itself. Now in this current activity, it is impossible such kind of activity. I don't have right to immediately go for my use purpose .... Maybe I go to that forest and cut one tree, it is immediately crime. And I go to the other, by conflict of the government. It is impossible now, [but] in that time it was possible that I use from this forest.

While Kambata users legally became member of the FC and so have equal rights, they still recognize that

This is our family's area, they say. This forest block is our families. The indigenous people say. Mean that word is created by that society, not from Farm Africa. By this case, they use. That activity we don't disturb, because we don't want to put beehive on this big tree. Up and down, that is a hazard

activity. Related to lose of life. In this case we don't want such kind of activity. So now, it is more or less fair utilization system<sup>27</sup>.

But it did created a

sense of ownership, that is our benefit, our internal feeling. Otherwise, no benefits of being a member of the FC. However, agreements in that time were there to use from this forest after asking permission to the FC. For high use, like house building, you need to ask permission. But for light use, farming material and firewood, we don't ask. That is our daily household consumption. ... If I would change this material to currency, money, that that can also be seen as benefits. Still now, I did not use, but the possibility is there.

As the kebele manager, from a Kambata background, stated.

On the other hand, for people having a plot in the forest but who have always lived adjacent to the it (the twenty families as part of the fifty-two households with traditional rights), they too primarily recognize the traditional ownership of the forest. The secretary of the FC formulates

But we are born from [and] relate to the forest. Yesterday we are live, today we are live, tomorrow we pass to other generation. So we struggle, we survive. And from any direction, come to destroy this forest, we are together lose our life. So we don't pass for nobody our forest.

Later in the interview, he refers to the new ownership after the establishment of the FC

The volume of the forest, life of forest, now it is good from other. Because at a regime of Derg, this all is controlled by government. In that time, somebody come to in different type of area, immediately through the forest, just he needs or likes a tree? He cuts, by any purpose, in every boundary. Now it is impossible, to come to this forest [and] destruct or cut, impossible. In this time, now volume is good. Now we have the ownership, one person come to pass here, it is impossible. ...

But

[W]e have a debt, not only me, all people have a debt by yourself.

*Interviewer: Members?*

Members. Because we are worry ... One day, by force, from our ownership we lose.

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<sup>27</sup> Kambata villager. Former FC member, but decided to leave the organization because of "fear, one day the government will take this forest again"

Whereas there are no uncertainties concerning the traditional ownership, the legal sense of ownership which came with the establishment of the PFM agreement is subjected to doubt, especially when it is used as reference in the relationship with the government. As the chairman of the FC explains:

[The forest is] still controlled by a government. Just as our asset, our account, for our purpose, for our aim. Just we turn back, beyond, front, back, it is impossible, because of: controlled by government. Our ownership is sometimes no, sometimes no. Sometimes this ownership is not clear for us.

This type of ownership is thus more often associated with a responsibility shared with other actors, as governmental bodies. An elderly summarizes

We fear. That is a very great problem. These activities become to straight, all responsibility bodies come to decision making or [become] participant [then it would be good] ... Forest is ours, ownership, not only two hundred members' or not only cooperative's. It's a government, all bodies take responsibility for the security of the forest, become to a good situation, a good keep life of the forest ... But these bodies don't give attention for the forest security for the future time. So that kind of activities become too less, [they] don't give attention [and] we become weak.

Two things can be discerned from above explanations. The traditional ownership is socially recognized and did not originate from establishing PFM. However, 'legally empowering' the collective, created doubt in some individual's reflections on their traditional rights. Although the Kambata people themselves recognize this traditional system and are not intended to resist it, the possibility, the new rope, that was created to expand ownership interferes with thoughts, feelings and reflections in relation to forest practices. It should be stressed again though that there is no easy generalization possible about how and to what extent the issue on ownership 'made inroads' (Appadurai 1996:134) into the selves of Agama villagers. Ethnicity is important, but should not presume stable interests as a natural given for one social group. The conflict has less to do with the particular identity categories as ethnicity groups than with historical relation to Agama forests, personal background and involvement in different kind of practices. The main purpose is here to portray the different reactions of people to the intervention and how this diverged from the intended objective (empowering people).

Second is that the legal ownership created by FC is more often used as a tool in relation to external influences from government or investors than to change societal relations. For 'outsiders',

this reaffirms the idea which is commonly held among PFM practitioners, constructed by theory on common pool resources and institutions, that:

Where they were previously considered as thieves and destructors of the forest and they are now considered as managers of the forest. That is really also an incentive for the communities (former Program Manager Farm Africa).

Or as the former Community Assistant Development Officer of the PFM project summarizes:

So from enemies to keeper of the forest.

However, for 'insiders', it did not change the traditional utilization patterns. The legal ownership is more perceived as a responsibility shared with other actors and therefore also subjected to doubt when those other actors do not take up that responsibility in practical situations. If it transformed people's self perception from 'destroyer' to 'keeper' of the forest, which is often taken for granted in PFM ideals, can be questioned. People often do refer to themselves as keeper of the forest, but this is explained from the perspective of their traditional ownership or to contrast with the inability of the government to support them. For example, the 'language politics' associated with both types of ownership differs. Traditionally, harvesting coffee, spices or honey was referred to as common 'forest use', while talking about utilization patterns in relation to the change after PFM was established were always framed in 'forest destruction'. This became clear when one farmer, living in a village adjacent to Agama<sup>28</sup> and owner of a plot in the nearby state forest, points at the way a question was framed:

*Interviewer: Because is there still forest destruction today?*

Forest by nature is related to human being. That means, this forest is not destroy, the word destruction is very heavy for me.

*Interviewer: It is usage?*

Ye, it is very usage. Main point about the usage of the forest, if that property come without owner, it is dangerous. It is dangerous.

Thus, this discussion shows how a seemingly empowering activity, establishing a legal agreement between a group of local people and government offices, does not necessarily lead to the expected sense of ownership or increased belief in power vis-à-vis the government. It questions how far concepts as 'empowerment' or 'targeting the poor' can be imposed on local people, as they

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<sup>28</sup> Village named Hindatawan one.

have different ways to reflect upon themselves. Also it was formally recognized, even in the FAP, that destruction was not the main issue in Agama forest. Yet, the familiar design for all PFM sites was carried out without making adjustments in the process, based on routinized activities and the project's predefined conception of and at the same time solution to a problem. So, when PFM project staff entered Agama, the encounter gave rise to a struggle of enrolling people in the project, to accept the associated frame of meaning and point of view. If they did so, then power delegation was the promise.

But there is more to say about actors intervening in the life of Agama villagers. Much more. To illustrate the resemblance in approach of environmental NGO's in the context of Agama, we will continue with another actor whose practices again show how preconceived notions of participation in natural resource management pave the way to uphold well established power relations. The importance to introduce this new actor is threefold. First, it serves as a second example in our ongoing discussion. Moreover, this NGO is still 'on the spot', currently carrying out its activities in Yeyebito and cause of some serious doubts and concerns about the FC's legal ownership. Thirdly, it also gives a general idea of the working culture of non-state actors in Ethiopia, something we have to keep in mind for the discussion in chapter three.

### *2.3.2 NABU IS HITTING THE GROUND*

#### **2.3.2.1 Who?**

Since 2008, the International Climate Initiative (ICI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety started financing climate projects in developing countries as complementing to the existing development cooperation work in Germany. The ICI receives funds from emission trading in order to support partner countries to protect the climate. One of those projects is the 'Climate Protection and Preservation of Primary Forests – A Management Model using the Wild Coffee Forests in Ethiopia as an Example' project which is implemented in Kaffa by Nabu, as affiliate of the German oldest and biggest environmental conservation organization. The objective of the project is formulated as follows:

Setting a Best-practice-example for Ethiopia and other regions: The project will make a significant contribution to the preservation of biological diversity, particularly that of Arabica-coffee (around 5,000 varieties). Its integrative approach aims to work as a "best-practice" model for climate and resource protection and sustainable regional development. New sources of income through

ecotourism and a microcredit system in Kaffa-Biosphere Reserve, plus the creation of jobs (in tourism, the ranger service), will markedly improve the living standards of the local people. (Nabu 2012)

To realize their targets, a big budget, information campaign and set of different project activities are organized of which one component is PFM. The project recognizes the high dependency of local people on the forest resources for their livelihood and aims to stimulate sustainable non-timber forest production in order to link poverty alleviation with forest conservation. To realize their aim of placing 10 000 hectare of Kaffa forest under PFM, Nabu cooperates with the Kaffa Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union in Bonga, who has a team of four local PFM experts. The coordinating team in Bonga comprises a Local Project Coordinator, Communication Officer, Field Assistant and driver who are located in an office in Bonga town. One of the main prestiges of the project was the recognition of UNESCO to establish Kaffa Biosphere Reserve, which was achieved after a four year campaign in June 2010. According to a press release quoting the Head of Africa Program for Nabu (Kruse 2010)

*The support by the local community will decide whether the Biosphere Reserve is going to be successful in the long-term. The successful cooperation with the zonal administration in Kaffa induced a trilateral agreement between NABU, UNESCO and the Ethiopian Ministry of Science and Technology in March 2009. In the context of this agreement NABU is working in close cooperation with the Ethiopian government with regards to the designation of further Biosphere Reserves (emphasis added).*

The designation implies a specific ecosystem approach to the forest management - dividing the forest into a core zone, buffer zone and transition zone<sup>29</sup> – which is supposed to be broader than the principles of PFM. As the Local Project Coordinator<sup>30</sup> in Bonga explains

Biosphere means zoning of PFM. PFM is only concerned about forest. There is no link with agricultural activities. So it speaks about conservation, but what to conserve? There is no ecosystem look. It has no value at all. While the biosphere principle also takes farmland into account. It has an

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<sup>29</sup> The core area is a protected site for conserving biodiversity and non-destructive research. the buffer zone adjoin the core areas and used for cooperative activities compatible with sound ecological practices (f.e. ecotourism, recreation and applied research and basic research. the transition zone may contain towns, farms, fisheries and other human activities where different stakeholders (local communities, NGO's, economic interests, scientists, government) work together to manage and sustainably develop the area's resources (NRDC 2000)

<sup>30</sup> This person was previously the Team Manager of Farm Africa when PFM was implemented in Agama. He will be referred intermittently with both functions.

ecosystem approach, spatial approach. In the transitional zone, there should be place for corridors to connect the core zones with each other. With a ecosystem look, it is much broader than PFM. Other activities are taken into account, like genetic conservation or other potential activities.

The contradiction between PFM and the ecosystem approach touched by the Project Coordinator, who was also the Project Team Leader of Farm Africa when implementing PFM in Agama, is the first clue for the struggle that has evolved since Yeyebito kebele (not village) was selected as project site for intervention. Again. “For the forest”, as one Agama villager said. But not their forest.

### **2.3.2.2 Pulling on different ropes**

During a drink on the first day in the village, a farmer comments

The foreign want to help people, but they don't get to the people themselves. Because in Ethiopian context, the money sticks somewhere and when it comes to the ground, nothing is left, This is also the case for Nabu, especially Nabu.

The word ‘especially’ is an important indication for the area of contention that has developed around Agama forest with the start of the Nabu activities in Yeyebito<sup>31</sup>. It is important to notice that Nabu project has got a federal permission which means that, apart from the formally decentralized government structure, permission is granted for its activities on all lower levels. Moreover, Nabu is not a direct implementer, but supports governmental departments, starting from SNNPRNRS to the zonal administration office, and to the woreda Bureau of Agriculture, to employ project staff and fieldworkers. The Team Leader in Bonga comments

You have to know that Nabu is not a direct implementer. We are not engaged in that, but we do control. First, we mapped the potential stakeholders and then we approached the zonal agricultural development office. From that level, the implementation starts. From zonal, it goes to woreda, to kebele and in the end to the DA's. And those DA's approach the community. Off course, one of the values that we incorporate in our proposal for the zone is involving communities.

Looking at the stories and perceptions of villagers however, raises questions when reading this last sentence. Although Agama already had a community nursery established in the time of Farm

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<sup>31</sup> There are currently three rangers or DA's employed by governmental offices, but supported by Nabu who are directly in contact with people in Yeyebito.

Africa<sup>32</sup>, the first activity of Nabu rangers was to search for land and 'labour force' to prepare another nursery for their reforestation program. This nursery was established in Agama, just next to the boundary of Agama forest, and its seedlings are only meant for planting in selected areas in the forest. Only in a second phase of the project, a community nursery for agro-forestry activities is said to be established. The 'labour force' was asked to FC members who agreed and prepared the seedbeds. But that was so far the only cooperation with the FC. One elderly comments

Again Nabu comes to here, our [FC] nursery are there, but come to make other nursery they say. And we go to start, make the area ready for that [new] nursery. After that, this [Nabu] nursery is [for] all people, not only cooperative they say. In that time we are disturbed. Become to just as a reform or revolution, start all [FC] people. In that time conflict [raises] between [FC management] body and members. Because of this nursery is not the cooperative he says. You [Nabu] have done activity in the cooperative area, so what does it mean? The government by itself sold our forest? Together with us?

It is a question several members ask themselves. In a meeting called by Nabu rangers in Yeyebito, which was characterized by a lot of conflicts and discussions, one of them says

We don't ask this FC, this nursery is for all people. We don't know about the cooperative.

Which can be understood from the project's 'ecosystem look' in which Agama forest and PFM is only part of, but nevertheless conflicts with the reality in Agama. Some FC members further neutrally say that benefits may come in the future, but for now there are only activities in the nursery for some workers, while others don't have detailed information on their planned activities, "the agreement was by talking. God knows what they are doing" as one Kambata farmer comments. The latter created doubts concerning legal ownership rights and even suspicion about the involvement of the FC committee ("*Management body received money from Nabu so they knew about activities of Nabu. Payment are there, but management body stays silent mode and we members don't know*"). According to the management committee, there was an agreement "by talking", referring to the personal negotiation between the FC chairman and the Nabu rangers to agree on their activities. A separation leader of Agama forest explains

We are an organization, we are enterprise, we participate in management activity. Why does any NGO come to negotiate with us? By what reason? ... come by name of the forest, immediately

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<sup>32</sup> This nursery is currently completely abandoned and destroyed by wild animals. Some villagers linked the deterioration of the nursery with the arrival of Nabu.

agreement with governmental positions, like the kebele, the kebele cabinet, they negotiate. We don't want the management committee of the cooperatives. ... just like Nabu. ... it has a financially matured office. So they come to negotiate? Immediately they go to the kebele counsel or kebele authorities. Not they negotiate about income activities, participation, reforestation, redevelopment, utilization system. They don't ask us, the cooperative management ... So such kind of unfair activities appear in this forest activity. I start from this idea and one day by force, catch up or turn back to governmental this forest I say.

Moreover, the situation of Nabu is also often a cause for quarrels in the FC meetings between the facilitator and the DA of natural resources. While the latter always grasps the occasion to promote the activities of Nabu, the facilitator opposes their approach and lack of coordination, leading to long discussions and a silent FC committee observing one argument after the other. For the facilitator, it is not the idea, but the practices that are to be opposed. He explains

Generally Nabu enterprise or this NGO activity, it is important for the conservation of the forest. I share their idea. But just I oppose now and today they continue to oppose me. Because without coordination, without negotiation, [they] started activity ... I call the chairman of management committee and ask him: what is the problem of [forest] cooperative and Nabu activity? What is the problem, what is the negotiation? And by what case they come in this boundary forest area, they come to start their activity I say. Just he explains, especially the chairman, explain about this. Other members of the committee, never hear. Have you evidence I say. No I haven't evidence, but by orally. Orally means, by personal negotiation ... Without ownership, without feeling, without thinking of asset, finally destruction [will] appear again.

But whereas for the facilitator the practices are more important to focus upon than the general idea, for Nabu the rationale seems to be the other way around. When discussing the difference in approach between Farm Africa and Nabu in an interview with the Team Leader of Nabu in Bonga, it was remarkable that it were not the practices that were under scrutiny, but its theory. Rather than to investigate the relationship between projects impacts and participatory practices, the argument was to present a coherent policy idea that was better as compared to the idea of PFM, not to explore the instrumentality of the model.

You know, PFM is a development and growth process. We are testing this. ... The community had rights and duties and they were very most of all aware about their rights. They were better in exercising rights, like they complain if they don't get their seedlings. The government on the other hand, is more confused than the community at this stage. ... They were very much interested in people and their participation. So they completely focused on that and so they missed some points.

Farm Africa, after ten years, they are still doing the same thing. Although they have seen failures, but they don't take it up. They just do as usual.

But when asking how Nabu is different in its approach to the community

As I told you, the forest is now recognized by Unesco as biosphere reserve. ... We look at what the potential is and link it to the outward world. ... So all levels should be linked and the issues have to be treated under a bigger umbrella. ... [For] trust [between NGO and community] there is advocacy and promotion of our aims.

The argument that policy models are more used as a system of representation and interpretation of what is done than to guide practices in the way they are carried out can be seen when confronting wider spatial scales with questions about Nabu activities. Different governmental and non-governmental workers in Bonga and Addis Ababa pointed to individual interests and a lack of cooperation with the FC's (*"FC is in one corner, Nabu in the other"*), as well as with other PFM implementing NGO's. The former Project Manager of Farm Africa, now a consultant in Natural Resource Management, who is working on a refined and simplified guideline to scale up PFM in Ethiopia, with the aim to transfer responsibilities and involvement in PFM from NGO's to governmental actors commented on his experiences with NGO's working in Kaffa zone

[T]hey can easily support each other, and you can also develop the resource. So that is one thing. [But] you know, there is this institutional affiliation in which people tend to their institution. Last time I was discussing in Bonga, there are now five actors in Bonga who are implementing PFM. Just only in Bonga, like there is the EU funded government up-scaling PFM program, the Farm Africa-SOS sahel, Nabu is financing, GEO is financing, and Ethio-Wetlands natural resource issue is also operative in Gesha. They are five. I have suggested to have a forum in which they discuss on their approaches and activities and to bring all these different approaches into, you know, streamline them, which makes it easier for the government to take it over. But it's like pulling on all ropes and their institutional interest will take them back.

The reference to 'ropes' should be stressed, as it raises an important question. If the model of PFM can be represented by one rope, should actors who adopt it, even though they shape into a particular form, then not come together when pulling that rope? And when this does not happen, based on what 'ropes' do they really carry out PFM? Can whole organizations and actors perform and belief in the idea of PFM, by referring to what they do and say, while at the same time, how they perform it evokes routinized thoughts, feelings, and experiences based on another rationality than the proclaimed one? Even if that contradicts PFM? To answer these questions, we need to go beyond

description of the above conflicts. Now we know what causes conflicts, we still need to understand how it did. Therefore, we will dissect how PFM practices are carried out, paying attention to the subtleties, the details of daily life. As Nietzsche said, "God is in the detail." As we shall see, so is the anti-God.

## 2.4 ASKING HOW ?

### 2.4.1 A DESERT VISIT

PFM is based on the idea that institutional changes and legal empowerment can shape villagers' practices, especially forest practices. Institutional change requires agency and is situated in the practices, in this case the practices generated by the intervention process. When successful, this process is closely tied to environmental protection. Therefore we will look at the specific practices that were generated by the project in order to bring change, and the influence it had on the way people imagined their selves in relation to the forest.

During the 18 months intervention of Farm Africa in Agama village, they organized several activities, but related to forest management, two are important: exchange visits to degraded areas in other parts of the country accompanied with trainings and environmental education and all the meetings organized to negotiate on the establishment of the FUG (which became FC) and the FAP<sup>33</sup>. From the interviews with Agama villagers, when asking about change in forest management or utilization patterns before and after the intervention, the only activities that are referred to have had impact on their forest management activities are the exchange visit and the trainings, not the establishment of the FC. Even when traditional forest users refer to the conflict with Kambata users and increased forest destruction because of their membership in the FC, they separate this from the impact on their environmental awareness. As one traditional user comments

After Farm Africa came to here, a good controlling and management system come to develop in our society. Awareness creation ... visiting other type of areas. It is high education as informal system for the society. More awareness we get from Farm Africa in that time.

While it was also often mentioned that

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<sup>33</sup> The FAP existed of a Forest Management Plan, a Forest Development Plan and a Forest Protection Plan.

This forest, from your observation, it is life. Without meal, living, it is possible. This forest is not only used for us. I got from others that it is used up to your area, for the world, uses direct and indirect. By this case, we keep.

It is important to notice that the exchange visit went beyond the discourse level, beyond meetings which as we shall see, are highly routinized activities in society. One individual who had the opportunity to accompany the visit, explains the experience as

One NGO comes to give awareness, more and more, for all peoples, in lecture form. Some people from the members and management committee visited a deserted area, by cost of the NGO. For government of cooperative that is very impossible. Again, we get awareness not only form lecture form, but practically observe, watch and come to explain to all members. Because no forest area, different type of cases are there, no good climate condition, no good situation for living standards, so we more and more practically observe that area and come to explain for the community. And, we keep our forest.

Participating in this practice redefined what is possible for some villagers, expanding their imagination and self-reflective beliefs about the competence to change one's own natural environment. The latter means that the perception on the capacities of human beings, and thus the self-capacity, to change forest into bare land changed as they saw people living a similar life in different circumstances. However, people might come to new understanding how humans can control their actions, the capacity to do so gets socially channeled. For this reason, the PFM project created a new institution, the FUG which was to change the actual capacity for acting within the realm of forest practices. But in this process, something happened.

#### *2.4.2 FROM MEETINGS TO MEETINGS*

To process to establish the FC and associated FAP, as any other NGO intervention in the village, started with village meetings and ended with signed documents. From the onset, it was decided that people needed to be organized into a FUG and sign an agreement with governmental bodies. But this needed to be participatory according to the project's rationale without losing the possibility to reach its goal. Thus, it was made participatory by organizing meetings, representative committees and lots of negotiations. However, to understand why this implies a contradiction in the context of Agama, we need a politico-historical perspective on the practice of holding meetings to organize people and dealing with documents.

As explained before, people have been organized into collectives since the establishment of the Derg. Peasant Associations, Producer's Cooperatives and mass mobilizations for villagisation and resettlement programs were all attempt to organize people for the 'betterment' of the 'poor masses' living in the countryside. Although these were based on the principle of participation, several authors (Alemayehu Ayana and Wiersum 2006, Mulugeta Abebe 2005, Vaughn 2003) noticed that the actual practices were more forced than voluntary. After the fall of the Derg, the EPRDF<sup>34</sup> embraced a form of 'revolutionary democracy' with the intention to use the performative power of the unified and mobilized participation based on nationalities. The attachment to nationality-based mobilization is the idea that it is morally better and above all, that people are more responsive to political education and encouragement (Vaughn 2003) in 'their own language by their own children'. The chairman of EPRDF explains

Yes, we needed to build a coalition, but we needed to build a coalition essentially in rural areas. Some of the groups that came out after the transitional arrangement felt that, because they were similar in view with the EPRDF the EPRDF should ally with them. We don't ally with groups. We ally with people. Eighty-five percent of the population lives in rural areas. Any alliance that helped us to mobilise this eighty-five percent we made; any that didn't, we didn't. And we have succeeded, not only because of those who were positively inclined to the EPRDF but primarily because of those who were not, because these people are reference points. We need these reference points. It is not a question of magnanimity: we need these reference points to show the farmers the other side of the coin, so they can choose, based on an understanding of the facts. Because that is the only type of decision that can sustain grassroots participation. (Interview, Chairman of EPRDF and then President of the TGE, Addis Ababa, August 1994 in Vaughn 2003:185)

To 'show this other side of the coin', a series of formal village meetings are organized which are carried out as almost ritual practices which helps to construct the representation of the government as simultaneously 'up there' and 'everywhere'. As Ferguson and Gupta (2002) phrase, the practice of village meetings are examples of social practices through which images of state verticality and encompassment are made effective and experienced. To give a concrete example, a political meeting was organized in Agama to discuss the economic situation and the different problems in the villages. These meetings took several days, as the participation was below expectations and the kebele administration called the meeting again and again, intermitted with a 'surprise' visit of the woreda administrator.

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<sup>34</sup> The ruling party in Ethiopia.

Before the meeting starts, always under the big *Ficus* tree in front of the kebele administration office, little groups of people knit together, diffused over the meeting place. After much back and forth walking of the officials – kebele administration, DA's, police, woreda officers – the group of people start to form a coherent whole, always with the farmers sitting on the ground and the more 'important' people on a little bench in front of the tree. Depending on the purpose of the meeting and the people that are present, the definition of 'important' people dynamically shifts between elderly people, priests, *iddir* leaders, kebele administration people, police, woreda officers or visitors. For example, during one of those meetings, the kebele chairman (also farmer) started with sitting on the bench, but when the head of Bureau of Agriculture and the Administrator, dressed in city clothes, suddenly appeared, he left the bench to sit on the ground. When they left, he stood up and went to the bench again. The meeting starts with a long speech, introducing the purpose of the meeting and questions to the farmers framed as "why you never participate for the improvement of the situation?" For example, when robbery appeared and one of the meetings addressed this issue, questions were framed in a language of "why do you steal? Why do you do that? This is not good for our village." After some time, farmers start to raise hands to speak, others keep silent, others are ignored. According to the issue discussed, the farmers can be organized into smaller groups, based on division in *iddirs*, to discuss among themselves before they all come together again to summarize what has been said. The event is highly dynamic, where officials come and go, play with their mobile phone, express tics with their body and sometimes gaze into the environment, while the farmers never express those kind of bodily signs of unease with the environment, they sit, listen, talk – although people rarely make eye-contact when they speak - and sometimes oppose. After long discussions, the meeting is finished by a similar speech as the one to open up the meeting, often announcing another meeting and reminding about the dangers of not participating [own observations].

The role that people take in such kind of meetings can be explained from the "way we are brought up" as the former Project Manager of Farm Africa once said. For villagers, governmental workers, extension workers the story of the 'backward' farmers that need to be taught is a well rehearsed one, transmitted through education or governmental trainings. As the DA of natural resources in Yeyebito for example explains his view on his work:

Also I help the farmers for integrated agricultural systems. Now for three consecutive years, I was help for the farmers about the integrated agriculture. The farmers, how the farmers use, for what purpose, how to use the farming system ... This all, my aim is to improve the knowledge of the farmers ... To change the knowledge of the farmers from subsistence standard to what, to industrial standard.

*Interviewer: Industrial standard?*

In the past, for a long period of time, the aim of this rural development is changed into, industry. Industry. First of all, in this time, the leading term (in rural) is agriculture and also the next, the plan of the government. All farmers use the industrial method. This is a long term plan. ... *Our* aim. To change the indigenous knowledge to modern knowledge. When I came to here, in previous, our farmers have little knowledge. Now I will change the knowledge of the farmers from indigenous to modern. When I give to the farmers, monthly and weekly and day to day practice or day to day training. About how to live, how to product and how to change your living standard, ... By this mechanism, if you work, if you do your job, systematically, you will change.

This summarizes the main strategy of the current government to bring development and points how it is used to represent the power of the government from federal to local.

When Farm Africa, or Nabu, intervenes in Agama they make use of the same practices, argued to be participatory by both government and NGO, but which represent routinized ways of performing power relations. In addition, NGO's are associated with the government as they only get permission to intervene by showing stamped documents to the kebele office.

NGO needs permission [from the government] to come, that is the rule (Agama three villager and FC member)

In this case, they are sent from the government. The forest is government, all activities is government. How I explain about that area, I don't know. Their aim is development, they have a purpose, that purpose again we together share, so why we challenge? (Agama three and FC member)

To say this is not to claim determinacy of practices or that NGO's cannot bring change in the context of Agama. Change of institutions is situated in the practice, but the extent to which agency is performed, influences the extent to which institutions are changed or reproduced. Following established ways of acting, in the role of farmer or official or extension worker involves agentic action. When people follow the guidelines of a role, they are not 'cultural dopes' as Garfinkel says (in Hitlin and Elder 2007:176), but rather norms and beliefs guide people to internalize and live up to these norms and guidelines. Although commitments to themselves and others that are enacted and recreated in interactions often lead to the reproduction of structures, it is not simply because various social positions act upon them in a deterministic way, but because it is important for the self to play the part as well. However if habitual actions and established routines to guide interactions need change, new choices must be made. Such choices however occur within the flow of situated activity and emotions, personal histories and personal traits influence the choices we make in

emergent situations. In other words, if the logic of the practice in which actors are situated is *not* that of participation, then it is difficult to carry out participation when actors are within the flow of activities of that practice. It needs personal conviction and a sense of ‘personal empowerment’ (Little et al. 2002) to develop self-reflective understandings of abilities and capacities to consciously make effort to make other choices. And this reveals another difficulty in performing participatory projects in Agama. Because the ones who are supposed to ‘bring empowerment’ have to reckon themselves with dispositions and self-reflective beliefs of powerlessness, while the ones who need to ‘receive empowerment’ have sometimes more beliefs in their capacities than presumed. Although living in the rural area is often taken as sole criterion to be in need for empowerment and position as local governmental or NGO worker provides some institutional power, asking about reflections on those positions gives a different view. As one Agama villager phrased during a kebele meeting “after a while, it [the kebele officials] becomes weak because of the power” referring to an inverse relation between institutional and creational power. Also a former DA explains what the main challenge is to implement ideas in practice:

It [forest proclamation] is only on paper. On the ground, who will research? develop a plan or convince the administrator? Even DA has no capacity, like GPS, electricity or computer, it is not there. so I don’t believe in that document, no confidence in that. ...

*Interviewer: What do you think are the main challenges to implement in practice the ideas on paper on community level?*

First one is awareness in the community. Sometimes it is very difficult to convince them. And second, the concerned bodies should be committed. Administrators should carefully listen to communities. But they are very powerful you know. You cannot quarrel against him or you go to the Prime Minister to explain. ...

On the other hand, an Agama villager and FC member comments upon NGO intervention in his locality as

I do not believe by the support of NGO’s or other bodies. Which means, they come to [here], in one time, again, by their programs phase out. In this case, how do we believe by our lives for the continuity? I don’t appreciate such kind of support. But I believe by the community together stand. From the destruction of the crops, or different type of activities, especially near to the forest, wild animals come to attack our property. In this case we together defend, such kind of activity, we commonly defend. Or our resource become to use, internally our force or thinking become together and we survive or struggle for our change of locally. It is very important, mean indigenous people or

society participation. Society activity, that is the main point, for change of the local. Otherwise, I don't believe by other newcomers or NGO or supportive systems.

*Interviewer: ... for example you would participate in new economic activities?*

Proclamation of the government, always about the economical [situation], participation is important he say. We participate, after that, from our participation, economically, locally, change it is important. In that time, from our participation, we don't gain income or benefit from our activity. We struggle, we participate, after that no result and so we collapse. For example, this forest activity in our area, especially our forest, we get payment from the forest for the future they say. Still now, no any other payment.

Two things should be noticed here. First is that 'non-participation' in meetings for some villagers is a way to exert resistance to the governmental (or NGO) activities, which is a sense of personal empowerment local extension workers often do not show. Second is that the forest cooperative activities are compared with governmental activities which do not bring in practice what they promise, while 'society participation' is referred to as solution to actually change local (forest) practices. This shows that the PFM intervention in Agama not only used routinized practices to establish the FC, it also left a situation in which the FC could not do more than reproduce habitual actions as holding meetings or preparing documents because the institution that needed to change the forest practices of villagers had no capacity, or intention, to become internalized in the forest based activities. To make this point clear, we can compare the FC with local institutions to organize farming activities.

#### *2.4.3 A COMPARISON WITH LOCAL FARMING INSTITUTIONS*

Regularly political meetings are organized in the village to transfer the ideology of agricultural industrialization. In the locality of Agama, this comes down to one issue: the farmers need to buy the fertilizers urea and DAP. Everybody. Without exception. The DA of natural resources urges all farmers to pay the amount of money<sup>35</sup> and widely promotes the benefits of using fertilizers. The farmers attend those political meetings, but these are as said routinized activities were they enact in playing their role well, as from experience they see those meetings as "only talking", not related to their agentic action of actually being in the field, holding the plough and see the work they need to do.

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<sup>35</sup> In the beginning, the fertilizers were given for free to the farmers, but gradually they needed to pay a higher share in the costs (partially covered by the government). Currently, they need to pay the full amount.

Such kind of meetings are just repetitive action. No result, no solution. We always conflict. For example, about this urea and DAP, they talk until [we all] cry, here it is not effective and we become silent. In other areas, by corruption they took. In our culture, payment makes us weak. Also, forest destructor went to woreda but came back and was enemy of the society again. So what is the result of that meetings? I don't go anymore. I have my cattle and farming to look after. That meetings are just demoralizing ... If I go to a meeting, my cattle is not looked after, so I don't go. Always meetings, it is not good for the house activities. No solution, ideas don't become to one (Kambata farmer and FC member).

Farming does have routinized activities as well, but equally generates nonroutine, emergent situations - the plough that breaks, the ox who refuses to work, the wind that blows the seeds away, the rains that are late - which requires a creative aspect of the self to act upon those situations in the flow of the activity. Mead writes about choices that are made in the 'knife edge' of the present moment (Flaherty and Fine 2001), which captures a fundamental presentness of action as we focus our attention most on the present within problematic situations. However, the choices and decisions made in such situations are not completely random. Apart from personal creativity and ability, social institutions play a role as well in the way a farmer farms and manages his land. In the case of farming, following local institutions are important: *daddo*, *dabbo* and *iddir*. In a case study on local institutions in Yeyebito, Stellmacher (2007:152) writes:

*A daddo working group is a neighbourhood working group, consisting of three to five people. Time scope of daddo was reported to be from one to two days up to 30 days a year, mostly part-time for some hours of the day. Dabbo is "much bigger than daddo" (secretary of Agama iddir) in terms of workforce and expenditure of time. It might be as much as 30 to 40 people coming together as often as 40 times a year. ... Forest. Jointly conducted activities of daddo and dabbo can be labour-intensive activities such as land tilling, but also activities related to the nearby forest. Collective beehive making, harvesting of forest coffee, and tree cutting for house construction are the main activities in this regard. Both, daddo and dabbo do not come off spontaneously and unscheduled but are very much institutionalized. Both working groups are particularly affiliated to the iddir association ... in the way that this institution provides the platform on which daddo and dabbo are organised and related problems and disputes are negotiated and solved. "During our iddir meetings somebody can stand up and ask the committee [...] and say that he has work to do" [former chairman Agama iddir]. By practical means, e.g. if one community member wants to have his coffee harvested and needs a definite quantity of people for a certain period of time, he will give the request over to the iddir in charge. He will then be: "put on a list and the people will help him at that time."*

First, this points to the fact that collective action in managing natural resources is present in Agama, but that the regulatory institution, the *iddir*, is backboneed with practical collective working activities, shaping the habitual and novel responses of farmer in interaction with the natural and social environment. And this is an important difference with the regulatory institution of the FC. As for farming, the political meetings established to influence farmers' practices are not linked to actual field activities which make the influence limited, not totally inexistent, the FC did and still does not organize collective activities *in* the forest which equals their influence on forest practices to the level of those political meetings.

The FC does give meaning to some daily behaviours and practices – meetings of the committee, preparing documents, members walking back from the meeting and reflecting upon it, the facilitator visiting the house of 'destructor' persons, visit to the Manja farmer, a Nabu worker shouting to the facilitator why he opposes their activities, a woman coming back from a FC meeting and telling the story to her husband etc. – but the link between the enforcement of the rules and the actual forest activities got lost, so the feelings, thoughts and experiences situated in the forest practice remain more associated with other 'ropes' than that of PFM and the FC which merely added an element to an old story rather than rewriting it. In response to the benefits from being member of the FC, a member comments

Previous year, we get benefit from forest activities and cooperative activity, like hen, sheep, banana and different type of gains we get from forest and forest related idea. Now any other support we get from the forest.

*Interviewer: And do you still use from your forest plot in Gokasha?*

We get, that is common [use]. I get from beehive and depend on that honey.

Similarly, as in many details of the other interviews, the owner of a plot in Agama forest phrases

Advantage means this means for our build or house, as I told you, by a beehive, for the coffee, spice and the same like forest result, we are get, that is common true.

While the management of the forest is related to the traditional management than to the regulations of the FC.

Anybody come to pass my forest plot. It is impossible. Anybody pass the boundary of the other's plot. It is impossible. Because we make beehive from ours, they from theirs, you from yours. By themselves. And use that beehive. Otherwise, nobody passes the other's plot. It is forbidden, socially. (separation leader Qidah)

This is commonly answered by other farmers as well, referring to the difficulties with the FC but simultaneously to their “struggle up to lose of life” independent of cooperative or governmental agency, which we can take quite literally as the forest is so integrally part of people’s life.

‘The element’ added then, situates itself more in people’s story telling, reflections and social theorizing - as for example the idea from the traditional users that forest destruction increased since Kambata people became member of the FC or “controlling system” – than in the actual performance of the forest utilization and management patterns, as for example Kambata respondents did not start to collect coffee, spices or honey in the forest, but used from the forest as before the FC was established and if they are planning to do so, then arrangements are not made through the forest cooperative. It is not to say that the intervention did not change people’s life-worlds, it did, but they situate it more in the development activities of Farm Africa than in the FC and on an individual level than in deep rooted social interactions, as one farmers mentioned “*This social life is here, one side, participation in forest conservation on the other side.*” This is also reflected when people give reasons why Farm Africa intervened in their locality. Although normative perspectives differ related to personal backgrounds, traditional users, settlers, even non-members mention that “*it gives more awareness about the longevity of the forest*”, while the agroforestry activities – seedlings to plant in the garden, animal rearing projects – are pointed to as long lasting benefits of the intervention. But this is attributed to Farm Africa. And Farm Africa left.

In the design of the FAP however, the intention to include forest related activities was there. Six forest guards were appointed, one for each zone in Agama forest, who need to control the area and report to the management committee. Also, in the utilization agreement, collective harvesting of dead wood for selling purpose and replanting activities were permitted. But these activities are not taken up by the people of Agama. The intervention did influence individual’s life, but got more internalized in collective sayings than collective doings concerning forest management. This could even seem to be not so problematic, considering forest destruction was not the main issue in Agama’s locality and ‘collective sayings’ increased environmental attention. However, for the empowerment part, one farmer and FC member concludes

Struggle for our right, to follow-up, ... This is not the culture. Our community in experience, negotiate by locally, problems solved by locally. We get good awareness from society. Otherwise pass up to end, struggle is not developed in our society. Because [we have] no awareness, no capacity. Because society is illiterate. In this case, still now, don’t not fulfill their right.

*Interviewer: And a NGO can come to increase this capacity?*

Awareness only about the forest management system, not about personally right situation. Especially about the right [way of] keeping [the] forest. Give awareness to society more and more about forest management.

## 2.5 REPHRASING THE INITIAL QUESTION

Taken together, when Farm Africa came with its PFM model in Agama, it had to deal with social conflicts rather than with forest destruction. But the model proved itself not to be a good guide for action. Rather than responding on the localized needs, the project was convinced to reach the participatory targets. Thus, after 18 months of fieldwork in Agama village, Farm Africa established an institution to influence the forest practices of the villagers through participatory methods as meetings, setting up committees, resource assessment etc. but to understand 'participation', we need not only look to *what* has been done, but also *how* it has been done. This revealed two main issues. First is that an institution was created within routinized practices which logic is entrenched by the aim to reproduce well established power relations rather than to enhance the capacity to self-act. Empowerment is not something one can give to another: if power is in relations, diffused rather than possessed, than empowerment also happens in the interactions and relational patterns, and does not necessarily flow from the 'dominant' to the 'dominated'. Second is that the institution could also not do more than reproduce the same routinized practices, as there was no well established link with actual forest practices. As Agrawal argues, environmental practice is the key link between regulatory rule that government is all about and imaginations of people, which means that the regulatory institution of the forest cooperative could only have limited impact on the 'knife-edge' decisions of people or become internalized to guide habitual responses within the flow of forest activities.

But we need to ask more questions.

First one is why is it so difficult for the participation and forest management to become the logic of practice? What is there, as invisible 'rope', which is so resistant that it strangles the 'rope' of PFM? Therefore we need to turn attention to that other big actor in PFM: the government. I will argue that PFM *in practice* is not only about managing forests, but about undermining the whole political culture where the government so hardly fought for to install, embedded in the practices of local governmental agencies. I will argue that participation and forests is what government, as signing partner in the Forest Management Agreement, is *not*

about. At least, in practice. Why this is so and how this trickles down to the context of PFM in Agama village, will be matter of the next chapter.

A subsequent question then could be if there is any future for PFM in Ethiopia? Is a different approach possible? A coincidence in Agama provided a chance to answer that question. In the fourth chapter, we will discuss how the cooperative facilitator came to Yeyebito using an approach that was not guided by a general model, but based upon reflexivity and practical knowledge. It will become clear that notions of the self and belief in its capacities among different actors lead to different outcomes and that this entails important reflections for policy reforms and extension work. Looking at the facilitator's experiences in detail, we will see that we need to rephrase our question in the beginning of this chapter to "at least, the FC is still concerned with income generation activities, so when and for what reasons did FC members and committee come to care about and act in relation to the cooperative principles?"

# THREE

## LONG TENTACLES BUT NO WINGS

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

(Abraham Lincoln)

### 3.1 WILDERNESS HAPPENED

At the end of 2003, after long negotiations and debates under mediation of Farm Africa staff, the outcome was reached: a PFM agreement was established, ready to be signed by all members of Agama FUG, responsible staff from Kaffa zone, Gimbo woreda, Yeyebito kebele and representatives of Farm Africa. The agreement vested the Agama FUG with long term exclusive use rights on use and management of forest resources, and with responsibilities regarding the protection and conservation of the forest, while local governmental bodies became responsible for monitoring of and support for the FUG. But then Farm Africa left. And the situation was left for the wilderness. And that was precisely what happened.

In a PhD research (Stellmacher 2007) on coffee forest institutions, partially conducted in Yeyebito kebele, a table is published demonstrating the seven persons – chairman, secretary, reporter and four permanent committee members - who were elected by mediation of Farm Africa as first committee from the FC (at the time of phasing out, there was an agreement with the government and the user groups were changed into cooperatives). However, nobody from the villagers ever referred to this committee in stories about the FC and the cooperative facilitator did never heard about it either. Only two different committees were thought to have existed in the period from the phase out of Farm Africa up to present. Confronting the chairman of the FUG as indicated in the table with the question, he explained to the facilitator:

I am related to the forest from my background, I have a plot in Bushasha zone. Again, [the separation leader of Gokasha]'s mother can be witness of that. But members doubt. I am sorry for that. In the beginning, I was chairman, but there was a conflict who could be member, Kambata or only the 52 households? I said that the forest is for all people, that not only indigenous people have right to use it. Forest benefits all people. But then the others were against, especially the members from Bushasha zone, and so ye, I was no chairman anymore. Especially ... [those six persons] were against. And then I, A., and T. [only A. was actual committee member at that time] became the committee.

In the PhD research (Stellmacher 2007:181) however, we read:

The persons assembled in the Agama FUS committee are no 'local nobodies'. The table's fifth column shows that most of them hold positions in relevant local institutions as the *kebele*, the *iddir* association, the 'elders' and the Catholic church. Some other positions of FUS committee members may not have been figured out in this research.

This difference in perception on the power of the committee members and what happened in practice indicates that the dynamics of power relations are difficult to grasp only by looking to institutional positions. The committee did not only change. The FUG completely diffused. Non-members used forest resources as members, non-committee members took committee positions and some members became non-participant. In 2006, a round of evaluation reports were written by the woreda Agricultural office natural resource management expert and part-time woreda fieldworker for the Farm Africa PFM project and delivered to Gimbo woreda. Although some of those documents got 'lost'

After I left, I prepared some lessons learned, comparing PFM with non-PFM situation. It was about main factors of deforestation and the policy. You know, they say, don't touch the forest, but no additional options were given. I wanted to present this to governmental bodies, like zonal office and court. Because, they still read what is written twenty years back.

Still one evaluation report of Agama Forest Cooperative could be traced back and gives important details how the institutional reform was perceived at time of evaluation three years after Farm Africa phased out. From the summary of the document, given in **Annex VI**, it again becomes clear that the main problem was not situated in high forest destruction or illegal cutting, but in the capacity of members and committee to 'obey the rules and regulations properly'. The utilization of forest products did not happen according to the plan - members and non-members using alike - nor did the forest guards perform their tasks as subscribed, and the participation of members and

administrative practices of the committee were missing. Although 'they learned the importance of the forest', it could not lead to collective action as designed by the project.

However, when Farm Africa left the site and the implementation phase of the FAP started, activities stopped not only because of its weak roots in the community, but there were also no 'wings' to sustain it. Although there was an agreement with governmental officers (Bureau of Agriculture, Cooperative Office, court and police) who were present during negotiations with the community and signed the agreement, soon after the phase out it would appear that promises were not kept in practice. Thus, when we discuss about the struggles generated in Agama village to implement PFM in practice, surely we need to connect structures and actors at different time and spatial scales to understand where this struggle comes about.

Therefore, in a first section we will zoom in on the governmental structure, ideology and dominant policies to bring development in the country with attention to the factors that will be important to understand in a second section why participation and forest management were particularly difficult to bring under political attention or incorporate in the working culture, of both governmental and non-governmental organizations. With this in mind, we will look then to the practices in Agama after the PFM agreement was signed and governmental agencies were expected to take up their responsibilities and duties in interaction with the FC. Finally, I will argue that signing the agreement was more an act of representation than it was one of redefining adopted knowledge systems.

### 3.2 ONE PARTY-STATE, AGRICULTURE AND A NOTION OF PARTICIPATION

It's a government. Government means, it's a government. He is a powerful. Powerful. But in that time, we negotiated with the government, just we keep and control by a good situation, we say, take from the government. (...) One is the government, second one is the farmers. Farmers and Government, dual use the land it say. That is the proclamation, if I don't cultivate my land, immediately, turn to governmental control and by his purpose he uses. Just the same like for the forest. Just investors, the others, such kind of policy, [government] uses. My cattle go through the fence of plantation of coffee? Immediately it is a crime and pay up to 100 [birr]. That is the policy by itself. This government acts as such. In generally, this forest, not cooperative asset. In generally we know. But, it is more ... we debt, [that we are] owner. Sometimes, partially or above partially, forest is not ours. Just our asset, [or for] different type of purpose [we] use? It is impossible. Because [it is] still controlled by a government. Just as our asset, our account, for our purpose, for our aim. Just we turn back, beyond,

front, back, it is impossible, because of controlled by government. Our ownership is sometimes no, sometimes no (FC chairman).

“One is the government, second one is the farmers”, it could be the leitmotiv of Ethiopian politics. The ruling party (EPRDF), “the brain of the revolutionary democratic system, the trendsetter, and the fulcrum of all decision-making organs (Mulugeta Abebe 2005:194)”, and the ideological doctrines that it promotes form the guiding principles for all socio-economic decisions and public policymaking in Ethiopia (Vaughn 2003). The interplay between ruling party and government structures, the ideology that gives both shape and content to public policies and the strategy adhered to implement these policies all have their consequences when attempting to establish PFM in a village like Agama. We will discuss them one by one in order to reveal relationships between political ideologies and practices from Addis Ababa to Gimbo, Bonga and Agama and how these contradict the *practice* of participation in forest management. One governmental program will be pivotal to explain the struggle with the principles of PFM, namely the Rural Development Policy and Strategies<sup>36</sup> of Ethiopia. A governmental program and strategy that, although effective in consolidating government and party structures, does not leave much space for a practical participatory forest policy.

### 3.2.1 ONE PARTY STATE

Since the EPRDF took power in 1991, it has invested a lot of effort to ‘spread its tentacles’ to even the remotest rural village<sup>37</sup> through an almost full overlap between party hierarchies and government structures, so much that the lines between the two appear indistinguishable (Merera Gudina 2008, Vaughn 2003). The EPRDF has regional affiliates which again need to control local government administrative personnel at district level who in turn are ‘responsible’ for the kebele levels. In addition, mass mobilization and civil society organizations are established by the government to motivate public participation on the premise that they support the party’s socio-economic policy objectives. In a research on public policymaking in Ethiopia, Mulugeta Abebe (2005:217) explains

Over the last thirteen years, since 1991 ... the government seems to have established a two-faceted structure of governance at all administrative levels. While it has built up a formal structure of government institutions to keep in line with constitutional provisions, in parallel the regime has built

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<sup>36</sup> From now on referred to as RDPS.

<sup>37</sup> Taken over from an interview with former PhD researcher (Zewdie Yihene)

a party structure that retains a degree of control to the extent that it would be difficult to use these government institutions effectively to challenge the power of the ruling party ... Therefore, the key policymaking structure is the combined administration and party system. There is no tradition of an independent bureaucracy, functioning as a tool of administration, with a political layer of elected leaders deciding on the policy issues. It is difficult to separate the party, the state and the administration.

The practice that follows from this 'two-faceted structure' is to ensure that at all levels the party is represented in governmental offices through actors who are both governmental employee and party member. However, the skills and knowledge required to be party member do not always coincide with the capacities required to carry out the governmental job. In an interview with a staff member from the zonal Cooperative office in Bonga, he comments on their limited capacity to effectively support the nine forest cooperatives (of which one of them is Agama FC) in Gimbo woreda:

At the woreda, [it is] not by discipline but by political structure that somebody is appointed. You have the marketing and the cooperative department. They have to be in contact with one political leader. All activities of all woreda's have to be followed up by this one person, especially attention is given to agriculture and health activities. So this political person has to manage his own office and be political leader at the same time. Do you get what I am saying?

*Interviewer: So you have this political structure from federal up to kebele and in each level somebody is appointed to oversee all activities?*

(...) [the head of our office] is not only talking about cooperatives you know. There is a lack of attention of political leaders. All activities have to be done by political leaders, without attention of the government, development of people is just little. Always somebody is assigned politically, so this can create conflicts between him and the professionals working in his department. So the department also has to be active, otherwise nothing happens, because the head in itself is not active. (...) One does not understand the other. They don't share the same background.

From the interviews in the cooperative office and Bureau of Agriculture, it becomes clear that personal achievement is discouraged. Rather than professional expertise, commitment to political interests is more appreciated and based upon to assign people 'fit for the task', whereas further education is discouraged. The Prime Minister<sup>38</sup> himself mentioned in a debate in the parliament<sup>39</sup>:

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<sup>38</sup> The Prime Minister recently died (20 August 2012). As he was a very powerful symbol of the EPRDF, It is expectantly looking at what will happen now in Ethiopian politics.

<sup>39</sup> Based on a discussion with my PhD colleague

*Question:* most offices are led by less educative people than their servants. How is it possible that somebody with a first degree can lead a PhD?

*Prime Minister:* a person can be a guard or a drop out. Our main aim is political commitment, not his grade. Forget about education for this leadership.

A strategy discerned to spread the tentacles of this 'octopus without brain' is to spread the message of 'servitude'. All must serve all and above all, the poor masses of Ethiopia must be taken care of. And there is no better patron than the government to do that (Mulugeta Abebe 2005). Team leader of the PFM scaling-up program sponsored by the EU and working in the Ministry of Agriculture states in an interview:

I have two principles. One is: the masses pay the taxes. The rich ones do not pay the taxes. And two is: we always have to take care of the masses, because if we don't take care of the masses, they will take care of us. And maybe we will not appreciate that. Thus, taking care of the masses is an integer part of my life.

To explain how 'taking care of the masses' is performed, we will turn to the next paragraph which sketches the main ideology and development strategy of the party.

### *3.2.2 REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRACY AND A RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY*

What has been made clearly understandable through the policy making structure of combined administration and party system, is the party's solution for the economic ills of the country, an Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI), rooted in their ideological context of revolutionary democracy and Marxist-Leninism adherence. In **Annex VII** an EPRDF document is added from which we understand that revolutionary democracy is essentially a peasant movement which needs to be mobilized to solve the structural agricultural problem of the country and steer it to market-oriented development and prosperity. Moreover, the only organization capable to defend the peasantry's interests and to lead the country to development and democracy seems to be the EPRDF. Centerpiece of their commitment to the peasantry is the ADLI which since the 1990s has become the pillar of all government policies and strategies in order to ensure rapid development in rural areas where the "worst type of poverty plagues rural people" (FDRE 2001:15). Only if all socio-economic policies are agriculture centered – infrastructure, health, education, industry – can rapid economic growth occur. In the RDPS we read that eighty-five percent of Ethiopia's population lives in rural areas and is engaged in agricultural production (see **Annex VIII** for details). The strategy

thus is to use the country's labor and land resources while relying less on capit as there is an acute shortage of that factor.

The rationale of the strategy is based on forward and backward production linkages to incite economic growth (RDPS 2003). A growth in agriculture would increase the quantity and quality of the supply of agricultural raw materials to the industrial and export sector, which would increase the demand for those products and as well the living conditions of the farmers. This in turn will increase the purchasing power of the rural population and its demand for production implements and consumer goods which will again deliver growth for the domestic market. Although the rationale seems plausible on paper, and the government has put enormous effort to implement it, agriculture has failed to show significant improvement on the ground. Berhanu Nega and Seid Nuru (2004:1) write:

Broadly, the criticism against ADLI rests on both empirical and theoretical considerations. The empirical argument is that ADLI failed to deliver on its promise of rapid growth of output and productivity in agriculture and in the rest of the economy. (...) Furthermore, the strategy's sole dependence on the expansion of a green revolution inputs to increase output and productivity without addressing institutional issues, its assumptions of price neutrality of supply side increases, its total neglect of demand side constraints that emanate for a very low level of urbanization of the country, its lack of consideration of the effect of population pressure on the available cultivable land and the decrease in average holding that it engendered, were all presented by critics to show why the strategy will not work in Ethiopia.

To say that the 'strategy will not work' is not an argument however to underestimate its embeddedness in bureaucratic practices and its impact on life in the rural areas. The 'necessity and indispensability of Popular Participation in Development' is one of the key notions of the RDPS document which made itself felt in the realm of everyday practices of Agama villagers. In the document we read that participation is "not sought for its own sake", but rather it is necessary "because rural development is virtually inconceivable without it". One small fragment can be quoted as exemplar (see **Annex IX** for extended fragment)

Efforts should be made to enable all members of kebele councils, particularly those kebele members with great social influence, to fully understand and appreciate the development path being pursued, to be fully convinced of its merits and to implement it on their own farm plots and backyard horticulture, and also to mobilize the people at large to actively take part in the development work. ... it is the kebele council forums which are decisive in persuading the people and mobilizing them for the execution of development tasks.

Unnecessary to say that participation is thus based on the principle of mass mobilization, not in first place because it is a fundamental right of individuals, but rather because it is necessary to increase the productive capacity of the country. In contrast to liberal democracy ideals where individual freedom is central, revolutionary democracy relies on the masses, mobilized in organizations to execute the development path being pursued. EPRDF thinking on democracy is rooted in “the all inclusive participation of people” (EPRDF 1995:12 in Vaughn 2003:171), which became first clear in their choice to establish an ‘ethnic federalism’ in 1991, perceiving the ethnic group as the highest effective level where collective participation is deemed possible shaped by their Marxist ideology and historical experience of mobilizing the peasantry based on ethnicity in their successful battle against the Derg regime. In an interview, the former president of EPRDF of the transition government says

The only coalition we seek is with the people, and the democratization we seek is the democratization of society and social relations (quoted in Vaughn 2003:171).

Pluralism has thus never been a goal on its own (Merera Gudina 2003, Mulugeta Abebe 2005, Vaughn 2003), which is also mirrored in their rural development strategy that gives a clear understanding of the concurrence between the interest of peasant populations benefiting from rural development and the party consolidating its power as a result of being seen as the only provider of such development and their way as the *only* way to achieve that development (Vaughn 2003). According to Mulugeta Abebe’s (2005) experiences with members of the ruling party, they claim that broad national development objectives, including ADLI, can only be put into practice when the ideals of revolutionary democracy are disseminated and diffused among the broad masses of Ethiopian people. Ideals however, that have little to do with practical knowledge on the situated lives of people who constitute those masses<sup>40</sup>.

In the next section we discuss how the party’s strategy for development and understanding of participation, trickling down from federal to local, from past to present and from state to non-state actors, also diffused into the scene of PFM. First, we will question how the party’s notion of participation and power raises resistance against actions oriented by participatory values and see how the distinction between governmental and non-governmental disappears when it comes to

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<sup>40</sup> The EPRDF is originated out the (and dominated by) the TPLF (Tigray People’s Liberation Front). TPLF was a rebellion group fighting against the Derg and based in the north of Ethiopia, Tigray region. They succeeded to overthrow the Derg, but needed to deal afterwards with a country of many different ethnicities. Moreover, the basic idea for all their policies was made during the time they were fighting in Tigray which means that these were adapted to the locality of Tigray which is for example completely different than in Kaffa zone (no natural forest in Tigray) (see Mulugeta Abebe 2005).

practices. In a second paragraph we will see how the concept of land ownership influences the possibilities to devolve forest management responsibilities to communities.

### 3.3 HOW TENTACLES ENTANGLE PFM

#### *3.3.1 'BRINGING' PARTICIPATION WITHIN A NOT SO PARTICIPATORY WORKING CULTURE*

In contrast to the rural development program, the country's forest policy and laws have received little attention from the federal government and can be included under the type of 'dormant policies', whereas in general, the practical application of forest laws on the ground is generally poor in the country (Melesse Damtie 2011, Temesgen and Lemenih 2011). For PFM in particular, little political attention has been devoted to its inclusion in forest policies. For example, the federal Forest Proclamation 2007 does not explicitly indicate PFM as a possibility to administer and manage forests, but it is only by way of interpretation that provisions in the laws can allow for application of PFM for forest management. However, problems with this 'interpretation' are formulated by the former Project Manager of Farm Africa

In the forest management I think, it is really related with the sociological makeup of the people. If this issues, if PFM have a strong political support. So far it has been around professions, being discussed within professionals and forestry service at local level. So it is with this discussion that it gets root now. But the profile from PFM or support for PFM should come up at higher level. At the minister level, at the prime minister. They have to say that this is the tool that we want to take over, then the local level says also, we'll take up that. So at the woreda level, the woreda experts don't push them about other activities which they are not told by the local woreda administrator. The local administrator will not push for activities for which the regional administrator is not asking him. And the zonal administrator doesn't care about other activities which the regional administrator is not asking him. So this is the situation. So from this you know, the problem of participation itself in Ethiopia, because it is not in our culture, traditional, that is the problem. So experts are not as such creative enough to really work what they think is right. And also the planning system, they call it participatory, but it is almost the same like the top down planning system.

The response of the NGO's active in PFM in Ethiopia is then also an attempt to influence the forest policy making process, through their own lobby work or organized into regional and national PFM

working groups<sup>41</sup>. However, the claim that public policy making is participatory means in fact that only the party and its supporters reach consensus and everybody who does not belong to that group is regarded with suspicion<sup>42</sup>. Although from an ideological perspective, the focus on community involvement and grassroots participation seems to point to commonalities between the party and NGO's, government regulations, rules and procedures have limited NGO activities and closed off participation in policy making (Negasa Deressa 2002). This can be taken quite literally as a former PFM expert working for the NTFP project<sup>43</sup> comments about the process to formulate the federal forest policy

Well, I'm not sure, yes, but we always say to each other, off the office we say, there might be some people also pulling it back. Because this policy means something. This policy means for example, protecting this forest being changed into other farmland. And if you really have a motive to have some farmland somewhere in the southwest, I may be interested to pull that back. ... Because it is funny, I remember once, when this federal forest policy was discussed among NGO's and forestry associations. All of us, the PFM groups were together. So in one of those meetings that T., the Bonn university guy, we hear that the draft is ready. Everybody was waiting for this forest draft to come. We started this in 2001, and now in, I think, 2006, we heard that the draft is ready. Which kind of draft!? We are there, all professionals, all foresters, nobody has heard. So we were really disturbed, so we wanted to see the draft. And we requested the guy, the boss was there, who said that, ok you will get it, you will get it. We couldn't get it. We were looking for that draft for one week. With all people at the top, everybody was going around. And finally, we couldn't get the digital, we got the hard copy, almost stolen from the Ministry of Agriculture. And then, that, scanned, we got it all around. So we came together, we did our comments and send it. And they throw it away. And that was issued as it is. So I don't know, why these guys, I don't know, why are these guys against all these comments. These guys are also foresters. They are Ethiopians, why? So there might be something behind which forces them to do that. So, I don't know, that's how this federal forest policy came out. It's not easy.

It is important to stress the remark "these *guys* are also foresters" because the resistance against participation of NGO's in policy making in general and against PFM in particular should not be viewed from the institutions to the persons resisting, but rather in reverse order, as 'the government', 'foresters' and 'non-government organizations' are still constituted by individuals who

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<sup>41</sup> The strength of this institution varies. As one GIZ consultant replied; "it depends on the time you ask [Laughter]"

<sup>42</sup> Based on interviews conducted by Mulugeta Abebe (2005)

<sup>43</sup> Non Timber Forest Project Southwest Ethiopia Research & Development Project, Mizan Teferi, Ethiopia. NTFP is cooperating with the local NGO Ethio-wetlands and also works in the area of Bonga forest.

make choices based on their personal judgement and experiences. Choices that are not necessarily in line with institutional goals or ideology and make the separation between state and non-state actors blurred. Three examples, on different levels, can be quoted to argue that resistance is not mainly against the ideology as framework to interpret events, which is often shared among different institutions, but rather against the values that (re)orient actions.

First example comes from Mulugeta Abebe Abebe (2005) who spent eight months in the parliament building in search for the practices of public policymaking. His experience was that most persons who are supposed to be responsible for policy decisions are “stuck between their personal conscience and public political life” and fear was the main factor “to be careful not to make any mistake that would embarrass party functionaries” or be in contradiction with party’s interests. It means that practices were not primarily guided by knowledge or values, but by an instrumental rationality to be in line with the party’s interests, defined by established power relations.

A second quote originates from an interview with the former Project Manager of Farm Africa when asking which actors are resisting PFM and why. He argued that “institutions cannot take a stance against participatory forest management”, but rather individuals who “are not convinced” because they “miss reality”. As a former forester, he explains about resistance and individuals’ attitude towards PFM

One is related with professional bias, also among scientists, they really cannot trust the community. They just consider themselves as the main responsible custodians. .. So this are, I can’t say it’s institutional, but individuals, some of them even scientists, who are not really convinced. And that is because of the technocratic nature, the country relies on people’s participation rather than trying to support people’s participation instead of pulling it. The other is, it’s individual interest. At the start of PFM, even the foresters themselves, they really don’t know what it is. And if you don’t know what something is, you fear it and you don’t automatically accept it. Even some were thinking as if they continue their job, as if they were losing some power. ... As professionals, they think they don’t have the full right to exercise their professional expertise on that forest. So without knowing really what the system would bring, they were just opposing it. ... Those who really openly say that PFM should not be tried in Ethiopia are really, for me, ignorant. They haven’t really seen what is on the ground and also haven’t seen the economic, the social, political, and environmental context in which they are in. ... No one is enforcing environmental laws. So, if we don’t try PFM, then we fool ourselves, *as if we are managing the resource.*

This analysis points to a lack of reflexivity on values, goals and interests in practicing politics or science in general and in resistance against PFM in particular. The Project Manager argues that

“they really don’t know what it is” referring to situation on the ground. It points to the importance of practical knowledge and experience of particular circumstances, which cannot be reduced to general scientific or political ‘truths’, to effectively support PFM. The challenge however is that individuals have learned to live in fear. Fear to question power from above and to lose power stretching downwards because, as one Nabu worker framed it, “you only have power if you have a gun or a lot of money. Everything is done by personal relationships here in Ethiopia.” This notion of power also colours the understanding of ‘cooperation’ and ‘participation’ which makes it possible for persons, related to both governmental and non-governmental institutions, to agree with the conceptual framework of PFM, but to simultaneously resist a reorientation of practices according to the values underlying PFM. In asking about power, the former Project Manager continues

Power in Ethiopian context is irresistible. It is something we have to accept it. After the feudal, then the Derg, the military government came, and he reinforced that. And even if you see the participatory culture of the society, it’s not that much developed. Some of the forces in Ethiopia are reinforcing these top down, autocratic systems. And it is these people who are now in the academic research centers. They don’t want to lose power, they want to be heard. And if something new is coming from outside, they will be challenged. So it’s all related with this psychological make-up and this is related with all our thinkings. And if you see really, academicians who are really supporting this thing in Ethiopia. They are really few. They have to break up that psychological make up and really be committed for the change they want to see; be on their personal interest. ... But with that also, this participation culture, the understanding of power, all these are also related with our attitude towards participation. Not only towards participation, towards supporting each other, towards working together. All these things, if you are coming with a new idea, I will not automatically accept it. The first thing which comes to me is how I would criticize it, and show my superiority over you. It’s all about power, our understanding on power. So how could we cooperate? That for me is really the problem. And that is related to governance issues. And then governance is also related with our long history and how we are grown up and all these things.

The ‘how’ of working together also finds its way to Bonga area which can be explained by a third example, looking at the cooperation between PFM implementing NGO’s in the area of Bonga. Although project staff for these different NGO’s<sup>44</sup> represent and defend the same policy model, PFM, the practical activities are more guided by a ‘will to power’ and assurance of the projects finances. The same PFM expert from above quotation comments on the advice for more cooperation among organizations working in the same area

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<sup>44</sup> EU funded government up-scaling PFM program, FarmAfrica-SOS sahel, Nabu, GEO and Ethio-Wetlands

Well, it is a good thing, coordinating is a very good thing. You don't lose, you don't confuse people, you don't lose resources, lots of things. And all people like it when you talk about it. But when you come to practice, there are different, different factors, individual personality matters. ... And it's difficult to avoid competition for funding. As probably, possible to avoid personality problems. ... Even then, you know it is not easy. Criticizing. Not reasonable criticism, really, not useful criticism comes from your partners. Like minded NGO's what we call, like those who are doing PFM. It is not very strong that much, you know, to come to the stage up. But inside, there are some frictions all the time. ... That is what happened in the coordination history. That's a major problem. Competition for funding, personality problems, I call it. Because some people, they just don't want to coordinate. They just want their own things to be seen, not somebody's work. This kind of behaviour exists.

Arguing for more cooperation and coordination among the different NGO's is indeed too easy as it can only become actualized in the everyday interactions between individuals member of those organizations. Although institutional interests and goals do matter, "individual personality" matters as well. And it is their notion of participation and power, related again to the way they are "grown up", that makes the boundaries between governmental and non-governmental organizations become blurred. One person who was recently employed for Nabu for the Ecotourism sub-project in Bonga said that

only after two months working in this NGO world, I learn how to work. If I walk outside the lines, they will fire me. I learn how to use charisma etc, to get what you want and to move in this world. As NGO worker, you are exposed to a lot of people. And it has a more or less good payment

Furthermore, in observing spatial locations and institutional functions, the overlap between government and PFM implementing NGO's is also visible. The office of Farm Africa for example is located in the same (small) building and compound of the zonal Bureau of Agriculture in Bonga. The former focal person for Farm Africa working in Agama was also linked as part time employee to the woreda Bureau of Agriculture and even now, in the case of Nabu, they are not directly implementing but supporting governmental offices. The Team Leader of Nabu, also affiliated to government as political advisor, in Bonga even remarked at the end of an interview

I also have my social obligations, so I cannot talk freely or comment on political activities. As NGO's, we have our limitations. There are agreements what we can do and what we cannot do.

The characteristics of the working culture and overlap between government (and party) and non-governmental organizations raise questions about how PFM projects really work and ask for reflections upon the practices and the rationality that motivate those practices. The local

governmental workers or NGO fieldworkers who are responsible for approaching the community and to organize activities along the lines of a policy model, are at the same time part of a working culture whose practices seem to oppose that same model. And when somebody is not experienced in a topic he is defending, as a novice who follows rules in contrast to the expert like Dreyfus explained, can he then teach others in the same topic? If there is a strong upstream demand for adherence and coherence, is it then possible to perceive the downstream system of relations that are affected by policy? In the previous chapter, we saw that Farm Africa established a FC through routinized practices which could maintain a distinction between what and how things were done. Above explanation then pointed at some factors which can explain why it is so difficult to change those routines and to reflect upon the way they are carried out.

### *3.3.2 AN ASYMMETRIC AGREEMENT*

The community doesn't really have the right, they have open access, but they don't have a right. To use it sustainably or they don't even have a reason to conserve it. Because the ownership is public. There is that issue, when the mass have access to the open space, then who really owns it, who has the right, who should conserve it, that issue (Communication Officer Farm Africa, Addis Ababa).

“That issue” points to a second big challenge for the field of PFM: the issue of land ownership. According to the FDRE Constitution article 40 (3)

The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of natural resources, is exclusively vested in the state and in the peoples of Ethiopia.

This constitutional rule provides for joint ownership of land and natural resources, including forests. But in article 6, it reads

Without prejudice to the right of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to the ownership of land, government shall ensure the right of private investors to the use of land on the basis of payment arrangements established by the law. Particulars shall be determined by law.

And these ‘particulars’, pointing to the federal and regional land laws to implement the FDRE constitution, have given total ownership to the state, leaving the people out. In the Federal Rural Land Administration (and repeated ad verbatim in the regional laws) we find that

Government being the owner of rural land, communal rural landholdings can be changed to private holdings as may be necessary

This confusion was illustrated in an interview with the former Project Manager of Farm Africa, talking about property rights and the forest management plan

The Farm Africa projects or PFM in Ethiopia, whoever is practicing is not transferring ownership rights. We are just establishing use rights. Because land belongs to the [thinking]...

*Interviewer: Government.*

Yes, government. To the people and the government. [looking thoughtfully for a second and then convincingly nodding] Ye to the government.

It is a minor detail, but it illustrates his reflective comparison between theoretical and practical knowledge gained during his career as PFM practitioner to conclude with the practices: land belongs to the government. Recall that when Farm Africa phased out, an agreement was concluded between the Agama FC and governmental bodies which granted them use rights of NTFPs in Agama forest. This agreement was an administrative contract, falling under the regulation of the Civil Code. In this type of contracts the government, in this case the woreda Bureau of Agriculture, has a special prerogative to modify and revoke the contract unilaterally (Melesse Damtie 2011)

[T]he government is responsible for land distribution and has the right to redistribute existing holdings ... as it deems necessary (RDPS 2003:24).

The point 'as it deems necessary' leaves sufficient space for interpretation as the proclamation on Expropriation of Landholdings of Public Purposes and Payment of Compensation does not provide criteria what is understood with 'public purposes' and leaves the issue for governmental officials to decide. However, in that time of signing, the governmental partners promised not to revoke the agreement and so the ceremony took place and "we enjoy in that time" as one FC member said. But agreeing is not a change of practices. Agreeing is maybe one step, but it also needs to be realized, orient and reframe actions<sup>45</sup> before it can go beyond an act of representation. However the governmental officials who were supposed to assist in the protection of the forest, for the community and *for its own sake* were at the same time people who are disciplined to embed the party's rural development rationale and notion of participation in their practices. Thus, when there is no deliberation on the values underlying the signing of the agreement, then what was done did not require changing how things were done. By looking at the practices of FC in Agama in relation to the government, I will argue that signing the agreement was more an act of representation than it was one of redefining adopted knowledge systems. Although the conceptual framework of PFM

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<sup>45</sup> With thanks to the interview with my PhD colleague

could amalgamate with the policy frameworks of the officials, it did not provide a guide for action to implement PFM. Rather, after the phase out of Farm Africa, the practical activities were dictated by political and economical means rationality, reconstituting rather than challenging established power constellations. As we will see, the question is not only if government officials would revoke the contract, but also if they are actually occupied with its existence.

### 3.4 LEAVING AGAMA FC WITHOUT WINGS

#### 3.4.1 *A MATTER OF BELIEF*

We have mentioned before that the exchange visit and environmental trainings were mentioned by people in Agama as creating ‘awareness’. It gave an opportunity to break down the illusion that only bigger powers can destroy the forest, but that the power lies also in their daily life decisions. However, they were also immediately presented with the way to channel that thought. And when the context in Agama raised unexpected problems (not forest destruction but transition to a homogenous group was the problem), no adjustments were made to the process of creating participatory forest management. A process that was mainly focused to regulate the visible activities. The question that follows is to what extent the project believed in the capacities of the people to really manage the forest, to create deeds from their thoughts and determine on their own what is right. In the transcript of a presentation to an evaluation team of the Bonga PFM project, from the three lessons learnt (Amare Getahun et al. 2007), the first two ones were

Community able to work in complex resource management systems

Community can take management responsibility

This insight however became projected into the participating villagers themselves. The former Assistant Community Development Officer of Farm Africa PFM project in Bonga explains her motivation to do her job

Previously, communities say that they are forest destructors, the government want to keep the forest from them. We believe that previously. But now not. Community, if you teach them, aware them, guide them, then you can change. They keep the forest. Then that forest is more benefited for them. So from enemies to keeper of the forest.

But in Agama, where forest destruction was not a main concern of governmental offices and which is located far from Gimbo woreda, making it difficult to “manage this kebele” as the DA mentioned, it is questionable to what extent the prestige of being recognized by others as ‘forest keepers’ was also

recognized by Agama villagers themselves who have been using forest resources and managing their forest plot for a long time by a strong traditional ownership system. The question in the belief of farmers' capacity was also raised in an interview by a consultant who made evaluations reports for PFM implementing NGO's. To one of the recommendations, project staff replied

[N]o we don't really want to go further. And then we asked why? Because we don't know if the government is really comfortable with this or not. And then I said, just go and negotiate with the government. They said, we don't know because we can't really feel confident enough that the farmers, once they harvest this one, can really manage the forest. You see. They don't have confidence in the farmers themselves. They say farmers can manage, but still they don't have the confidence. And then they say maybe we get into conflict with the government, because if farmers clear it, but couldn't manage to really kind of you know regenerate it, then they said we come in conflict with the government.

The same question comes forth when we look at the premises on which the forest was 'given' to the community. One FC member said

I remember by agreement of Farm Africa: if you destruct this forest, it goes to government back. Because forest is life, serious. If you keep than you live with this forest. Otherwise you will just fly like Kambata, we know their story of desert. ... First we have to keep the forest, control from destruction. Otherwise we all lose our life, because we all will have to move. Kaffa, Kambata, Manja, all! I remember this message from Farm Africa.

A statement that has been quoted by other members as well and is frequently cited in "governmental speaking" during FC meetings as we saw in the Kambata *iddir* on forest destruction<sup>46</sup>. The forest was thus given on an "if you... then we..." rationality making the

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<sup>46</sup> Remember agenda points in chapter two which called for a Kambata iddir to search for the destructor person. The meeting ended in conflict when the facilitator and the FC chairman announced that it was forbidden for any Kambata person to use from the forest until the case was 'solved'. During the iddir, most people were silent, only some four participants were actively responding on the (translated) speeches of the facilitator and FC chairman. On a question why they were so silent, a Kambata farmer replied: "Two reasons are there for the silent mode of the community. First one, cooperative by itself guide such kind of activity, but pass [information] to the kebele [administration]. Kebele deeply not know about this forest management agreement and detailed activity. In that time, this word goes in which direction? Silently we observe that word. Again, in that time we went to the meeting for other agenda or purpose. Information does not reach us,

relationship between the signing members of the FC and the governmental officials of a conditional nature. And the reactions of the members rapidly became even so. Although the members, traditional users as well as newcomers, argued that they agreed with the idea of forest conservation because “I know the advantages from the forest from my background”, when the woreda ignored their part in the implementation of the utilization agreement, the reaction became one of “if there are no benefits, then we don’t keep the forest according to your design.”

The above explanation should not be confused though with the frequently cited argument that a failure to legally recognize local people’s tenure rights evokes fear in people to be evicted from their land by the powers of the government and that people so may not be encouraged to sustainably manage and improve their land if they are aware that it can be expropriated without sufficient compensation (Melesse Damtie 2011). The life in Agama reveals a somewhat more nuanced picture. All farmers are indeed aware of the fact that land belongs to the government, but that doesn’t mean that they do not have a reason to conserve it. The everyday necessity of having food is a pretty good one for most villagers. As farming is their means for survival, and that plot of land is the way to ensure it, then this is not a minor incentive to put effort and time in cultivation of the land. Moreover in Agama, families with well maintained farming land and gardens are socially more approved and encouraged than ‘laziness’. When talking about the difficulties of combining farming and forest keeping, the chairman of the FC comments

I explain for you, I know, it’s human being, become to meet or challenge to your idea, and somebody’s idea become to collapse by different type of case, I know. But yesterday, and after last week, last month, again last year, from my experience and from my activity, I give response for you. Because in this time, it is a sowing time, it is good cultivation time. In this time stay, [some farmers] sit, some bodies are there, assume in my brain. Or in your brain, assume it. But those persons wait whom? Whose? Or for what purpose he sits?

The chairman of the previous FC committee similarly touches the idea of ‘hard working’ when he explains how to make the community strong

The main point, give awareness. Again and again, by *iddir*. More, much give awareness for these persons. Society come together and discuss about his living condition, no any other problems. This

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just as a new agenda for us in our brain in that time [when they start to speak about forest destruction]. In this case, we are not ready, how we explain detailed?”

person is a hard worker, strong but only his work becomes to strong? Don't give change. First, give awareness about his harvested crops or any materials, and from a discussion, a good price he gets and give direction, and in another situation, technically, gather information from this meeting. Otherwise [he] become to lose. Don't get benefit from his alone activity, alone done, alone imaginary. So become to discuss [together], and don't participate in *iddir*, it gives side effect for people.

It should be noticed that he refers to the local institution of the *iddir*, and not the kebele meetings, to 'give awareness' to people and points again to the strength of institutions that both serves instrumental as value rational goals.

A similar situation is pictured for forest lands. Often, it is taken for granted that common pool resources are unsustainably managed if there is no legal recognition of community's rights and state ownership is not enforced (Bruns 2009) which turns the forest into 'open access' as the Communication Officer argues above. This however is a harsh generalization, voided from practical knowledge of the daily life in a rural village as Agama. Although the image of the 'up there' state is never completely gone, regularly reminded upon by kebele meetings and intensive door to door visiting of DA's and governmental workers during election time, the presentness of everyday life exigencies requires social organization, creative thinking and acting, pushing the 'dome' to the background. We explained before that there was a strong traditional utilization system of forest resources in Agama which refers to the need of social arrangements when living together and using the same resources. And although the belief that the government is still the final owner of the forest does have influence (as we will discuss below), it is not primarily situated in a lack of properly maintaining a forest plot which is again socially disapproved. One elderly and traditional user mentions:

Generally the owner is the government: that is a universal truth. But under government, second owner or responsibility taker is me. Because from my utilization, I start life. For ... different type, my life is related to this forest. In this case, second owner ... is me ... and our community.

In response to a question about the combination of daily life activities and time for the forest cooperative, the previous kebele chairman and elderly answers

In our local, activities are fulfilled by adult men. The young people, today eat, tomorrow die, that is their slogan in our local. We keep the forest, keep the environment, ... [but they] don't care. Not all peoples think about development of the area in a village. No awareness .... Again, some bodies don't give meaning to the change for the local. ... internal motivation is less.

A remark could be that these responses seem too resonant with the environmental rhetoric of Farm Africa that intervened in the village to be original. But, forest practices have been an integer and essential part of the life of all Agama villagers, already for several generations and it would be ignorant to say that they have never thought about their feelings and interests in relation to these practices before Farm Africa came. One elderly and separation leader of one of the zone in Agama forest answers in a question about his background

From my experience, this forest, now in this generation, I am the tenth generation, pass up to tenth. I am the tenth generation. From my background, my parents I hear, and all generations pass from one to another, forest is life. This is the word. Forest is life.

The point here is not that much the origins of environmental awareness, rather it is the argument that legal ownership, especially when the practices contradict its meaning, are not the only driver to manage and conserve forest land. The direct connection between land and life and the exigencies of nature is something entrenched in Agama villagers' social practices, not only visible in an 'environmental rhetoric', but also in local institutionalized practices<sup>47</sup> and personal histories. However, Agama people do not live in a vacuum. When government and non-governmental actors intervene who are not aware of the social value system, then it does get important to justify or judge practices with reference to legal ownership and how it is enacted. In the next paragraph, we will see how local governmental bodies who signed the agreement seem to be more bonded to the ADLI strategy than to the contract they concluded with the Agama FC and how a legal tool to defend rights became a tool to create doubts about those very same rights.

### *3.4.2 COFFEA AND JUSTITIA*

#### **3.4.2.1 Forest development for 'its own sake'**

The woreda Bureau of Agriculture in Gimbo, one of the signing partners of the agreement, is perceived as a main governmental structure to implement the rural development strategy. According to the RDPS, woreda's have the responsibility to prepare annual short and long term development programs and have the authority to oversee, coordinate, control, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plans. However, they are at the same time "political forums which play a key role in rural development" and need to "package clearly the work at each administrative level,

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<sup>47</sup> For example during coffee drinks (which happens at least three times a day with family members of other people from the village), the first cup of coffee is always emptied out on the floor (made from earth and dung) to give something back to the 'spirits' of the soil.

to equip each level with the required capacity to perform the assigned work.” The head of the Gimbo woreda Bureau of Agriculture explains their strategy for the future

We are leading the people of Kaffa according to the zone. Our action plan is to increase their livelihood and to reduce poverty. Coordinating in woreda, through meetings, and in kebeles they are also coordinating. You know, most of farmers here are poor. ... Now half of farmers are poor. So food security is our main target. We have only power and land. So we are pushing them to use fertilizers and seeds. The long vision is to change our country. The short vision is to provide food three times a day for each person.

For him, the ‘means’ to reach the target of food security are thus ‘power’ and ‘land’ whereas the woreda office has the authority to select land when there is a demand for it that serves the goal of development. In the context of Kaffa - endowed with natural forest - such kind of demand particularly comes from investors to establish coffee plantations<sup>48</sup>. According to the manager of the Coffee forest Forum in Addis Ababa, currently “*in whole Kaffa zone, eighty investors were licensed to do their projects.*” In comparison, twelve years ago, during the study of Zewdie Yihenew, there were fourteen investors. An increase which was also noticed by villagers of Agama. For example, when questioned about the forest management during the different government regimes, the vice leader of the FC distinguished a separate period dominated by investors coming to the area

And this current government, now we come to organize by a cooperative system. ... After that much of the forest is captured by investments. We don’t get any use from the investment.

Although investors surrounding Agama village did receive land located in state forest, with time, they ‘expanded’ their understanding of the rule when they bought or took land from farmers surrounding their investment lands. Some farmers adjacent to the coffee investors Green Coffee and Homeland saw how their adjacent grazing lands became incorporated, with the punishment of a fine when their cattle went through the investors’ expanded fences.

When Agama forest was designated as cooperative forest, it should then not be viewed as a separate forest patch, but as part of a chain of forestland (state forest and cooperative forest) which does not only serve for PFM activities, but is also potentially useful for development or investment activities. In the RDPS we read that “forested land will be most effectively protected only if suitable and appropriate uses can be found for them”, which entails that forestlands only have value as they

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<sup>48</sup> Based on observations and interviews. Sometimes investors apply for land and when they are granted forest land, rather than to start their investment activities they log wood and sell it (observed in Sheka zone).

can “provide direct income sources for farmers.” Forest interventions are not “carried out simply as forest development exercise done for its own sake.” Something which did not go unnoticed to members of the Agama FC who find themselves surrounded by all these investment activities. One villager, “disturbed by this investment activities”, commented on the question what the main challenges are for the FC and the forest in the future

I fear about this spread of the investments. ... Investors only focus on profits, don't care about for climate or forest life. Because he is business oriented. In this case, [there] remain two areas, federal and cooperative forest. One day, controlled by investors. Because of, he comes to ask permission from us, I go that area, I develop that area and improve that social life around that area he say. Come to start and plant coffee. Coffee, by nature is under tree, shade loving tree. But they destroy, clear the forest and after that plant coffee. Coffee is not tree, coffee is not forest, by nature. The big trees control climate situation and climate condition, gather from different type of areas rain, we use from this. All my life activity come to stop in that time. Investors come to take this forest? Already we stop life. We go to where? That mean, it is dangerous and a great challenge for the future, these investment activities.

*interviewer: Can an investor just take land from this cooperative forest?*

Maybe one day that is true. [government] gives to the investors. Just like around this area, forest [was taken] for the investors. So what is the difference between that cooperative forest and federal forest? They are the same? Yes, first they are the same, concentration, they are the same. It is a nature, that is a nature. By what case would government oppose those investment activities? ... Government gives respect for the investors, that is true, but not for society. In this case, one day, this forest is from investors, controlled by investors, that is true.

Next to his opinion about investment challenges for the FC, we can also notice that his first criteria to distinguish forests in his environment is that “it is nature, that is a nature” and only secondly uses the legal status (state or cooperative forest) to reduce the forest to categories (a detail to keep in mind for the discussion at the end of this paragraph). When confronting the head of Bureau of Agriculture in Gimbo with this perspective, he replies

Did the farmers tell you that? You know, sometimes they tell complain because they want something. This about investors is not true. Investors only use land that is permitted by government. Forest is divided in parts that can be used and parts that cannot be used. It is not a random picking of areas.

*Interviewer: So there is rule governing their actions?*

Yes. Also investors they give something to our country. They have their own role to play. There is agreement with zonal and woreda office. You know, this question does not come from strong persons. We are doing this according to laws, government directions. A land of farmer is land of

farmer. Forest is forest. So no investors just taking that. Investors have a role to play for our country. There is first a study on which area that could be given to them, before we do.

We have seen however that the 'government directions' still leave sufficient space for interpretation and justification for the way land is (re)distributed. Thus, when an investor arrives at the woreda office in Gimbo and asks for free land, it will be important that knowledge on PFM and geographical location of cooperative forest areas is existent to guide the allocation of (forest) land.

But that knowledge got lost (and was refused). Although Farm Africa organized workshops and training about PFM for governmental officers, when they phased out, the institutional linkages were missing (interview, Zelalem Temesgen and Mulugeta Lemenih 2011). When asking about PFM in the Gimbo woreda Bureau of Agriculture, only limited information was available. The only concrete information was the reference to Nabu who was supporting the office to establish five nurseries to plant coffee and indigenous tree seedlings next summer. And even this information was not completely clear as there was doubt if "they will also plant some fruit trees used for farmers, maybe even economic trees. But now, only forest is focused upon. Maybe next year, I don't know." The Head commented further

We have attention for the forest, but it is not working ... We have no time for forest management actually. Food security, health issues, they get more attention. And that are a lot of activities you know.

There is also no job description for a PFM expert or clarity about responsibilities and duties for the different governmental departments (Melesse Damtie 2011, Zelalem Temesgen and Mulugeta Lemenih 2011, own observations). Although the cooperative office is following the FC's, they have limited capacity and a shortage of budget "not according to the annual plan"<sup>49</sup>, while there is no technical support for the FC's to perform the forestry evaluation and monitoring as stated in the agreement. Looking at the organizational structure, there are actually no people who could do this. From a document about organizational resources of Gimbo woreda, three persons are managing the section Forestry and Wildlife with 2,5 percent of the budget, while 25 persons are managing agricultural related activities with 97,5 percent of the budget (Zewdie Yihenew 2002). In addition, interviews with natural resource personnel (conducted by Zewdie Yihenew in 2000) revealed that they spend the bulk of their time in the field promoting food security oriented extension programs. An observation that also holds for the DA of natural resources in Yeyebito who spends most of his

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<sup>49</sup> The zonal cooperative office needs to follow and support 513 cooperatives with a team of four persons. Also in Gimbo woreda cooperative office, limited capacity was mentioned as being the case.

time 'explaining' the farmers about integrated agricultural systems and pushing them to pay their money for urea and DAP. Furthermore, government institutions are characterized by a high staff turn over which makes it difficult to build capacity or 'memory' for the guidance of PFM. One PFM implementer remarked that ninety percent of the technical staff trained in PFM did not continue the job for more than twelve months (quoted in Zelalem Temesgen and Mulugeta Lemenih 2011).

But it is not merely a 'lack' of institutional linkage or knowledge, in the words of one zonal cooperative officer *"I would not say it's a lack of awareness, it's rather a lack of attention."* Knowledge to guide behaviour and actions concerning PFM became rather dictated by the usual political and economical rationalities. The agreement with the Agama FC was barely signed when the forest was almost handed over to investors. The former natural resource management expert of the woreda bureau of Agriculture (who was at the same time part time fieldworker for Farm Africa) witnessed

What is also demoralizing is the investment idea of the government. We should invest in coffee they say. And they wanted to change the PFM sites in coffee plantations. In 2000, they tried to invest in coffee specialization, all zonal tried to expand. [But] When you say "all land is occupied", investment office and zonal administration come to ask why you said that? PFM is governmental land, they say, not occupied ... And I remember one time, informally the whole Yeyebito forest was given to investors by the zonal administration. For a coffee plantation, whole the forest, Darra, Agama and Michiti. The investor went to the investment bureau, but there was no comment of a land expert and so the report was returned back to experts. They asked me as expert for advice and I did not agree. Based on the policy about forest management system, based on the [Forest] proclamation, I resisted and returned the report. That was when my job was satisfactory. That I could change something. Because for the investor, first they probably would have done logging ... If you disturb one PFM site with investment, the participation will decrease and more political influences will come. Even, the farmers did not really believe, Farm Africa and the government are not really working of PFM, farmers believed. So if you disturb the PFM sites, farmers' belief will decrease further.

And it was only three years ago that the stone office building given to the Agama FC in time of Farm Africa was expropriated by Gimbo woreda to sell it to an investor. According to the stories of FC members and the facilitator, the woreda officers arrived in the village, closed down the office, with all the documents and materials still inside, rapidly leaving again with the promise that they would receive a part of the money from the sale of the office building. Today, that building is still empty, no investor ever came, and the stamped woreda document that evidenced the right on a share of the payment is buried in a pile of papers, resting in the storeroom of a newly build FC office, as a forgotten witness for the hope to ever receive the payment in the future.

In contrast to the willingness to accept investors in name of development, the willingness to support the FC in harvesting forest resources for economic return is not that visible in governmental practices. One point that was frequently mentioned in Agama was the case of selling dead wood from the forest. In the FAP it was allowed to harvest wood from 'eldest trees'<sup>50</sup> and naturally damaged or died trees and to sell the wood or derived charcoal to gain income for their activities. But when such an occasion happened, by the activities of a road company<sup>51</sup> who left destructed trees in Agama forest when building the asphalt road from Bonga to Mizan, the woreda did not give permission. The former secretary of the FC committee explains

This is our forest, but by this [road company] destroy and take resources. Mean, for their enterprise profit they struggle. Governmental inward, they are together destroy this forest, not only the company. ... They destroy so we follow-up and start suing in woreda. Again woreda to zone, zone to woreda. Just on a time [of Farm Africa], we could harvest wood for fire or house purpose and sell and gain benefit from that they say. We believe and send a letter, regularly to ask permission of woreda. We wait and sit in our house. Immediately, tomorrow, next week, next month they say. In the processing time, thief go to Bonga, pick out by car, come to here, come to [take the wood] and [go] back. Already finished that wood. No any gain from that destruction tree. On a time, [when] Farm Africa lived here, they did not only support members. They know the official activity, they know. ... Take for example, from kebele up to federal, it has a chain, Farm Africa. In this way, any problem [that occurred], [Farm Africa could give] immediately a solution. Anybody, in governmental position. Otherwise in our capacity, our performance, it is very heavy for us.

Although there is an official channel for the FC to defend their rights in such cases, the court, the rationale of that channel is more directed towards "empty your pockets" than towards defending people's rights.

### **3.4.2.2 Labour force and money instead of jurisdiction**

You know the government is also very smart. ... the NGO's go to government and the government says ok, we are ok with it. And then the NGO's also feel like the government accepted them. When it comes to really practicing ... the first thing NGO's tell you: law enforcement is a problem, and that's government fault. So government is not involved, definitely. And then if you go to NGO's, what they

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<sup>50</sup> One farmer and FC control committee member noticed: "Manage and utilize they say, but utilize is sometimes not clear for me. Those eldest trees, when they die? So when benefit for the committee? In our manual, we can sell eldest trees, but when does trees become to old? Man or tree first die? When utilization?"

<sup>51</sup> A contracted Korean company is building an asphalt road from Bonga to Misan. Many patches of forest being destructed and resources taken out of the forest

tell you is: sustainability is a problem. Who is supposed to sustain the government? NGO's start and then they are supposed to transfer the project at the end to the government counterpart, but here is no one to pick it up. You see, government is not involved. NGO's are not meant to replace the government forever. (interview with occasional consultant for Farm Africa February 2012)

Although the woreda court did not explicitly sign the PFM agreement, Agama villagers often calculate it in the list of governmental bodies that did not hold their promise after signing. However, as governmental body, they are responsible for law enforcement and thus according to the FAP agreement of the FC, they are responsible to back the FC with law enforcement in cases of forest destruction and in case non-members use forest products without asking permission to the FC. As we have seen in chapter II, the latter was more of a design construct than a necessity in Agama. The former however, although "we local people are from nature strong", is argued to be necessary in case of "high crimes"<sup>52</sup> as several people mentioned. It should be stressed though that it is only since the arrival of the DA of natural resources and the facilitator that court cases actually have been initiated by the FC. Especially the DA, at the same time member of the party and kebele council member, is arguing to initiate court cases during FC committee meetings. Recently, he initiated (through the FC) a case in woreda court against four farmers concerning destruction (wood was harvested for house building material) in the cooperative forest and a case in kebele court against twenty-seven farmers to issue a prohibition against the use of any products from their respective forest plots in the nearby state forest.

From the stories of the villagers concerning their experiences with court cases, the 'supply side' of rights does not seem to be primarily guided by the promises that were made when signing the agreement, but rather by embedded political rationales and economical interests. First, the image of the 'poor farmers' whose labour force is needed for economical development has also intruded justifications for the practical activities in court. In Gimbo woreda, the Head phrases

Awareness creation, that is the aim of the government. ... Because, they are poor. Politically, it is not our aim to send them to prison, economically it is not good. They come here with their children, their family. How to send them to prison?

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<sup>52</sup> It was often claimed that for 'little cases' village solutions were preferred (giving advice through iddir, elderly or 'popular persons'), but in cases like the road company, the electricity company intervening in the forest or the corrupt kebele chairman who sold land to the Manja farmer, governmental court is perceived as necessary because "We people are from nature strong, but this is not enough for the conservation of the forest. Add to that, a strong governmental role." (Village elder and FC member)

Furthermore, this notion of farmers has also effect on the self-reflective beliefs in their own capacity when they go to court as witnesses in cases of forest destruction. Questions that are impossible to answer (*“By what purpose, what type of instruments for cutting does he use? How we know! We are always together or together destruct that forest? Such kind of questions deliver for the witness (FC chairman)”*) or focusing on illiteracy of farmers reinforce the image of an asymmetric relationship in the interaction between farmers and the woreda court. In Agama, the vice-leader was even imprisoned for a short time because he was accused of corruption when he did not give two times the exact same account of the facts during witnessing. When the court asked him why, he replied *“I am illiterate”*. Eventually he was sent home and the case for which he witnessed never returned a verdict.

Second is that money matters when starting a case in court. Not only to pay transportation costs back and forth to Gimbo, but also to bribe judges, witnesses and advocacies to ‘direct’ outcomes or completely cancel cases. The case we saw from the Manja farmer who illegally bought land from the kebele land administrator is one example where witnesses were bribed to change their story. The case of the Korean company, still busy with building the asphalt road, has also been sent to the woreda court by the FC, but never received response. Interestingly, the Team Leader of Nabu in Bonga, former Project Manager of Farm Africa, claimed to have attempted to support the FC in its case against the road company. He commented

Nabu and the road constructor, we came at the same time. ... There is a national management plan to implement, but there is gap between reality and the plan, because it is not a strong institution<sup>53</sup> [supervisor team]. The implementation has a lot of limitations in terms of skills, finance, rules. The road construction company did wrong, they went outside of the agreement. I personally guided the process against them for this error and the company agreed to compensate, it was about 2,7 million birr, but in Yeyebito, nobody did receive because of political persons in between. For reasons I cannot explain, the money was high jacked somewhere, maybe illegal

Although court cases may not be successful, it does have impact on internal and social struggles. Considering the agreement was conditional (“if you.. then we”), the FC committee members find their selves between their promise to sue forest destructors in order to keep the forest and the struggles associated with the practices to realize that promise. One FC control committee members explains

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<sup>53</sup> There is a supervisor team (based in Addis Ababa) appointed to oversee the activities of the road company. They had issued that the company needed to pay compensation to the communities were damage was done to properties and cooperative forest but that never became real.

... if we are silent mode, then we are the right hand of the government. If we send to woreda, we suffer from this activity. If we start suing, then our application become to sleep with somebody in an office. One day, it can become effective, we start activity and if those bodies come to visit and check up, it is good. But previous year, we started suing, and because no decision in that time, this person stopped but started again. After coming back, again he pushed the forest boundary. How can we simply look and stay? So we started again this year. [but] governmental role is very minus. If government once comes, they will ask why we stayed silent, because in our manual we promised to keep the forest, so we pass to another body. Otherwise, the [FC] management body will be sued, and that will sure be effective.

The interaction between the FC and the court are again an indication how this local institution diverted away from a focus on forest management and participation. The reflections, thoughts and emotional feedback coming from those experiences are primarily associated with internal and social struggles (*"if that suing system is not effective. That person becomes enemy for society"*) structured by established power relations rather than with collective action for forest management or a willingness to imagine their selves in line with the regulations of the FC. It is thus another example of the importance *how* things are done (based on political and economical rationalities) and that is it not sufficient to see *what* is done (making court representatives signing an agreement and providing training to inform them about PFM).

### 3.5 AN ACT OF REPRESENTATION

Coming so far, we have seen how PFM has 'hit the ground' in Agama village from the moment Farm Africa started a redemarcation of the forest and what happened when they phased out and left the situation for the governmental agencies who signed the PFM agreement. In the first two chapters we saw how the PFM project ignored historical and localized knowledge, holding on to an operational logic in order to visualize a design – through organizing meetings, creating documents, providing materials and an office – and to establish one local organization that ensured 'equality' and 'fairness'. We saw how form lost its meaning, 'know what' without 'know how', so that the concept of participation in sustainable forest management became a secondary order interpretative framework for practices rather than that it could guide the practices to establish a FC. Moreover, looking from a broader political and historical perspective, we saw how certain practices in the locality of Agama could become routinized and reaffirm well established power relations rather than challenging them. All this makes the FC practices primarily associated with a rupture of long standing social institutions and traditional arrangements to use the forest; and with strained

relationships with governmental offices based on a conditional agreement, but not primarily with the common daily practices of harvesting non-timber forest products. FC practices and the self-formation taking place within those practices thus did not motivate members to align their sense of selves with the project design. Likewise, in this chapter we saw that even governmental and non-governmental actors involved (or supposed to be) in the field of PFM do not necessarily adopt a sense for participation or attention for the forest in their daily practices. Nor is there is a clear distinction between governmental and non-governmental bodies. Although NGO's at the discourse level say that 'government is not involved', there are myriad linkages between the two. As they are using similar mobilizing concepts or 'metaphors' – involvement of communities and enhancing the life of the rural poor – and perceiving themselves both as provider of development and participation, overlap in relationships and practices can be justified. So, when representatives of some governmental agencies signed an agreement with Agama FC to share responsibilities and duties in sustainably managing and using the forest, it was not contradictory for their selves as they did not needed to change their practices, but only temporary the language they used to frame their conceptual framework to interpret those practices. The agreement was rather a secondary consequence, following from a range of individuals who had designed the agreement, but not an individual thought that could guide subsequent actions. As such, signing became more an act of representation than of changing adopted knowledge systems or the manner of interacting with local people in their practical activities.

Do we need to make a conclusion then that the policy model of PFM is unimplementable in Agama (and perhaps beyond)? No, we shouldn't. Realization of an institutional design that a reform seek to consolidate is as contingent as it is political. Some years after Farm Africa left, one contingency happened that would shape and reshape the particularity of PFM practices in Agama: a new cooperative facilitator entered Yeyebito. This new encounter will provide us a chance to reflect how PFM and other policy models can become a guide for actions, showing that both social practice and the self are important in effects produced by new policy or regulatory rules.

# FOUR

## A SMALL STORY WITH LASTING ROOTS

Different men seek after happiness in different ways and by different means, and so make for themselves different modes of life and forms of government.

(Aristotle)

### 4.1 CHANGING POSITION IN THE SPACE OF POINT OF VIEWS

To introduce this chapter, let us reiterate what the natural resource management expert and part time focal person for Farm Africa PFM project concluded about the state of the FC in Agama

Only the cooperative office is following them. So now the FC is acting as a business on honey and spices. The forest keeping is only secondary.

He is correct in his observation. The daily practices within which the institution of the Agama FC is involved are currently more focused on how to run its business properly than how to manage the forest accordingly. However. We could take a different perspective which would transform this conclusion into a new question. We can say that the FC only has become a business project. But we can also say, at least, the FC has become concerned with enacting cooperative principles. And this shift reveals again a “little question” with particularly important insights for the story. Because, when and for what reason did some Agama villagers come to care about, act in relation to and think about their actions in terms of the regulatory cooperative principles?

In this chapter, we shall phrase an answer to this question which will reveal that the arrival of the facilitator in Yeyebito, some three years ago, was a central event without which this question

would maybe not have been a possible matter of discussion. We shall see that he used a different approach to enter the community, not on the premise of poor farmers that need empowerment, but on the observation that nobody was following cooperative principles; not mobilized by a bigger project or policy model and consequently without tools to 'ask' participation as supportive development activities. The puzzle then is how his doings, sayings, and thinkings differed and how this impacted on villagers in Agama and again on himself, and how it oriented FC's practices.

As mentioned and argued in the prologue, we shall answer this question by looking at his story as short ethnography in juxtaposition with the previous three chapters to position us in a different point of view which can provide an entrance point for the individual reader to the practical knowledge, reflections and thoughts of the facilitator in relation to his experiences with the FC. First, we shall place the interview and the facilitator in time and place to provide an interpretative framework to understand the story, which follows afterwards. In a second section then we shall formulate answers on above question and point to the relevance for the practices of PFM in Agama.

#### 4.2 A VIRTUE OF SELFISHNESS<sup>54</sup>

The facilitator G. is a professional facilitator working for the district Cooperative Office since three years. His first job assignment was to re-organize the cooperatives in two kebeles, Yeyebito and Bichachega, which were given to him in an attempt to challenge his facilitator and personal qualities. Because in that time, "no good situation from woreda office and me" and as such his supervisors assigned him to go to those "dangerous areas." An assignment which would upset his professional and personal life.

In his young age, because of a family issue, he was sent to Addis Ababa to live there with his aunt, "*a person I did not really like that much.*" Early in his life, he learns how to find a way in the capital, and more importantly, how to survive on his own, as his family is "*interested in other things.*" Unlike his peers in his birth place, who were growing up under the influence of the strong family institution as in most Ethiopian cases, he grew up in a situation where his emotional reactions differed from culturally shared meanings as he perceived the family members who encircled him opposite to the experience of his self. His emotions served thus as a gauge of the difference between internal expectations and internal results which gave him the opportunity to shape his own definitions and created a window into his self. When confronted with problems, rather than first

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<sup>54</sup> Ayn Rand

relying on the people around him to guide his decisions, he started to rely more on his principles and beliefs, gathered from life experiences. This did not evoke bitterness or disbelief in interaction with other people. To the contrary, when he was older he returned back to Bonga, searched his close family members and found them one by one.

When he got the chance to continue his education (*“that was my dream, because those people in woreda that dominated me didn’t want me to learn in that time, so that chance, it’s a god activity”*) he found himself not alone anymore as he found literature formulating principles that resembled those he created in his life trajectory. Rather than learning theory in University to carry it out in practice, he found theoretical knowledge that complemented the practical knowledge he previously gained. Later on, returning back to his job, when he found himself alone again and confronted with problems, his logic was to rely on the principles again to guide his behaviour in interactions with the situation faced, to shift the weight to internal standards and self-verification than to external feedback and self-representation. This caused him to observe people based on analysis of values, as point of departure for actions and not based on categorization along social identities as ‘powerless farmer’ and ‘powerful administrator’. What matters for him is experience, not only *“talking as the others in the office, that comfort chair is not favorable for me.”* Although he plays his role well when needed, it is in function of his goals fulfillment, balancing himself between sovereign power and individual power, between universals and practical cases.

Adhering strongly to his principles, professionally translated in cooperative laws, he finds himself a desert area when going to Yeyebito. A lawless world, where no any (cooperative) rule is put into practice which evokes in him a “struggle up to lose of my life.” So in the first part of the interview he explains at length the malpractices and offences he encountered and how he managed to reorganize the forest cooperative, *“first we give feeling to our rules, after that we are success. Otherwise without rules, we are just as a blind.”* During his struggle he needs to redefine continuously his interpretation of theoretical guidelines, finding himself in between governmental expectations and internal thinking (*“my brain is destroyed by government in that time, sometimes I cry you know, by secretly. I stop my job I think, but no I say, my family comes to other side, imagine in my brain”*) to create a content that is durable in practice. A content that on the one hand must be able to hold for the woreda office, who evaluates mainly through correct documentation concerning the account of the FC and not that much by looking at other activities *“because these people are dangerous woreda says”* and on the other hand for the villagers of Agama who *“don’t worry about this political meeting, never give attention”* but are more concerned with everyday practices of managing their forest as *“you know practical job, it is very important for my talking.”*

The interview then reaches a turning point when the interviewer touches the subject of his relation with the DA of natural resources in Yeyebito, with the reply that *“our target is the same, but professionally we differ.”* Although they are faced with the same circumstances, being a bridge between the rural life and the woreda office, they are antagonistic in the choices they make to build that bridge. As talking about the DA evokes thoughts of the pressure put by an external actor on the management of the forest, the second part of the interview starts with the ‘malpractices’ generated by this actor, evoking movement when talking about a supposed meeting organized in Agama as their practices are not following the proclaimed values used by this organization to, contradictorily, justify these same practices. This discussion brings his perspective from inside to outside looking as he continues with explaining about the difficulties situated in the interaction between FC and government and FC and court area to carry out a sustainable PFM. But if the different perceptions on cooperatives could separate The facilitator from the villagers, with time the struggle with external pressures was an essential factor to bring them together. It makes him to talk more mild about forest destruction (*“build his house is not a crime. Not a crime”*) in comparison to the beginning of the interview and further paves the way to express his long term vision on his “mission”.

His retrospective overview of the experiences in Yeyebito also serve as an example how historical conditions defining a generational experience can separate individuals of different living place and age, despite a cultural solidarity. He grew up mainly under the regime of the current government in a city, experiencing the silent policy of suppressing the intelligentsia. Too young to fully realize the power of the Derg, which he learned from books and actually not opposes as “in a Derg time, immediately participate, all people in a meeting time”, he did fully experience how to struggle for education and for the election of professionals into the government. When in 1991, EPRDF took power, they started with promoting democracy and freedom, only to restrict it again later on, catalyzed by the dramatic elections of 2005. But that small period of expanded freedom was enough to experience the satisfaction of exercising it, with a reaching its climax when the facilitator led his fellow students in Bonga into protest against a governmental decision to cut down education, more out of innocence (*“we are all human beings”*) than out of some sort of evil resistance. A satisfaction that created an understanding that adhering to own beliefs can help to transform an apparently dominating power into a new, unexpected freedom.

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#### 4.2.1 MY FAMILY MY SOCIETY MY BODY

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##### **“I use my internal force”**

- *Can you introduce your background?*

(...) I am born in July, 1983., I am born in Kaffa zone, especially Telo woreda, in the small town of Felegessela. In that time, I start education in that area, in the elementary level. After that, by case of relative, transfer to Addis, the capital of Ethiopia and again I start education in that area up to high school. Again come back to Bonga, again Kaffa zone. Start grade 9 up to 12, graduated here. After that, I start again the higher level education as diploma level, in 2007 again I graduated.

- *Diploma?*

Diploma level. And immediately after that, I start to work in the woreda. (...) Facilitator of cooperative and management and marketing, that is my profession. Again my working areas, sites, are especially Yeyebito and Bichachega. Now, I work in more, kebeles. (...) six kebeles now I facilitate. Or organize, or shape, this cooperative principle about any agricultural activity. They can organize themselves, it is possible, international cooperative principles are there. In this way, without any discrimination, age, sex, religion, education, race, without any other discrimination, by keep of the laws or ways, internationally, we organize and manage. And that society contribute their money, knowledge, labour, again capital contribute and share (...), from lack of economically, from, solve economically, politically and socially problems, avoided by this communication. Communication and coordination.

- *Communication?*

Communication about all the activities, any other situational activities, marketing, and consumer, saving, again producing activities. As a local, ecological situation, organize in

that area. And now, more or less it is good. And from my job, from my activities, there is a good performance, now, I have a performance. By this case, I am selected by this activity. And just, more from other facilitators, I have potential. Mean, not only from talking. From practically, up to just Ethiopian foreign minister (...) I was praised by him in regional level. One price is money, one again permission to, especially in university, start my education again.

- *And this price...*

Without, yes. I get a price, never from another institution, only from my task. Only my performance (...) or internal motivation. in this case, now I started education in ... University.

- *Which year did you get this price?*

Last year, in 2011 now again, next summer I'll start, now for the second I'm ready in this time. And that is more or less my background here.

- *So last year you started education again in university. Which subject did you....*

Subject again the same like. Management and marketing we are still starting, commonly, after three years, maybe departmental separation is there for the future. Now we commonly start, all facilitators come, from all parts of Ethiopia, come to start at the diploma level.

- *And after you graduated in 2007, you immediately started to work in the woreda?*

Direct, woreda give order to facilitate on the kebele level. Immediately give position for the kebele. In that time, by that application, I go to start immediately facilitate or speed up that activity. In that time, there is a shortage of facilitators in the woreda, not only in the woreda, in the context of Ethiopian level. In this case, we are three or four graduated

students, in this case, especially in cooperative activities, dominated activities are there. Still now. For a long period of time, problems are there in that area. Especially in that profession.

- In...

Yes, In cooperative level. No knowhow, shortage of awareness, start from zonal to kebele level. In this case, this gap is very high. It is a crucial area, crucial activity. In that time, come to immediately break, especially in my site. Sometimes I get advice from woreda and zone. Just I connect, not only by my profession, I use my personal activity, personal creativity, creation. Just I use and immediately come to forward. And a lot of people get beneficiary from that activity. Just, I like my profession. Generally.

- And when you came in Yeyebito, your first task I think, how was it to come there and to found the situation as it was? The FC especially, but also in general, the participation of people, process of coming there?

Yes, that is a basic question. I come to that area not only for forest management and conservation, but for all, in generally. In generally, all cooperatives activity is where? Where are high problems, about what, what is the situation, which direction? What is the problem? Start the problem from the internal, the external situation, or from any other influence to that cooperative? Just immediately I contact this management body of the cooperatives. Any cooperatives, just they are not a lot in that time. Two cooperatives are there, I know. Three actually, one cooperative died, ye by decision of their members. And so two cooperatives are there. The first one, coffee cooperative. Again, the second one is Agama forest cooperative are there. Bulky and high problems are there in a time. Again, one Saving and Credit are there. In that time I gathered information from the

members, from the kebele cabinet bodies, again from the management of the cooperative body, again from the members, non-members. I gather information, carefully. Because, in that time, activities stopped, especially in the forest area, all activities become to stop. Really, hundred percent stop.

- Forest Cooperative?

The forest cooperative. No any other activities are there. Only three persons move, contact with the government, with NGO, with kebele. Especially not kebele, not good relations are there.

- Between kebele and FC?

Yes, no good relations between. Especially those three persons, only by personal motivation, without a principle of the cooperatives, they stay seven years above in authority. Again not good activities by the governmental situation. The woreda take by force the first office of the forest cooperative, woreda counselors immediately come by force, take out from this cooperatives. In that time all are disturbed. That is one case. The other case, by the investment of the Korean kingdom for construction of the road nearby. A lot of forest destruction, still now no payments are gain in that area.

- In that time, that was also a problem?

Ye, ye. Immediately, that road building company is already a long time a problem. Also, no payment still now, because the woreda sold that office from the forest cooperative to an investor. So externally it has a problem, that is one factor. Internally, they are very far from each other, it is very conflicated, disturb each other, members and committee, committee by itself, members by itself. They are separate, this is not a cooperative. By the way, generally, especially in the forest area, it's agreement between them. Between a government or body and from the cooperatives. That is the agreement.

But not real from the cooperative system, still now, especially in Agama area.

- *So, an agreement, not put in practice?*

Yes, not in practice. Again that agreement never became implemented, by internal problems. By internal communication problems. That is the main reason. In that time, after my gathering or assembling information, beyond, just orally I start to contact with each of the bodies, each of the members. In that time, the raising ideas, or generated ideas, focus only on the management body first.

- *You?*

Members, they focus on those questions. Most questions, most problems about the management body. Members and management body, not a good relation between them. Members raise their ideas, about change of this bad activity of the management body.

- *That was the main thing they raised when you asked information?*

Yes, we never gain information from our bodies they say. We elect them, after that they close that information. Any other information, income, outcome, revenue, expense, it is closed. Because, yearly or timely by a principle of cooperative, information need to be send to the members, explain the details for the members. Then the members again, they can react to the management body. That is a channel, but it is not there in that time. (...) As from my profession, they can pass an authority time of three years, if that management body maybe becomes strong or performed or profitable, they can continue up to three years. Maybe up to six, seven years if they are reelected. But they passed six years, without any evaluation, without any checking or follow-up of their activity. Without general assembly become to decision. They go on by themselves. In this case, there

are only three persons, chairman, secretary and cashier. That is the only activity in that time.

- *The chairman was..*

The chairman was A.F., I. and T. W. Only three. I ask for the other management body persons, it is impossible. In that time, I try to explain about the principle of the cooperative, management system, how we come to beneficiary, how we stand. How we use the law of cooperatives for creation by yourself, internally strong, and negotiate from other, block other, oppose other. First we start from the internal strength, we become strong, then the external situation becomes simple I say. In that time, they never accept me, my idea... But finally I get those problems from them. Their recordings system is not good, from their background, from the start of the cooperative activities. Income and..lose it is not balanced.

- *Expense?*

Income and lose that is one way. Revenue and expense is another. (...) Expense and revenue, there is a lack of awareness, and illiterate people. Again, income and lose, it is not balanced. That is dual, dual way in a cooperative. Lose and gain, by agreement, that is possible, by general assembly, they can take together a decision, from the management body. One watches others, others observes other body. In that time (...) good chain activity are there? If they become to lose, it is no problem. That is a law. When they start activity, in that time, two aims are there, lose and gain. That is no problem. But without any agreement, without negotiation, without detailed explanation, one body starts that activity and that enterprise or cooperative become to lose, it is impossible, just pass this by-law. Pass this by-law. In that time, that body asked by a governmental court. That is a rule. Without any negotiation. The same like

as negotiation, it's possible, no problem, come to lose, gain, no problem. That is a law.

*- Cooperative law?*

Cooperative law. That is a habitual truth. Everywhere, in every world. That is a truth. Also, revenue and expense were not recorded in documents. Without any documents, still now, six years or seven years since their activities started.

*- Six or seven years...*

Six years, I mean, ye I'm real. Six, seven years, I'm sure. Since I have been working there, two times I go in that area, two times it is checked by auditors, woreda auditors from the Cooperative promotion office, they come to audit, two times. They come to check that internal activities, each of the activities, how is the recording, what is the revenue, what is the income, what is the lose, what is the expense, what is the asset, capital, just like, liability.

(...) it has awareness in generally. And immediately from the members' ideas, again from my profession, immediately I call a general assembly. But in that time, the committee members block my idea, because of just I am a newcomer, they want something. Like sometimes NGO's are there, they get satisfaction like trainings, visiting another area. These advantages are only for the management body. Especially three persons, block my idea. Ten times, without disturbance, ten times I call, finally...

*- Ten times you call a meeting?*

I call a meeting, but nobody comes. Because those persons change my words or send message to the members. So in that time, I call personally each of the members. Personally, without any disturbance. Without any challenging, I call each of them, door to door I call. That is, I use finally my energy. Call, after I change their ideas, their mental brains, they come to that general assembly when I call.

Also, I call the kebele bodies, management body, DA's of natural forest. (...) I call all bodies, members, again management body, again kebele government, again DA, I call. And you together support me. Because of, maybe it has done error, they are elected persons, from the members, I don't know. Because I don't know the background of the persons, he is a good man, a good idea, maybe I don't know. Thus, in this case, I can only help by giving recommendations. Never I can participate myself, or raise my own ideas or block others, it is impossible in a cooperative law. (...) Thus, I explain detailed about the election of a new committee, how the election goes, how the writing is. One member, one vote, that is the final in the election time. They use, raise, reject, by their rights, by members' rights. And the other bodies become to look and observe, carefully. Because maybe in the election, they cheat, I don't know. In this case, I know after a stay of three months in the kebele. I check, internally there are some groups, things are there. I know. I pick out that problems and again resend to the members. Such kind of problems are there, I know. But I say to them: we come to here and change our environment. That is our aim. No any other, no any person go to prison or ask by governmental court. That is not our message. Lack of awareness are there, I know; not only for you I say. Me as well, I lack awareness. In my profession or in another case. So, let us exchange ideas and come together, we take correction. Maybe hard errors or corruption are there, that is a special case. That persons have to be asked by court, but the other, common errors, we change, for the future, we are change I say. Immediately all bodies accept my idea. Immediately without disturbance, I ask the management body to make a report for the general assembly, they need to explain their activities. But simply not

they are ready. Finally, just orally, in a speaking form they explain.

*- The management body.*

The management body. After that, immediately by permission of the law, without any cracking of the law, by rule of the cooperatives, just change that committee, by raising of the hand and election system. I use that law professionally and practically. Immediately change that body by other body. Because in that time, this forest, a lot of destruction appears. I was very disturbed, and I am lose of my life, I struggle up to end by the destruction of the forest. Anybody come to here in that time, especially in the dark, holiday, in a market day, you know, locally open market days are there weekly. Come to the forest by secret. (...) Nobody come to control that area, so by secretly come by car and carry to every place, Chechenda, Chenna, Misan, Tepi, Bonga, Wushwush.. all houses build by this Agama forest.

*- Did you observe this?*

Yes, I observed, ten times, hundred times I observe. You know, in that time I go alone, without any supportive person, up to that debt person, or error done person's house, I go. Personally I give a warning. Because I cry sometimes, you know, alone. I cry, why I say. Because of, this forest is life, that means not only society's. A lot of teams are there who don't respect the forest, but simply for the personal satisfaction, to solve their personal problems, they sell those trees. That is especially to build houses, that young tree, a good species, they destroy. In this case, ye, finally, one program we create, serious. That is a true story. I create one program, you know. One time in that area, a man is killed. A passenger, they robbed and killed. So, all government bodies come to here. And I contact a person with political position...

*- During your stay somebody was murdered?*

Ye. Robbery, Yes! That is true. In that time, he comes from Misan, I don't know, he's a politically high position person, and he was killed by unknown body. That is robbery. In that time, the community is collected to pick out that robbery they say. Form the police office, from the governmental, from different type of political positions come to collect the society. In that time, I also have a governmental position, so immediately I come to participate in their activity. Day and night I am together, pick out that... problems.

*- Robbery?*

Not only that robbery, problems. Any bad activity in the community, especially I focus on the forest destruction and other cases of stealing, like cattle thieves. So any other bad activity in society, we pick out, immediately I pick out together with a police man. Together talked with all people and asked what the problems were (...) seriously, detailed, (...) After that, I call separate groups of people, by iddir system. Who goes in the night, who is a drunk person, who always goes out without taking care of his garden activity, who goes to other place and stay for a long time, stay and come, just disturbs the society's activity, who. By iddir, that is a local, a cultural in Ethiopia area, especially iddir, means, from your observation, it is serious. Where, what have you done, people know, and what type of activity have you done. Your activity, I know, my activity you know. That is an iddir. It is a good cultural communication. (...) Each of the iddirs, I go to give advice, together. Because of I am a body from the government, again from the society. And then just, I relate sometimes, seventy-five percent, I relate the discussion to the forest destruction. I use my internal force, my internal force. Because without this technique, it is very difficult. Because a lot of people stay here for two years, or three years and use that forest. Sometimes, some groups

connect the management body. You know, by this case, high destruction always appear. (...) By relatives, by persons that they know, they communicate, together eating, together drinking.. You know, friendly, just they are connect. Destruction, they know it happens, but don't pick out that problems. High gap are there. In this case, immediately in that creation time, we pick out from the management body, especially one person, he is powerful, also people nearest of the forest, especially young people, supported by that main destruction person, support persons are there in that area especially from the society. Again we pick out, up to twenty persons pick out from the iddirs.

- *You?*

No, not me, I participate by indirect. Directly I use the iddir. The iddir members know, for me unknown, that case unknown, again kebele by itself unknown, that information true. Because we don't have evidence, that is a great problem. In this case, I contact somebody, responsibility body, political. I contact that, that forest is already destroyed by these persons I say to that body, please let them stay for some weeks. Otherwise difficult I say. And up to twenty days they needed to stay in the police station.

- *All those persons?*

All those persons, all twenty persons. All twenty persons. Especially destruction persons. Destruction only by them. That is true, universal truth. Community by itself know. Immediately, just I, fighting, on a time, this is a battle place for me, Yeyebito site for me.

- *And when those people went to prison, the management body was still not changed by a new election?*

No change, yes. No change yes. No change, because before that event happened, when I say come on, and together we discuss and

maybe solve our problem I say. It's never, you come from where they say. We want the NGO, we are create by NGO, who is government, who is you they say.

- *So during this first assembly you mentioned before, with the DA and so on, the members agreed but nothing happened afterwards?*

Nothing changed in that time. First the forest management DA are there, but he cannot do such kind of technique. You know, from me, he came first to this area, staid for a long period, but when he calls meeting, always he tries [clapping hands]. In this case, he doesn't solve anything. After that, I go to that area start and he become to follow me (... ) After that, go to the police station, come to prison, take decision, immediately, any other destruction on the forest, completely silent. Still now, still now, hundred percent immediately silent. In that time, I become a strong man, a strength man, not only by my profession, by internally, by mentally, I am a free man. Immediately, just after my struggle, I gain beneficiary, meaning brain satisfaction. I get satisfaction from this activity. They after twenty days become silently, just, I explain for them, and they accept my idea. Finally become to, yes you are right. I want, because of we have a lack of awareness, lack of information, shortage of knowledge. By this case we have done a mistake, now just, excuse me they say. Peacefully, now we go to our activity.

- *Twenty persons, do I know somebody from them?*

Yes, from the members, you know, a lot of people, also from the members' family. From neighbours, from the indigenous, somebody from the indigenous family. Not all twenty become to destroy that forest, never. But indirectly, they participate, just give money, pay money and that person goes back to Wushwush [neighbouring town], maybe

Bonga. In Bonga, he waits, and that house material come to there. (...) Again, he goes to Wushi [neighbouring kebele], again pay for the labour, yes indirectly. After this detailed gathering information, I catch up each of the persons, secretly I write their names, put on my notebook. After that, they were picked out from the society, check it. Check it immediately, Just we take decision. (...) Again, two times I go to their house, because of this forest is not only yours, not only mine. The human beings' life. So I struggle up to lose of my life. I never collapse, I never wait anybody. Kebele management, woreda court, I never wait I say. Immediately you and me kill each of them, here. Because it is not only my profession, it is my life, your life. But maybe you have a lack of information about the forest, only use for personally. So utilization system itself are there. We negotiate, we talk about, discuss about. How, I use you say, ask me. And my profession permitted up to my ability, I explain for you. Otherwise, maybe it is a heavy question, I send to the zone. We gain more information about this forest management, conservation and utilization system. Otherwise, why, simply you alone, thinking or alone struggle for your satisfaction I say. Immediately they come to regret and change their mind, you know, personally change. Again those persons come the other day. In supportive form, supportive form that person. And finally, after one year, they are my best friends. Now they are more from awareness from me. They are more, more, more accept my idea. From any other. From first my friends, from the first my office, now they are my supportives, my heart. You know that societies. After that I strengthen more and create other cooperative. Still now, that kebele especially, in one kebele, Yeyebito kebele, five cooperatives created by me. Only by me. Free and resettled, or readjust. One,

forest cooperative, two, coffee cooperative, three saving and credit, four consumer cooperative, five, honey cooperative. Five cooperatives are there. Still now are there. It is more, especially saving and credit, they gain beneficiaries, members' satisfaction now fulfill. Seventy five percent fulfill.

- *And how did you find the people if you establish a new cooperative. How did you approach to establish the committees and the cooperatives?*

My approach, not directly I use my profession, not accept in society. Just it is very far from a principle or from a science or modern activity. A lot of times, impose that culture. Impose a culture, that our society, I know. Because my family, my society, my body. So, it has a high problem, I never pass to another body, from the woreda or any other body. Because that problem is mine, mine problem again mine. In this case, I think in myself.

- *Society says..*

Society says ye. I think in my brain, that problem is mine or ours. In this case, partially I am a profession person. Just I create, as a situational of that society, approach. First I use what approach? I give prestige or good attitude for the society. I give a good feeling, a good greatness, just simply relaxed, as an orally approach. (...) First I touch each of the societies [persons] and when they have a good awareness, I never lose my brain or my energy. Because they partially know for the future, for the change. That is, ye, I think about here, no matter, no problem about this, but if he has a little of awareness, I use my internal force partially. Especially I follow-up, I give awareness for nothing about this information about this cooperative system. You know, without cooperative system, one area, one environment, one country come to wait change, without entrepreneur, without creative, one country, one society become to

wait change, nothing. That is the general situation, I explain, detailed, starting from examples. Just our society wants, from talking, practically. In that time always give attention for you, follow you.

- *Practically you...*

Practically, main problem is that. Only by your talking, never give attention for your talking. It's not, little, attention give. (...) Sometimes, high gap are there, I know. Maybe I can't write, reading and just like. From governmental workers, especially DA, they know society, which one is the performed DA, or performed workers. By itself, from their experience, know. Form your talent, form your explanation, from your thinking in the mind. From the treating, from your respect for the position of the eldest, medium, young. Because of equal of my age are there. From me. Again the medium. Again the eldest. Just I separate this society. And pick out from this, a lot of people [for the establishment of the cooperatives]. In that time, I start in a meeting system. Only by my own program I call. I call by my program. Negotiate with them, without any person, political situation, participation or discrimination. After that, again for the personal, my internal feeling, internal target. Where, by what purpose I want them? Immediately, I contact door to door, I explain. In a working activity I go together participate. By a joking form, relax, that person mind, just orally, change to the modern. From this problem, from your disturbance, economically, politically or socially, you will become strong. You know, it is a good. For your health, your family's education. It is a main and good activity for the future. Again I explain from a developing and developed country. From developed, our again, become to, from our Ethiopian context. Not developed. More situations are there. I explain, give examples. From a kebele, from

region to region, I give information about. Detailly. In that time, they are surprised by my activity. Without any persons, without any body know, only by my negotiation, only my contact, we discuss. We are together, settle, after that, immediately by my own cost, their problem, chain from the woreda, zone. Immediately by a short time, I finished and become to just, settle. Just my talking change to implement. They are very surprised. And still now, it is a good activity for these 5 or 6 cooperatives. They are a good acceptance are there. Still now any members not disturbed by the payment. Especially in the coffee cooperative. I come to together union. Personally to check information, gather information that problem solve by negation system. Friendly. Again, the honey cooperative the same like, I come to negotiate, internally. They accept mine activity by the way. In this case, now, more or less good. But this again continue. Maybe I struggle up to quarter. For the next [facilitator] again the same like. And the next, again the same like. Finally, the community become to strong and increase their income. I'm really, I have a hope for the future. Finally, they is a good, forest conservation and management system. More or less, from this crack, phase out of Farm Africa. And after coming, in between, high gap are there in the forest cooperative history. The first one in that time. I am very disturbed in that time. So finally I am very satisfied. Because of, finally stop of destruction, any human destruction. Today it is very good, very good, from my observation only, that is the judgment of my brain. In this case, I am very satisfied. Finally, in that area, the community touch me, my idea, touch me. Because, he talks about for this locality, no any other message they say. So we are follow they say. One person comes to contribute one share, especially in saving and credit, I am

satisfied. Finally I am very surprised in my society. Because of I treat their brain, again finally they treat my brain. First we very fear his activity, he is very dangerous we say. But now, stand and ask me. Stand and ask me, excuse me they say. No problem I say. Because of you are only focusing on personal satisfaction. Now, we are, not only from your talking, from our practically, just here is the money. Now I get, I borrowed 5000 birr from the saving and credit. Here, that is your talking. In that time I am your enemy, I know, I explain for a lot of people. The facilitator is dangerous, The facilitator is strong, The facilitator is hardest they say. For a lot of people I explain. But finally your idea I touch and pay. I pay share, one share, thousand birr. Urea and DAP, two hundred birr, but I never pay that, still now he say. From a society middle, alone stand and stop.

*- Urea and DAP*

I never believe by urea and DAP. We pay two hundred for one quarter of hectare. Now I pay thousand for you, only. That mean, in my brain, internally I regret. I change by your story. That what I explained is false. You are carefully, silently, anybody come to talk about disturb your mind. use by your professionally, technically, and from all our society, you alone won. We believe. Just we pay thousand. Collect and again our money, take an in account of the bank from saving and credit. Again from an union. I go to I hear from your back, We believe The facilitator they say in a union. That mean that is a great name. You take money, just distribute, here is five thousand birr, now I take. So I am a false man; you are a right man. Never, please, please, again and again, don't go to another site. Stay with us up to two or three year and together we change our environment they say, you know. This is my story.

*- And for the FC, you changed the first management committee. So how did the election go?*

First, election by itself, first information I send to the kebele.

*- That you wanted to change the committee.*

Ye.

*- And this is an order from the woreda?*

Order, not from the woreda. I wanted order from the woreda. Because that is my profession. No anybody become to participate, become to disturb, mean it is impossible. Because of, he's a rule. This is a rule, this is the activity. Become to a match, ok we continue. Become to a crack, or high gap are there between? It has a special case, well, no problem, to change the committee. For more activity, it has a problem, it has a gap? No problem, we wait and come to improve; no problem. Sometimes, not stay up to three years that management committee. After one year, it needs change. Because if they are weak, bankruptcy comes to that enterprise or cooperative, run business come to fail? Immediately change in one year. The same like. Evaluation from the management committee and members, yearly. And again, the accounting system become to closed, closed account, in June, yearly in June.

*- Each year?*

Ye, each year that is a common. By this case, I explain for the members and committees. I call, again information I send to the management body and the kebele, especially any cooperative management starting in activity, it is impossible I say, for the kebele. Because at governmental position, kebele manages all activity, in kebele situation, all activity. From all community, all enterprise, all activity, that is possible I know. That is a political position. So I give information to the kebele. Immediately write and send letter to the management committee of the

cooperative, I say. That is an order. They immediately by orally send. And immediately stop their [committee's] activity. Any training, any activity, impossible, without rule. First we give feeling to our rules, after that we are success. Otherwise, without rule, without plan, just as a blind, the same as a blind. Become to fall and attack by their body. The same like you know. By this case, they believe and come to change that management body. (...)

*- And by people raising their hands?*

Yes, that is a real. Not only for the recommendation. Maybe from some bodies, challenged. This is a kebele chairman, this is a manager, this is DA, again (...) They maybe cheat, it is impossible, because the chairman, I talk about and explain this cooperative law. By this, this this situation. You want that person? You raise your hands. One member, one vote. So this person we want. This person's background, I don't know. You know your community I say. Especially for the members, you know, without fear, without any disturbance, without any person influence, use your right I say. Otherwise, tomorrow you explain any direction, it is not good. Because, now you think The facilitator is a stolen or thief person? That is true? Just you say. And for the future you adapt his word. By any body you are imposed. By a cooperative rule, become to a kebele chairman, here. Impose your idea? Immediately raise your hand. Just say, The facilitator's without a rule, The facilitator say, the same like. Just you raise and you pick out. Otherwise, who is coming to solve our problems? Our problems solved by us. Don't wait anybody. This is a rule. Just for forever, maybe I live here or go to another area. Go on by yourself, your performance, your strength, and you struggle for the beneficiary of the activity I say. Immediately they become

strong and elect that seven persons. Immediately we take appointment. Immediately weekly Monday, we start this eu or stay two years and above. This stopping activity. Again readjust and renew our activity. That forest management and controlling system. Just we are catalyze.

*- And just, when those seven people are chosen, then among themselves they chose who is going to take which position of the management committee?*

Ye. Again in that time. In that time, immediately just you are vice, this is storekeeper, this is secretary, this is cashier. And then they explain for the general assembly. This is chairman, here is chairman, mister x is, mister y is, mister q, mister o.. just explain immediately (...) in that election time, that management committee, in a locally, families are there, separation families are there from the nation and nationalities, are there in that time. Three bodies are there, three families. Manja family by itself, Kambata family, Kaffa family, Oromo family. Again females. Female and Manja, without any challenge, pass that permanent member. Without any challenge. By full of vote. By full of raising hand. Female and Manja. That is a common. From Manja, one is pass, from female one is pass for permanent member. Again, the Kambata, the same like. Because of, a little society.

*- So who is the Manja then as permanent member from the FC?*

Haile Mariam, the eldest one, but he never comes to start that activity, because I never come to that area he say. I have a problem he says, just like. But from the separation, we use Abeto. (...) He lives in Yeyebito, next to G., the short way to B., just one time, farming area are there. Asham asham we say.

*- How do you see the relation between you and the DA and your influence on the community?*

In that time or now?

*- In that time and still now.*

Ye, I don't know. First I come to that area... he's a manager, but I never wait his force, or attention, don't matter about. Don't care about, I give attention for your situation. Because of, only I run or struggle for my program. My schedules, I use day and night. Not only in a day, I use night. But after finishing my program, again create other position, other schedules create. In that time, just we are, from a DA or from the community. Especially from a DA, we start in the coffee cooperative. Programs are there in that time. They are weak. In a coffee, in a forest [cooperative]. Simply, by lack of awareness, he becomes together activity with management committee. It is impossible. Not him, also for me it is impossible. For mine profession, it is impossible. Because of I give direction. I explain direction for the cooperatives, as a principle. Not only me, kebele chairman, DA, again facilitator. I never put my signature, still now, from your observation, I never participate by their activity. But I give direction. First the government asks me if a cooperative fails, mine, immediately reject or take decision about me. From woreda or zone. But I follow-up, check, what are you doing? Your program is what? Again, I create together, activity for here, here, by this direction you go on. This I give order or command, by practically. In that time, before I come, he stayed here for some months, in this case he participates and gives order, the same like as the kebele cabinet. He participates, gives order, warning, just you know. Just actively. By not, hardly, by not good, but activity, simply he strong shows for them. By strong give order, command, you know, without... (...) it is dangerous for him.

But he hasn't awareness about this management or talented activity about this cooperative system. For a long period of time, no facilitator are there. Especially lack of facilitators. In this case, anybody come to participate, anybody come to dissolve that cooperative, by any means they are disturbed, always disturbed that cooperative activity. The same like as the DA, from a political person, again come from woreda, it is not awareness about the cooperative. What is a cooperative they say. Personal collection and their business run. Without kebele know, anybody's movement is impossible he say. Still now, that is, between DA and me, that is a challenged word. Without kebele know, any activity is impossible he say.

*- Because he is a political person*

That political person, he accepts, he's a relation to contact EPRDF information. Bureaus contact him daily. He knows that words, use that words. I know. In this case, cooperative allowance in a world, international cooperative law, by this way, it is impossible. Not K. [DA], woreda president become to participate, it is impossible. He knows, but become to touch, that president come to that area. He's without awareness such kind of activities occur in that area and dissolve. And I ask the cooperative, who has done that error I say. Ha, governmental workers, because he is powerful, he is from a government, possible they say. Again! Not only DA, K. is a challenge for me. By itself, the cooperative management committee. They are again lack of awareness. The same like of cooperatives, the same like of others. Oow, Other DA's are there, but only K. imposes. In that time I go to K., just such kind of activity is not good I say. Because of maybe you haven't information about cooperatives. That is by the way not your information. But by supportive of your profession, possible. That is common.

Not only you come to here, aim, my purpose, the same like you. Our target is the same, but professionally it is different. But maybe I support you by my situation. Again you support me by your situation. Friendly. Otherwise detailly, deeply by any activity, this is your profession, here, your profession reject by me, that is not good. That is not good activity I say. So, just follow your profession, give support for the community, that is again mine, theirs. Five are there in this area, governmental position workers. We are here.

- *Five?*

Yes, in a time, five workers are there from a government. Three DA's, one facilitator and one veterinary. In this case, so why do you interfere always? Maybe you believe by a power of politician situation. I know, but they don't know. Maybe by simply one word, I give you advice. After that I never care about you carefully move in the society. Because our aim is one, change this environment. Just from your profession, again mine profession, all are become to one word only, change this environment. That is my aim. Without this activity, maybe use your political situation or other activity. And that come to disturb this cooperative, or my mind or other profession man. It is dangerous for you I say, seriously, I take about here. Why do you say he says. So, take care I say. I start my activity (...). On the other hand, the committee says, he [DA] talks about dangerous word, stupid word, because we are disturbed, we never go that office. And K.'s word, task that is not our task, they say. Again management body, again come to other activity. Well, I say, his aim is good, but maybe that activity, without kebele known, this activity is not good. Because I change his word into a good position for them. For the management body of the cooperatives. Because of he is a governmental worker, maybe he's done an error, maybe he ask from

anybody. So in this case, sometimes from that, maybe he thinks in his brain, that. Again, ninety percent lack of awareness about cooperatives, I say. Not only for him, but for whole woreda I say. Principle by itself, now, slowly comes to the part of society. In this case by a lack of information, (...) I ask, excuse me he say. In that time, laugh and detailly he comes to discuss about cooperatives. Again refresh their mind and still now. We pass by practically, from the K.'s activity. Cooperative activity become to change, you know. In this time, become to dominate you know. As K. calls meeting, society never come, just cooperative calling, immediately become to participant [laughing]. I jump one step form K.'s plan. That always disturbs his mind. (...)

**“that is my relative, that is another case, this is my task, a community situation”**

First I check documentation of the cooperative. Because by a lot people, they have a team. One team are there, I know, especially around the street, they are a team. The other society says that that team has no performance they say. By the street settled societies. A lot of societies, we know, especially in a young age. Dominate the society.

- *By their idea?*

By their activities, practically, dominate. Some groups are there, done error. Some groups dominate, they are connected by relative. In this case, they are closed activity. The same like as some skilled teams, football team sometimes. They dominate by income system. For example, the coffee cooperative, they have a team. (...) Society by itself, dominated societies, mediums and acceptance societies are there. That medium persons become to connect each of them and take from the cooperative money, by themselves, pick out and take for the personal satisfaction. From

the five thousand up to sixteen thousand birr. (...) In that time, I come to that area from the woreda. I start that activity and check the documents. A lot of people from the street come to me and say, O The facilitator, just our cooperative they are stolen, they are group, in this case, this case, they say. (...) Always come to cry for me, and I observe. They are true or false? I debt by myself. And slowly I check if that is true. O my goodness I say. My goodness. Immediately I call the management body and they come to sit. Discussion, detailly, three, four days. Afternoon. Full of one week of discussion, come to negotiate. Idea conflicts are there. We exchange greeting and peace, we create peace. Immediately together start the work and you are turn, this is a receivable account, turn [that money] to the account. Not is a good. The society is disturbed. Members by itself disturbed. Without this money come to receiving, it is difficult I say.

*- Also the FC?*

The same like FC, the same like coffee cooperative. From your question, some societies don't appreciate me. The same like as DA. I don't work by personal connection or by personal satisfaction. But by activities of the working. Just you know, you go to forward. Maybe from any direction, from your right side, left side come challenges. (...) After that, that is evidence from their activities. practically implement. I immediately start suing in the woreda, immediately come to take, it has evidence, immediately take decision. All payments, that money comes to the account, in the cooperatives account. In that time, they appreciate. From the woreda, from any political situation, from anybody. A lot of, seventy five percent from the society appreciate, from the members. All of appreciate by my activity. In that time, alone, not only the DA, but also these error or corruption persons, by itself it's enemy. Clear

enemy for me in that time. One person means, ten to fifteen thousand return you know. Same like H.M.. My relative. Three thousand two hundred sixteen birr and 10 cent return immediately. In that time I am strong. Seriously. Immediately suing I start for H.M. I say. That is my relative, that is another case. This is a task, a community situation. This is not a good, it's a bad activity I say. (...) Immediately next to my activity of the FC. First, the FC become to stop that destruction, I am satisfied, I am strong and immediately that energy is use again for the coffee cooperative. The coffee cooperative again become to normally closed. Normally, ye. In this case, challenges maybe from that corner. Otherwise, personally, I never resist, these are my friends. The same like as governmental workers. Friendly, I love you, I love him, but maybe his [the DA] feeling, internally I don't know. Just he and me, we are together, give supportive for the community. Otherwise, detailly or deeply or from my background or from his background, I never contact, by any means. Maybe from that situation, he's defined maybe my idea, I don't know the direction. But he struggle his profession. The same like, I struggle my profession. Our contribution only use, for change of that society. Otherwise no any other message.

*- And you said, a lot of money have to pay money back to the FC. Are all these people relatives from the management body (...)?*

Sometimes such kind of activities maybe are there. They use cooperative systems. Just you get benefits by your participation, your contribution. You know, you bought two or three shares? Your benefit not equal to the buyer of one share. Again by your participation, a lot gain from others, minus or minimize participation person. By this situation, without any missing or absent, they are participation members, immediately get

that money, sheep or hen or any supportive items from Farm Africa. You are again missed person, never get. By this case. First, for the motivators, the always participants, the first level, distribute for them. After that, come to the second, the same like as a systematically, distribute for all. By this situation. Again sometimes, ye, in our Ethiopian context, or in our local context, sometimes relatives are ye, occurs, ye that is a common.

**“this is not NGO style you know”**

*- I talked with the people of Nabu, they said that there was an extensive program to discuss with the community (...) but a lot of people say they don't have any information. So I was wondering about your role and information about this Nabu. Did they come and organized meetings (...)?*

Ye, thank you. Generally Nabu enterprise or this NGO activity, it is important for the conservation of the forest. I share their idea. But just I opposed one time and now they are continue to oppose me. Because without coordination, without negotiation, without discussion, they start activity. Especially from the community, the nearest society. We are challenge but our project here, the society here. It's a neighbor. Society and forest, is a neighbor. They are together, the same like, forest and this society, the same like, in a colour, in a situation, in a story. Again in any other activity, the same like, forest and forest related people or society. The same like, no any other definition by my interpretation. In this case, they come to start activity, in that time, I didn't live in this area. Only when I come back from the university I hear about their activity. They never started from the forest [cooperative] first. First contact for the kebele management body and distribution of [fuel saving] ovens. First we discuss and visiting form, immediately they go to contact

the natural forest DA. Immediately contact the DA. I leave after that.

*- That were the Nabu coordinators?*

Coordinators of Nabu. Immediately we want K. they say. Always. K. DA. Contact K. DA and visit that forest cooperative nursery. Nursery settled by us. Our cooperative. And they go and visit. What is the problem? What is the reason I say? We have a program, we have a project, so we will together start our activity with the cooperative they say. So cooperative together, is good I say. Again my sites are a lot and I go to other site. Immediately they go to start somebody, from [FC] management body, I don't know. Those activities they explain for them by orally. Immediately they negotiate and show a planting area, for the Nabu. The members become to, the same like as... By the way, the members appreciate by Farm Africa's activity, they interpret the same like for Nabu. Yes, support comes to here, they say. Thus, all members come together and start, prepare the nursery. Together start and after that the members make the nursery area ready. After that, we don't want, them [members]. Because of, we have a capital. Enough capital are there. In this time, we settled our nursery, finally maybe if we want, yes we call them. Otherwise no you are not important they [Nabu rangers] say. Immediately disturb and all members go to their house. I come to that kebele again by my program. The members raise their ideas for me. Ok, without.... And I call the chairman of management body and ask him: what is the problem of cooperative and Nabu activity? What is the problem, what is the negotiation? And by what case they come in this boundary forest area, they come to start their activity I say. Just he explains, especially the chairman, explain about this. Other committee members never hear. Uhu. Have you evidence I say. No I haven't evidence, but by orally. Orally mean, by

personally negotiation. (...) O it is impossible, you have done a mistake I say. It is never. First they have a program, project. Together we negotiate, agreement, we are supportive, again they support us. By labour, by activity, participation, conservation we participate. Again they by financially, by skilled form. Otherwise it is not effective. For them, again for the cooperative. Without ownership, without feeling, without thinking of asset, then finally again [forest] destruction. Only. Because of why, always members wait income. That is true. Why you do such kind of activity, I say. Immediately I push,... that is again the second challenge for the DA and me. That is the main challenge now, because of, maybe internally, payment are there I know. I know, that is a common. Maybe he thinks, the facilitator is strong, the same like as yesterday, he breaks and Nabu become to fail or leave from my site and that payment become to absent. So focus on that. But that is not my idea. Cooperation it is good I say. Without cooperation.. by itself what is the target of NGO? NGO, not the same like as political situation. This is the same like as political situation. NGO by itself, together the body of the society. Support of the society. That means, together, what are the crucial problems. First detailed research about the members living condition, you know. I am sorry now, again and again, I am sorry it is not good, by itself their activity. I know that some agents are there, they negotiated with me. Internally contact from somebody, from the rangers, I don't know their name. The DA's, contact immediately by some body. In that time, I raise my hand. Because I want, I want hundred percent, I want support, not only for society, the NGO come to that area, support again for me, again they are support. From my talking they implement practically. In that time, I appreciate hundred percent by Nabu

activity, by Farm Africa activity. The same like, from any other NGO. But they changed my history by internally feeling or internally definition, immediately. The facilitator challenges this Nabu activity they say. I never challenged. From theirs, I know detailly from Nabu activity, detailly I know. But Nabu by itself, why does it not give respect or feeling to the society? It never gives feeling about or care about society. (...) But I say, you are come on and I go to you and you come to me. And we together do a lot of activities. For the future, not only for this story, for the next generation, our settled document, use for the next generation. Next generation start here, again more create or more entrepreneur society, for the future. So if we are close without document, we start our activity, means, what? What is the meaning of that activity? For that, that is a NGO, NGO organization. Not only sole enterprise. Because he [Nabu] is a great, famous. Why just impose? Believe by their financially or by their knowledge? Without community, without society, without locally, without socially, personal knowledge. Valueless. So I'm disturbed. Still now, not a good relation about DA and me. Nabu activity workers, by itself all are my friends. Just I ask, I am not opposed, very appreciate by their activity, but no cooperation activity about the Nabu activity, and the same like as kebele and the cooperative. Again, no cooperation activities are there, that is a true.

*- But you don't have any information about that 15 days meeting where Nabu workers worked together with the community and explained about their aims? (...)*

For the Nabu? Where is that activity done? Never, by them, they come only to the street, they contact and finish the street.

*- So you don't...*

Anybody come to this cooperative office. Without cooperative office, without rules, without, I explain by-laws for them. They don't know about by-laws. M., those strangers, DA's, they not know about this information about the by-laws. Ye! They not know. So he comes to ask the management body. Management body, they come to contact me. Otherwise, they contact to chairman, leader of the cooperative, that chairman calls management body. We first discuss about, officially, we have office. So the cooperative has office! They come to simply as the road, under tree, just explain, ye you are title of cooperative what, ye I am secretary. Ye, come on, just we are start here, here, here. Just we are maybe oppose, immediately we are reject, they say. This is not NGO style, you know.

- *So but, other information says that there was a meeting of 15 days with the community and people of the kebele and there was a research and so on, like resource mapping of Agama forest and so on. But you don't have information that this has happened?*

A map? Change name?

- *Yes, like a meeting of 15 days...*

Where, where?

- *In Yeyebito..*

Fifty days?

*Fifteen days. Like Farm Afirca when they came, they also called a meeting and discussed about the project (...). So Nabu when they came...*

Fifteen days meeting from whom, whom to whom?

- *Nabu people..*

Nabu from whom? From whom?

- *Nabu rangers and the community, just..*

Which one community?

- *Yeyebito.*

So who said?

- *Somebody from Nabu.*

I don't know. That is a stranger word for me.

- *You don't...*

That mean, by itself that is possible. I explain about Nabu from cooperative relation. That is a political situation, I don't know. They explain a lot.

- *But you were not present for example?*

I don't know. They are, connect, I struggle for this activity for the forest of the cooperative map area. That is my problem. They come to start from communication from anybody. Come to start by force in the activity of the forest area, it is impossible, still now. Today, they have done a mistake, uses force, hundred percent. By themselves, calls his body, just I know you, come on they have work, they have budget, you know. They pay, I pay this money. You are come to guard, here, come to just this activity, here seedling, just activity, here, here. You know, just secretly by telephone. That is activity you know. Still now, always I struggle, for the future, maybe I write a letter. It is very error you know. Any other supervision, supervision by itself. Again all are activities by themselves, only without check up, run by themselves, dominate the cooperatives, and they are connect from the, fifty days, twenty days! From whom, that area is whom? Why from the kebele's place are there in the garden, why you settle their nursery beyond the kebele's office? They are community connect, which one community become to connect? From your interview, maybe, from your interview, anybody become to, we are twenty days, thirty days we negotiate from the society. Which one society has time to come fifteen days? By which day? It is very error, maybe ten persons, they contact one day, change to fifteen days. So that is false, hundred percent. I am sorry, you know. This is cooperative area, means, this is a case for the court. Just I, I start suing, I have evidence. Or I will, I know. Sometimes, always I struggle, that is not good for me I say and I stop. I never want that story. Because of the conservation

of the forest. That is a continue. Just. Otherwise, as a cooperative law, they become to start by force activity. We negotiate from a community, which one is a community? Cooperative community? Or local community? Or village community? Or they want, secretly they call by telephone, for that workers for their place, call under the three. Maybe harvest the word, the ideas and we negotiate with community they say, I don't know. (...)

**“that is an universal truth”**

By the way, our situation, maybe, it's a common, not only by this activity. Take from [the forest cooperative] by force, immediately, in ten minutes, all of management body are present, immediately by kebele force. Woreda comes to here, immediately, president comes by order from the other body. Immediately for ten minutes, twenty minutes. Immediately take it by kebele military. Immediately catch up. I wait you, you again wait other persons, wait management body. After that they take the office they say. In that time, just our office, why from us, this is our asset, the government send for us. All of us become loud. But who is here? The same like as a Nabu activity, you know. In that time, that office become to closed. Our material, documents, any official...

*- The forest cooperative office?*

The forest office! (...) Immediately by force, sell it to investors. I go to struggle hundred percent times, I lose my brain. After that, material we get from this Ethio-Libia. By my own, just I go one day to prison, that is a peace area, prison, sometimes you know. I struggle...

*- You went to prison?*

Because of I have done by force alone. Because of that materials are locked up in that office. No any other pen, no any other document, under tree, we sit, always we simply talk. Without any information, without any recording. So in that time, we

immediately start building another office, just material bought. Maybe, I go to prison, ask me please. Otherwise, I come to free or come to strong and finally my ideas are accept by responsibility body, just we are together live here I say, by angry word, because I am disturbed. By their activity start building and immediately we are start and finish our office. Now start again, first clearly and smoothly, become to finishing and I call the members. (...) I give letter, write, type of material, price. And I adjust, written form, a document. And by stamp of cooperative, I give for the responsibility bodies and count one, two, three material. Just members go to my office I say. Just by my own, without anybody calling. Any kebele or from woreda, from zone, I don't want. Because, I am very, in that time, I'm not normal person, you know. By their, why the woreda president come to by force, such kind of activities done, mean, what? In that time I live in a time, up to lose of my life, I struggle, up to lose of my life or leaved out from the governmental workers for the future. Because nobody from the responsibility bodies come to ask for this cooperative management body. They are illiterate! Thus, immediately controlled by other bodies.

*- Is that a problem, also in court, that the farmers are illiterate, for example in court cases of forest destruction when they have to go to court?*

Ye, the same like. Because of the woreda position, that is a political power. Immediately by telephone, give order you know. That is dangerous. Just from any other in Ethiopian channel, it is very difficult. Because orders, sometimes, court takes from that, that power. You know. That is a main challenge for all. For all. In this case, ye, we take our material [out of that office], in that time pick out, especially I., that manual take by himself, his house. Again the balance of measuring weight. Again

take by himself, again big chair, two, three chair take his house and I don't know he says. We don't struggle by force. I am not a ring of man, or boxer. But technically, slowly, first we protect our right, just our material use, still now. (...) The Nabu, I am not opposing. If their activities, become to coordinate, I appreciate, it is good I say. Without coordination, their activity I do not accept. Still now, I don't accept in my brain. Because of not good. I know that area, I can give support for them, again more support give for me. We are together, chain and I explain more. I live in that area. More explain for the cooperative members, management body and for the future security of the forest it is good. But they are, you know just sinnerity, you know, not good. (...) They use a force. That is an universal truth.

- *Who uses force?*

A Nabu. Nabu workers, it is used a, that is real and real.

**"because, all societies think about the court, check it your pockets"**

- *And have you participated in court cases, like actually going to the woreda and hearing the questions they ask etc..*

Around Nabu?

- *Around forest destruction.*

Forest destruction, yee, oew, orally, a lot of times I go to participate. Without my participation, any activity not become to success. (...)

- *So practically how does it happen? (...). And they have to go several times to answer questions from the judge and advocates?*

Advocate and judge. Advocate or librarian, librarian you know. Not advocate. Ye, librarian. That is eu... sometimes, that is, from our governmental policy or sometimes personal attitude differs from one to another.

Especially in a court area , in Ethiopian situation. It is a corruption centre.

- *Court?*

Yes, corruption centre. That is, a wealthy, judge mean that is a wealthy person, by corruption. That is one big centre, is a corruption centre, means, it's a court area. Or librarian, this advocate. In this case, because all societies become to where? To one channel only, pass. Any other person has to pass one channel, that channel is the court area. Governmental here is. Law creator at the top level. That is a juridical person. (...) That is the channel. All law constitution here, drafting, define, implement. Law. In the governmental level, everywhere, every country. Drafting the law, define, implement. This is the high level, federal level. From a regional level or between them, here, and become to finally implement. Implement place where? Court and police. That is the final, rule become to implement. Mean, court and police. That is the general definition. The final working or implement in that area. In this case, all, president had done mistake, come to pass by what channel? This court channel. Court channel means, implement area. Again, me, I done error, I am profession person, I done error in my profession? Come to pass by this way. Only this channel, this channel is a narrow channel. Court never asked by anybody. Court never asked by any other court. Any higher court. Not court asked by any forum. Immediately his idea changed, and that decision of court or judge, immediately reject, without any criteria. He's not correct, maybe he takes decision ten years. He's done a mistake, I done a mistake, I give decision from the judge, ten years. I ask my suing document, and go to higher level. That higher level, I go to simply not by a paper. A lot of money I give for the judge, indirectly, by my relative, my friend, by other case. I give a lot of money for him.

Immediately he speaks out as a definition of law system. Again create, he is a known person, especially about the law system. How to pass from your crime done or mistake. From your corruption, change that law judge direction. Change to the other, give definition. Immediately without any other criteria, freely I go to my house, you know. So, in this case, anything comes to change. (...) Otherwise, you carefully come to your suing. Especially, carefully, maybe one judge becomes to change his direction. You ask your document, go to the other position, become to lock, well. This judge become to ask by other means. You contact one person, that judge means other case. You are talented person, otherwise it is dangerous in a Ethiopian situation. Because of, all societies think, about the court start to sue me. Check it your pockets. Without your pockets, start suing, fail out, immediately. Immediately fail. So by this situation...

*- So this is difficult for the FC*

Yes always. That is the problem. That is the problem, I know. But I never explain such kind of secrets, I mean, it is heaviest. But sometimes, I participate, I start, I know. Sometimes. But the performance of the person that needs to start suing. Their [FC] performance by itself. Their handling of information, handling of witnesses. You know. Just the management body says: that [forest] destruction, mistake done person, one times, two times go to Gimbo [court] and come, that is enough for us they say. That is not good. Because they [FC] lose a lot of money you know. From their account. Kill of the time and kill of the money. So this means, at least I am low level educated level. I know that case. Why that money become to fail. Just three times, four times, the chairman and witness, I mean, I mean I'm really become to fail. It's a dangerous, committees. Because of, why you finished this financial, why I say? I go to this

cooperative activities. Why you ask me? Take care they say immediately. Become to conflict with me. Such kind of activities are there. In this case, why. Become to success, we are together start. I contact from anybody, from the court, from responsibility body, from political position. We are believe that area. that person only use a lot of materials. That is the community, from the society. No, it's not good. Maybe I raise that idea, all become to by the facilitator, maybe the facilitator contact form our enemies they say. So specially come to aggressive and come to that position. Kambata family destruct the forest they say, you know, thinking. But from a Kaffa are there I know. From a Manja are there. So they use a lot of wood? I look. Other day, I go to, secretly, just I have a good approach for that boy [who was sued by the FC]. And I go to visit and look his house. Without your known, I go to visit and just why you destruct, why you don't ask members, again by the other means. Look he says. One, two, three, four, five, all committee members sell [wood]. Always they build [house] from their forest. All are, not only this tree, this building material. All around, again it's a devil. Devil, all are. So newcomers, impose always on us. Little error, they are big loudly talk. They are night and day use, direct and indirect use. We from Kambata family, we have a chain from forest lumber. Look, observe my house, my living situation.

*- And he was the Kambata person who was sued?*

Yes, Kambata, they are suing, five Kambata are selected out, together with the DA you know. Sometimes not good. I am disturbed by their activity. That is one case. Again, M. case [the manja famer]. That is the DA's case. K. by itself created this case, together with M. [former kebele chairman]. He is supportive of M., the DA always, M.'s friend (...) Again, this face is K., this face is M., the same like you

know. Because I challenged M. in a previous time, not now. In this case, K. sometimes uses M.'s activity and receives M., come to in the management body, attack me, K. is surprised and supports M.'s idea, M. improves K.'s idea. Become to challenge all my activity, especially in cooperative. (...) in the court, at the woreda level. They together know this secret, DA by itself.

- So M. also knows about the case of the Manja farmer?

So that land! By secretly corruption money, from the kebele land administrator in a time, that land give for that farmer. That farmer by itself know, still now he is poor. Poor person. But corruption done by this M. and K. (...)

**“by the way, building his house is not a crime”**

Again this Kambata society. Why? Kambata, always they are by any means, they are use beneficiaries from that area. From previous year, not from Kambata forest destruction always, from Manja and Kaffa, I know. Before that fighting time. From a Kambata, one boy or two, I don't know. They are always focus on the Kambata. Again the same like as newcomers, because of case of newcomers.

- Also other newcomers for example?

No, Kambata is newcomer, imposed by this Kaffa, Kambata family. Because of the Kaffa made a mistake. My uncle, your relative, just as a church case, by different type of beliefs, culturally you collect, you know. Kambata are separate, any other relations are there between Kambata and Kaffa. By this case, it's a Kambata, always, by ask a government they say. You know. That is not my internal feeling, I never go to participate that activity. First, decision by my mind. That is true, go to up to end, they are true. That is finished. Otherwise, by simply disturb for your mind, I struggle, mean it is not good. (...)

- And so you went to that Kambata boy...

Ye, he had a little house you know. The same like here. All the trees he used, were from the garden. All are the garden. But this one [tree], that strongly supports the edge of the house, some little trees use, Washo [local name] from the forest. So, (...) officially, we give advice for him. Seriously advice you know.

- By the committee?

By the committee, and by me. Again by the DA. No what is the problem. This is my family. He is a young boy, he tries to build his house, that is good. By the way, building his house is not crime. Not crime. Not crime... So why. Just I observe forward beyond of the river you know. Just as a far, long plan. My plan is long, you know. But that boy, we give advice, change and he participates. He is a young boy, he is a generation you know. It's a generation, our generation. Because of, he regrets what he has done. More, from the crime, from prison, one person regrets mean, that is the value. For all activity. In that time, in replanting he comes to participate. From other destructor persons, again responsibility takes for the forest. We give awareness about the forest utilization. Direct and indirect. We give. That is our mission. My mission is that. That is my mission. No any other mission. That is a lack of talent you know. By this case.

**“That is my dream”**

- And from you long term plan, how do you see the future now, your personal future in Yeyebito, and the future of the forest cooperative?

Especially in Yeyebito, I don't know, maybe tomorrow I am called by position of the authority, I don't know, that is a governmental which comes with my profession. Otherwise, for the future I want, or, as a governmental situation, it is impossible for me to explain. Maybe I haven't capacity, especially

financially, maybe I have a dream, about Yeyebito. Sustainability. Especially saving and credit and honey cooperatives. Improvement. Improvement. And marketing channel for the channel. Or sustainability of channel or continuity. Ye, I have a dream. Again, a lot of production are there. Maybe gain a value or price that production. The society become to a lot of production, produce a lot of honey product. Yes, I, for the future, that is my dream. By project, by NGO, any other support I gain. Maybe that NGO participate and together speed up that activity or catalyze or facilitate. Otherwise, by my own personal motivation, maybe one day. Just, I get one activity I say, always thinking in my mind. And for the future, for my life change, that is the best area. That is on my mind. That Yeyebito on my mind, forever. Just I wish for that community, change. Especially, partially society wants or wait change. Always. Always they have a dream. But no channel, no way. Always disturbs. Individually I know, each of the society. In this case, how I fulfill this society's interest I say. Especially not the young society, by itself the young society is for the community dominate. It is main challenge. The young society, especially the medium age. Especially in a farming area, I explained for you. Especially in a farmer area. In a farmer area, wants change, wants good. Specially, a good situation, a facilitating life. (...) Enough resources are there in that area, especially in a coffee, in a honey, the same like of, wild animals. Simply enough, by recreation form, that forest we use, they use that area, simply as a park form. High gain, I'm really, high income for the community, that's possible. But now it is not, as a governmentally, support is minus. The same like as I told for Nabu. No cooperation activity. That is a lack of cooperation activity. Is very challenged for the change of that area. But I wish, I want. Or I

have a dream for the future. Yeyebito, not only Yeyebito, in our Kaffa, organic honey, one day it is popular in the world. I struggle, I use up to end of my internal knowledge, or internal feeling, internal motivation, I use hundred percent. Ye, one day, it is popular in the world. That, our organic honey. That is my dream (...).

*- For the farmers?*

Ye for the farmers. Because of, I like the farmers you know. Farmers, still now, it is not beneficial in this. Still now, it is not balanced, his struggle. In this time, always farmers become poor. Always. Merchants become rich in Ethiopia. Rich in Ethiopia. The merchants, no any other alternative. No any other preferable activity. Only the merchant negotiate prices, it is closed that way. No any other problem. That is cooperative by itself, is the way. For the comparing. Not enough performance about this cooperative, capital is limited you know. By this case, without any,..Take for example Nabu worker. Per day, ten birr. No any other alternative about that. The same like in other kebele. They alone. They come to pay five birr per day. They come to negotiate. No any other alternative. The same like as farmers' life. It is closed. Closed. Except merchants become rich. In one season, come rich man. As a stolen form. Not buying and selling activities. Or marketing systems, not that area.

*- And the farmers accept every price.*

Yes. That is. Always thinking on my mind. (...) In nature I am a strong person, me I am strong. But for the implement, it is heavy for me. Sometimes I am challenged. Politically it is heavy. If I come politically, maybe I forget such kind of futurity or performance believe or confidentially. It is impossible at the political situation. (...) Otherwise, for your project, for your dream success, for your family, about for your life, for the futurity, you

know. Some people are thinking, it is never. Impossible. By this situation, just I am far from such kind of activity. (...) But, that forest is my life. Not that your chair. Comfort chair is not favorable for me I say. I am young, I need a force, my internal emotion, I have image, I have a dream. So up to that success, I never do it, come to power I say.

### 4.3 A DIFFERENT GOVERNANCE

The interview with the facilitator served different goals. At best, it provided practical knowledge and an inside look on why and how a facilitator attempts to reorganize a group of people and create a vivid cooperative again who can sustainably manage the forest. When the facilitator came to Yeyebito and was confronted with cooperative practices that were not dictated by the general principles of cooperatives and the specific by-laws of the FC (*“just it is very far from a principle”*), his primary goal was to orient the activities in accordance with the rules, to “give feeling for our rules”, because otherwise people act “just as a blind”. He mentions how he used his internal motivation, feeling and personal creativity to improve and change the situation which he now judges “more or less good”. Finding himself balancing between definitions of how a cooperative should work and how it actually works he attempts to steer his own and others behaviour which finally also influences his own feelings, thinkings and judgements (*“I treat their brain, again finally they treat my brain”*). It indicates how he formed his self in the experiences with the FC practices and in reverse, how his “internal target” gave shape to the same successive practices.

To realize its other goals, we will now place it within the whole story in order to extract reasonable answers on the question posed in section one.

#### 4.3.1 FREEDOM IS A PRACTICE, NOT A RESULT OR A STATE OF AFFAIRS<sup>55</sup>

We have seen that villagers in Agama do say they redefined their thinking on forest management and conservation, but rather than being connected to the institution of the forest cooperative, it was rather associated with practices of environmental training and visiting other degraded areas. The latter provided space to deliberate on the value of forests and produced knowledge of particular cases where the forest was already degraded. The feedback from these actions became associated with personal background and provided practical experience to guide people’s actions. The practices towards the establishment of the forest cooperative however, were target driven. The intervention was designed to empower collectives and ensure participation through representative committees, but not to respond on the localized ethics of the traditional forest management system, privileging operational logic and institutional demands above contextualized response. Also for development workers in charge, it is difficult to contradict models that would ensure success on the basis of practical experiences if they are not empowered to make judgements and considerations on their own. Often, fieldworkers for the PFM project are part time governmental workers whose salary is ‘topped up’ by the

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<sup>55</sup> Foucault

responsible NGO as motivation to carry out their work. This is not a motivation however to orient their actions based on value deliberations and questions about established power relations and notions of government, community and the relation between. Thus, when the coherence of a model falls apart in the unfolding practices, routinized actions and decisions often become dominant.

To stress the importance of individual thoughts and rationality which motivates practices is not to deny the importance of institutions and possibility of local organization. In fact, local organizing institutions are an important part of the life of Agama villagers, but whereas policy on natural resource management has yet come to realize that “communities are able to manage their resources”, the technical model to implement policy as PFM have only included an instrumental perspective on institutions, ignoring the values it has for a community, and collapsing the distinction between a group and the individual beliefs and values of the members of that group. Taking again the example of institutions regulating agricultural practices in Agama, we see that they both serve instrumental as value rational purposes. The *dabboo* has a clear goal of working together on the field, but is backboned by the *iddir* institution or gatherings with village elders to deliberate on the village specific social and economic problems. They do not make inferences from institutions to people, rather they see the individuals constituting that institution. They do not privilege the individual over the society, but recognize individuals’ perceptions over society and understand the community in which they live from the individuals living in that community, not in reverse. For people, it is not possible to oversee all relations in which they are part at each moment in time, these unfold successively in the practices in which they participate. Yet that is what development projects try to shape, a model is designed to steer all those relations at once, as if they exist in the same space. So they don’t see the individuals reason, thoughts, feelings that give rise to those relations, but try to grasp all the relations at once, in juxtaposition, losing track that nationality, society, locality is based on selves and of the way these get socially channeled.

This understanding was a crucial difference in the approach of the facilitator to establish the FC again. When nobody came to the village meetings he called, he changed his strategy and went door to door, talking with individual people who made up the community. After this, he used the *iddir* institution to address the issue of forest destruction - understanding the institution from the perspective of the individuals and not in reverse as Farm Africa when they used the structure of Agama *iddir* to border a group who was allowed to be member of the FUG. Rather than starting with activities that were directly aimed at the production of the FC, for example controlling their documentations, organizing new elections, creating by-laws etc. This can be explained from the view that he was not primarily concerned with establishment of the form, the forest cooperative, but with giving meaning to the form, to bring the cooperative activities in line

with its principles. His motivation to do his job was not only based on an instrumental interest of earning money, rather he lived for the satisfaction of doing the job, *“not only by my profession, I use my personal activity, personal creativity, creation. Just I like my profession”* and *“Immediately, just after my struggle, I gain beneficiary, mean brain satisfaction. I get satisfaction from this activity.”* As such, his primary goals rested within himself while the relations with the villagers were secondary to his final aim of establishing a cooperative. This is an important difference with project implementers who see the relationship with the villagers as primarily goal because on the one hand their participation is needed to establish project targets and on the other hand, benefits are only given in exchange for participation. Every action then becomes a reaction to others in that relationship as it is the primary goal to maintain those relationships and what it represents, the project, rather than the action in itself. But the facilitator was not backed by political power as the DA was (*“the woreda is my enemy in that time”*) nor did he have the tool of NGO's: development activities to ask for participation which changes a relationship in patron-client (*“In that time, they are surprised by my activity. Without any persons, without any body know, only by my negotiation, only my contact, discuss”*). So he went door to door, speaking to the individual rather than to the collective, with nothing else to offer than the question to participate drawing upon his own persuasion power. But because he was not mobilized in the implementation of a project's model – the word PFM was actually very new for him – he was also not burdened to uphold its representation which left space for his own activities. It does not mean that ‘anything goes’ or that general knowledge is not important as he was very much inspired by international cooperative laws, but that these principles were constantly confronted with his experiences in the village and reflected upon.

#### 4.3.2 MUTUAL INTERESTS

From interviews with FC committee members (chairman, vice-leader, secretary, cashier and permanent member and control committee) and observation of their practices, we can say that there is a care about how the FC is managed and a willingness among committee members to participate in the cooperative regulatory practices. FC meetings are organized, an agenda is made, court cases on forest destruction are discussed, documentations are prepared for an audit of the cooperative office, the FC bank account is managed, a new FC office was built and even in the future the committee is planning to inaugurate the office and ask a loan to Farm Africa to make T-shirts for that event. Committee members, especially the chairman, worry about the relationship with the members and how to bring them more ‘closer’ to the committee, about income generation activities for the FC and support from the government for their activities, but defend their activities and keep struggling for the sustainability of the FC.

It may be argued that changes in the regulatory institution of the FC, initiated by the facilitator, went together with changes in actions and beliefs about how a cooperative should be managed. One way to explain this change in belief and actions is to suggest that the observed shift in how the FC institution was practiced and the subsequent changes in beliefs are unrelated – that they are sufficiently separated in time and no causal relations can be drawn. But this is unsatisfactory. Another argument could be that it was a response to the change in ownership, the agreement with the government to co-manage Agama forest has created a greater concern to manage it according to cooperative principles, which caused a change in beliefs and actions. Although this could be part of the explanation, it is still inadequate. First is that this transfer of ownership found place five years before the facilitator came and no cooperative activities as mentioned above followed during those years. Also not when four other facilitators, who worked in Yeyebito before the facilitator from this story, came to ‘straighten’ cooperative activities. Another is that contributing the change to ‘ownership’ collapses the distinction between interests of a group as perceived by an observer and the beliefs of members of that group. It is not that the interests, actions and beliefs of the committee members were of one piece or that changes in them took place all at once.

The argument here that follows from the story is that the practices initiated by the facilitator and the *way* they were carried out, created variations in beliefs and actions among individuals to constitute themselves as FC committee and to manage it as a proper cooperative. When FC committee and members became enrolled in new practices, as a result of the regulatory actions of the facilitator, they needed to define their own position in relation to the rules he defended and the changes in practices it necessitated. When the former secretary of the FC together with nineteen other persons was sent to prison for two weeks; or when FC members participate in the election of a new committee to counter corruption of the former; or when the committee need to prepare their documents for an audit from the cooperative office, it must entail internal struggles and it is understandable that they begun thinking of their interests and positions in relation to these practices. Especially for those people in close interaction with the facilitator.

The facilitator did not enter the community on the premise of poor farmers in need for empowerment, but with the observation that nobody was following cooperative principles. Rather than being mobilized in a project by concepts as ‘participation’, he was more internally driven, mobilized by a sense of his self. The way the practices were carried out to establish the FC differed, the target was not only the form, but the meaning as well, realizing that meaning needed to be shared with villagers and could not be imposed or asked in exchange for benefits as development activities. The time that the facilitator has spent in the village shaped multiple daily interactions within the village which eventually allowed for a joint production of interests in

cooperatives, interactions that allowed for more space to exercise their existential agency and recognized the creativity in the individuals, placed in their social context.

Thus, the actions and beliefs of committee members can be connected with the practices to manage and regulate the FC, in which they have come to participate after recognizing a mutual interest in 'proper' cooperative activities, brought into existence by the way the facilitator approached his 'target'. This led to a FC that is still managing its 'business', with social and individual struggles and conflicts off course, but also with a motivation of villagers to constitute themselves formally as FC committee members and to a willingness to participate in its practices so that now, as the facilitator concludes, "now more or less, it is good".

#### 4.4 THINKING ABOUT POLICY

A policy model is based upon general (scientific) knowledge and theories, in the case of PFM on concepts of participation, community involvement, empowerment and sustainable forest management which was translated into the Bonga PFM project's design as 'blueprint for social engineering', providing the methods to apply the theory. As such, the conceptual framework and the applied 'techniques' are supposed to guide the actions of the project staff implementing the project. But the design is not a guarantee to determinate individuals' thought. Rather it is an agreement among a group of people, a compromise drawn upon many individual thoughts, a secondary consequence. The primary act – the individual process of reason – however must be performed by each person involved in the project. But when implementing field staff is not well rehearsed (or encouraged by their organization) in the activity of *phronesis* – deliberation about values with reference to the practices they are situated in – then the practical activities become guided, as Mosse (2004) observes, by an instrumental rationality defined by the ruling relations of power. The design only provides form, while meaning is given by the individuals, which reveals a disjunction between rules and universals underlying *what* is done – setting up committees, organizing village meetings, establishing a new institution – and the particular and situationally dependent reasoning underlying *how* it is done – only driven by instrumental interests or also accompanied with situational ethics.

The FC was created with the intention to legally empower the community. An institution however is open for interpretation and must be practiced in order to have an impact. When there is only attention for its means – management of the forest, activities to gain income – and less for the ethical questions that arise in a particular context – as the conflict between the Kambata and the traditional forest users – then an originally emancipatory institution may turn into its own opposite and become disconnected from personal value systems of individuals supposed to guide their behaviour through these institutions. When an educational institution as

a school for example only focuses on its means (exams, learning, tasks, administration, registration...) and not on its values (personal development, contribution to society, deliberating on ethics...) than the link between the two becomes weak, creating students who perceive school as an instrument to get somewhere, oriented towards production rather than to action of the self. Similarly, when a blue print for social engineering does not explicitly recognize (or encourage) individual reasoning (or agency) which inevitably happens when carried out in practice, then it does not provide direction how both the process towards and the establishment of a new institution can be guided by value-rationality in addition to a means rationality which is often dictated by the ruling constellations of power.

If I have insisted on all these 'selves', 'practices' and 'em-power-ment', it is because these matter to carry out policy reforms. Living in a rural area is not a condition for poverty. Poverty is not a condition for empowerment. There is no such thing as 'poor masses'. Participation cannot be 'delivered', especially if the ones who need to deliver it did not create a sense of personal empowerment themselves, 'one cannot distribute what one did not create' could be a leitmotiv for development work. It is true that we cannot change individually what has been collectively shaped. One person cannot oversee the whole from what he is part, he does not see all the relations, all the objects, all the moments in time which make up all and everything which is enrolled in the same project and collectively created. But what an individual can do is determine his inner experience, how he relates to the outer events. And this is a difference in people enrolled. Not primarily along social identities as ethnicity, status, caste or gender, but based on the continuity of experiences that formed their selves, depending on the practices in which they have been involved and the objective structures in which they find themselves in. For some, it are acts of self-representation. For others, it are acts of self-verification. Some put more attention to the Me, others to the creational aspects of the I. But both have impact on the flow of activities and ideas, and thus on the practices following from interventions to implement policy models. If the natural resource management expert and part time field worker for Farm Africa would not have acted as he did to prevent Agama forest being given to investors, the story would have been told otherwise. Or not at all. If the facilitator would not have come to Yeyebito, the story would maybe not be able to say that 'the FC is merely a business project'. People do have influence on the direction in which practices flow and thus how a policy is performed. But likewise, people differ in rationality and moral code to guide their actions and decisions and people whose code differs from the concepts underlying PFM, because they have been part of routinized practices for a long time or because they had different experiences, they too can make decisive choices (which also implies not choosing), which makes the flow of practices being pulled by different ropes into different directions.

So is good policy unimplementable? No. But it doesn't happen through the collective, but through individual reckoning. To speak metaphorically, we can prepare food together and divide meal among many men, but we don't have a collective stomach to digest it. This is exactly what a farmer compared a good community discussion with: with eating good food which brought "satisfaction in my brain" (not our brain). This is how participation can work to collectively improve: as a product of many individual thoughts, involving many people thinking for the betterment of oneself and the other. Men invent a wheel. They make a bike. They make a car. They make an airplane. Products of individual thoughts coming together in one creation that improves continuously.

If there is no attention for how people think, feel, judge or act in the practices generated to implement policy models, to how practices are carried out and not only to what they seem to represent, to the paradox that project workers' practices erode the models they work to reinstate as representation, then policy models can do nothing more than offer headless frameworks. As one PFM expert said, "this [laptop] is not the product of one company, so many people have been involved, and it's a result of good thinking of so many people. ... and when you see into the participation, from the start you have to have that ... spirit, and if you are not that sort of man, it is really very difficult to work in such participatory project." Maybe opinions may vary if good policy is implementable or not, but it seems plausible, looking at the story in Agama, to conclude that if 'one' can bring already change in the course of the story, then when all those 'ones' come together in idea, time and space, it may bring transformation.

# POSTSCRIPT

It is not the works, but the *belief* which is here decisive and determines the order of rank - to employ once more an old religious formula with a new and deeper meaning - it is some fundamental certainty which a noble soul has about itself, something which is not to be sought, is not to be found, and perhaps, also not to be lost. - *The noble soul has reverence for itself.*

(Frierich Nietzsche Beyond Good and Evil)

## ON A WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON<sup>56</sup>

In early May, the facilitator strolls to the FC office. A meeting with the FC chairman, vice-leader, secretary and cashier – the core of the committee – is scheduled. After a while, the chairman arrives, followed by the vice-leader coming from the opposite direction, but considering they don't have a key (the secretary does), they need to wait and so take opportunity of the time to discuss on account affairs. Still people did not pay back loans or gave back materials they 'borrowed' from the FC. They discuss, sometimes loud sometimes silently, to start suing people in the woreda court who took more than 100 birr<sup>57</sup>, while the others should be sued in the kebele court. After a while, the secretary appears on the horizon, always with his big notebook under his arm, and finally the door of the office can be opened. In the mean while, the DA has noticed the little group (his house is next to the FC office) and comes to join the discussion. Slowly, the discussion starts – slowly because the cashier is not showing up, the mobiles are not working so the secretary needs to go all the way to his house – and soon it comes to the subject of the Manja farmer. The DA wants to go the court and sue him, but the chairman replies that the cooperative on itself does not have the capacity, the advocate office needs to come and listen to witnesses, but the facilitator reminds him that “only the cooperative is struggling for forest destruction. Last time, we went bankrupt! Going back and forth al the time to Gimbo. Like she paid to the FC, but others who come here, they just go to kebele and not to us. What is the evidence for the FC from all those bodies that come here to the forest?” The latter is implicitly

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<sup>56</sup> Retold based upon own observations and reflections of the facilitator afterwards. The event happened at the end of my stay which enabled me to follow the main points of the discussion myself.

<sup>57</sup> 100 birr = 4,42 euro = 5,56 US dollar (24 August 2012)

pointed at the DA who gets the hint and starts to defend the activities of Nabu. “They have big budgets and made the forest recognized by UNESCO. We need to call a meeting and ask members for support, because in future there will be a yearly payment for the FC<sup>58</sup>.” The facilitator and the DA however do not come to agree about the case of Nabu and so the argument flows from one side to the other. The committee members, in the meanwhile the secretary is returned together with the cashier, let the discussion go by. The vice-leader occasionally puts his head down on his arm, the secretary unnoticeable plays with his pen, while sometimes next to him, a deep sigh escapes the chairman, and on the other side the cashier amusingly watches the play. But then tired, as he reflects afterwards, the facilitator directs him to the chairman with the statement that people ‘on the street’ told him that the vice-leader and the chairman received payment from Nabu but don’t give information to the FC members about that. The chairman, first defensively, then mild, agrees that members doubt in the committee, but he did not receive any payment, “It is true, we haven’t evidence or documents. We showed them some places, but we haven’t evidence.” The discussion goes on, but then, as send from above, the DA receives a phone call (the network is on again) and the atmosphere breaks. He goes outside to talk, although the walls don’t stop sounds, and the people inside the office start to joke. Not without listening to what is said outside though (a farmer has ‘destructured’ state forest and somebody is calling to the DA to go and check<sup>59</sup>). As if the discussion on Nabu didn’t occur, they start to discuss on the matter of the Manja farmer again and other court cases, only intermitted by the funny story of the vice-leader - at least for the others who cheer and laugh while the vice-leader himself looks a bit sour - about that one time he needed to stay in prison because the police office did not believe him when he was witnessing. Finally, the meeting organically reaches its ends and everybody takes his belongings, a walking stick, a pen, a notebook, to go outside. All the people dawdle a bit around the office and then, they take off, each in his own direction to their home and the coffee that is waiting. It are only the facilitator and a temporary guest, a researcher, who take off in eastern direction, talking about the meeting and a honey project they want to establish.

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<sup>58</sup> He was referring to carbon payment from future REDD programs in Bonga area

<sup>59</sup> This is another case of the former kebele chairman who illegally sold land to a farmer some years ago and which is now being ‘accused’ of destroying forest.

## PART III: NON-CONCLUSION

# ONE

## HOW DID PFM HIT THE GROUND IN AGAMA?

Do not deplore, do not laugh, do not hate, - understand.

(Spinoza)

### 1.1 REITERATING THE AIMS AND QUESTIONS

The research started with elaborating on the situation of forests and their governance in Ethiopia. We saw that forests in Ethiopia are subjected to degradation and deforestation and that the forest laws and forest policy of Ethiopia have contributed little to control forest degradation in the country. On the one hand, forest regulation have been dominated by a control and command approach, ignoring the role of local people in managing and protecting forest degradation, but on the other hand, we remarked that forest policy belongs to the 'dormant policies' in Ethiopia and thus little attention is given to the process of implementation and to actors who are involved in carrying out forest related practices on the ground.

In contrast, agriculture is seen as the main strategy for development of the country and subsequently, ADLI have been the pillar for all other policies formulated by the government (or party). But as historically always have been the case in Ethiopia, the strategy to implement these policies are characterized by an understanding of 'participation' as mass mobilizations, not sought for its own sake, but as a controlled tool to carry out socio-economic development policies. ADLI is thus seen as the *only* way for the country to develop and the party is seen as the *only* provider of that development.

As deforestation of forests became an international issue and the condition of forests and Ethiopian people were perceived to require action, since the 1990s, several international NGO's and bilateral agencies have introduced a new approach for effective forest development, protection and sustainable utilization, called participatory forest management (PFM). According

to their reports, the method has proved its effectiveness and even, the government of Ethiopia is preparing to scale-up PFM in Ethiopia in various parts of the country.

The contradiction however between the conceptual framework of PFM and the way participation and forest management have been carried out in the particular context of Ethiopia begged for the question how PFM was enacted in practice and what the practices were in which these decisions and institutions are produced and acted upon. This research further focused on the local level, the micro-realities and everyday lives of people living in Agama who became involved in a PFM intervention by the NGO Farm Africa. Taking a practice based approach we formulated the research aim as

*To get understanding in (i) how a PFM intervention entered the life-worlds of local people in Agama with (ii) particular attention to participation and empowerment, and in (iii) the relationship between the policy model of PFM and the (forest) practices it generated and legitimized in the particular context of Agama, to render a critical reflection on the policy process by looking at what happens in the local arena of PFM and how it happens.*

From this aim, the research questions were formulated as follows:

- 1) What happens when PFM hits the ground in Agama?
  - A) How was it introduced and institutionalized?
  - B) How do people act upon, become to care about and act in relation to a newly introduced regulatory institution?
  - C) What are the consequences for forest (and natural resource) management?
- 2) Particularly, how are participation and empowerment practiced in the historical and political context of Agama?
- 3) How has PFM affected the field of forest practices in Agama?

We followed a narrative approach to present the empirical results because case studies cannot be summarized and should be read in its entirety to allow for a thick description which provided answers on above questions. To complete the cycle of the research, we can now relate the outcome, the story, back to the research questions and see if we can formulate answers; and if propositions can be made based upon the empirics that can be related to other literature and serve as guidelines to research PFM in other settings and orient in which direction analysis needs to happen. This will be done in the next section, following the order in which the research questions are pictured above. It should be reminded though that next section should be read with the narrative of part II in mind which forms the context in which the answers originated.

## 1.1.2 WHAT HAPPENED WHEN PFM HITS THE GROUND IN AGAMA?

### 1.1.2.1 HOW WAS IT INTRODUCED AND INSTITUTIONALIZED

The project intervention started with focusing upon the more visible aspect, the more 'dramatic intervention' when they assigned priority to a redemarcation of the forest area in Bonga and more specific in Yeyebito to delineate cooperative forest. However, avoid from historical context and due to the contingency of two events - the murder that happened in Agama forest and subsequent removal of thirty two families out of the forest – this act became associated with past experiences that linked boundary demarcation with enforcement, removal, and deep changes in life without power to change them; not with participation and forest management. Past forest related interventions were more a visible evidence of state power rather than an attempt to improve forest management with inclusion of people depending on the forest. This created doubts among villagers concerning the aims of the new NGO coming in their locality.

Furthermore, we saw that when particular and action oriented knowledge appeared in the organization, it was ignored or refused as it did not fit with the design to intervene in selected PFM sites. Then, before the actual PFM phase started in Agama, development activities were introduced again focusing on the more obvious, rooted in the conviction of supporting the 'poor rural people', and based upon the notion that benefits are necessary to convince people to participate in subsequent project activities. Although these activities were appreciated by most Agama villagers, they still benefit from the seedlings and agro-forestry activities, the project also diverted away from the values it propagated: donor-client images were constructed and Farm Africa became associated with beneficial activities rather than with forest management and participation.

To institutionalize the FC a series of practices were organized intended to be participatory. Negotiations, village meetings, representative committees, documents, management plans were all performed or set up so that in the end the PFM agreement was signed between the FUG, bringing together some two hundred members, and governmental bodies. However, based on concrete examples in Agama, we saw that a participatory project can claim participation *and* reproduce asymmetric power relations at the same time in practices that are practically compatible, but logically contradictory. When Farm Africa came with its PFM model in Agama, it had to deal with social conflicts rather than with forest destruction. But when confronted with the social conflicts between the different groups, an operational logic locked the project into certain design choices: to keep on establishing one FUG group rather than to respond to the

differentiated and localized needs. Because there was a strong sense of 'traditional' ownership and associated social institutions to regulate forest practices, the main difficulty became to reach the target of one group where members have 'equal' rights to use forest products. But the model proved itself not to be a good guide for action. Thus, after almost two years of fieldwork in Agama village, the institution that was established to influence the forest practices of the villagers did not challenge existing power configurations as 'participation' is not only *what* has been done, but also *how* it has been done, and could do nothing more than to reproduce routinized practices.

Comparing the FC with local institutions, we learned that villagers do have institutions to organize natural resource management (as for farming), but that there is both an instrumental (like working groups to farm together) and a value-rational (like the iddir institution to deliberate on local needs and problems) rationality to maintain those institutions, which lacked in the set-up of the FC. Furthermore, for people in Agama, they do not make inferences from institutions to people, rather in reverse order, they recognize individuals' perceptions over those institutions. They understand community in which they live from the individual living in that community and not in reverse. It is not that they oversee all relations in which they are part at each moment in time, rather these happen successively in the daily practices in which they participate. Yet, that is what development projects try to shape and in a design to steer all relations at once, ignoring the selves that constitute those relations.

After signing the agreement we saw that the institution not only lacked roots, but also did not have wings to sustain it. The act of signing an agreement was more one of representation than of redefining knowledge systems and well established power relations and so knowledge to guide behaviour and actions concerning PFM became rather dictated by the usual political and economical rationalities. Moreover, we saw that governmental and non-governmental actors involved (or supposed to be) in the field of PFM do not necessarily adopt a sense for participation or attention for the forest in their daily practices. Nor that there is a clear distinction between governmental and non-governmental. Although NGO's at the discourse level say that 'government is not involved', there are myriad linkages between the two. As they are using similar mobilizing concepts or 'metaphors' – involvement of communities and enhancing the life of the rural poor – and perceive themselves both as provider of development and participation, relationships and practices become entwined. So, when representatives of some governmental agencies signed an agreement with Agama FC to share responsibilities and duties in sustainably managing and using the forest, it was not contradictory for their selves as they did not needed to change their practices, but only temporary the language they used to frame their conceptual framework to interpret those practices. The agreement was rather a secondary

consequence, following from a range of individuals who had designed the agreement, but not an individual thought that could guide subsequent actions.

### *1.1.2.2 HOW DO PEOPLE ACT UPON, COME TO CARE ABOUT AND ACT IN RELATION TO A NEWLY INTRODUCED REGULATORY INSTITUTION?*

There are no easy generalizations that can be made to explain how people act upon a new institutions intervening in their life-worlds. Categorizations along externally observable differences or social identities may be a first step in an analysis an attempt to grasp the enormous array of beliefs people hold on themselves and the events in their life, but to end there would fail to attend to the many different ways people constitute themselves and do so differently over time (Agrawal 2005). However, we saw that two related concepts were important to understand how people acted upon the intervention: the social and environmental *practices* in which they became involved and the *self*-formation that took place within those practices and reversely shaped direction in which successive practices flow.

When individuals become involved in new institutional arrangements and receive new knowledge, as a result of new regulations or interventions, then they have to define their position in relation to these regulations and the changes in practices they necessitate. The only practices that were referred to have had impact on people's imagination concerning forest management were a visit to degraded areas and environmental trainings. Participating in the former practice redefined what is possible for some villagers, expanding their imagination and self-reflective beliefs about the competence to change one's own natural environment. It gave an opportunity to break down the image that only bigger events can destroy the forest, but that the power lies also in their daily life decisions. However, they were also immediately presented with the way to socially channel that thought in the form of the FC.

The attempt to organize Agama people in this form however revealed that not forest destruction, but the response to change from individual to group holdings was the main issue. The benefit of legal ownership and the recognition of being forest keeper rather than forest destructor were not that much valued to guide daily (forest) practices in the locality of Agama. When Farm Africa left, after reaching the 'target' of signing the PFM agreement, the FC was left without roots or wings and could not enforce collective forest activities. On the one hand, the FUG diffused completely, the utilization of forest products did not happen according to the plan - members and non-members using alike - nor did the forest guards perform their tasks as subscribed, and the participation of members and administrative practices of the committee were missing. On the other hand, the agreement was based on a conditional rationality ("if you.. then we") which made the relation between Agama FC and government conditional as well,

urging some people to think “if they don’t keep their promise, then we also don’t have to act according to plan.”

But then, through a contingency in events, a new facilitator came to Yeyebito which shifted the question “how a project that was concerned with forest management and participation became oriented towards merely cooperative related activities” to “at least, the FC is still concerned with income generation activities, so when and for what reasons did FC members and committee come to care about and act in relation to the cooperative principles”. The practices initiated by the facilitator and the *way* they were carried out, created variations in beliefs and actions among individuals to constitute themselves as FC committee and to manage it as a proper cooperative. When FC committee and members became enrolled in new practices, as a result of the regulatory actions of the facilitator, they needed to define again their own position in relation to the rules he defended and the changes in practices it necessitated. Using a different approach, internally driven and realizing that meaning needs to be shared rather than imposed, the facilitator could actually enforce and motivate people to participate in cooperative practices – election of new committee, imprisoning ‘destructor’ persons, building a new office, documentation – leading to a willingness in some people to constitute themselves as FC committee and recognize a mutual interest in cooperative activities.

### *1.1.2.3 WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCE FOR FOREST (AND NATURAL) RESOURCE MANAGEMENT?*

Forest destruction is a very much localized problem and equally needs localized solutions. A first question that needs to be asked is if there is really need for an intervention to change forest practices? And based on what knowledge is this decided? General notions of life in a rural village or practical knowledge and experiences of the selected case? If traditional institutions are managing, even if this is not ‘fair’ perceived from an outsider perspective, then careful consideration needs to precede decision if action is necessary. And if so then critical reflection during the process is necessary to prevent a ‘helicopter’ intervention: arriving with a lot of noise, dropping a bomb and then take off again. The story of Agama warns us to extend lessons from indigenous systems to new institutions to manage CPRs. Research on CPRs have put attention to the ability of communities to manage their resources, but the difference between indigenous and formal institutions can differ in purpose, meaning and form. Indigenous systems to manage the forest did exist, but did not involved corporate organizations and thus did not necessarily predict the success of new formal organization demanding procedures and regulations of financial management or accountability. For the people of Agama, the forest was effectively managed without the existence of such collective body even if this implied unequal use of forest

resources. As we said in part one, institutions are not merely functional or for material interests, they are part of the symbolic domain as well (Mosse 1997). The chairman of the FC had a formal position of power, but because people doubted his traditional rights on a forest plot, he did not receive authority or status from them. Thus, from the whole story of Agama, we can conclude that common pool resource management is eminently political, historical and social.

A second observation is that to reduce the costs of environmental regulation, it is also necessary to know which environmental practices lead to 'environmental selves' that come to care about the environment and recognize it as something that needs to be managed for the future. If practices associated with the establishment of a new local institution are based upon routinized patterns and established power relations then people might not rapidly come to a new sense of what is in the interest of their selves. Practical working activities in the forest *and* recognition of the symbolic meaning of institutions are important elements to 'root' a new forest regulatory institution.

### 1.1.2 PARTICULARLY, HOW ARE PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT PRACTICED IN THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF AGAMA?

In the historical and political context of Agama, participation and empowerment are particularly rich concepts which equally ask for rich descriptions from the perspective of *all* people involved in social interactions. Throughout the narrative, one thing that repeatedly came back and dictated practices was the well established idea that living in a rural village as Agama means poverty and thus means need for empowerment which requires action of NGO's and government who see themselves as sole provider of that empowerment. But empowerment is not something one can give to another: if power is in relations, diffused rather than possessed, then empowerment also happens in the interactions and relational patterns, and does not necessarily flow from the 'dominant' to the 'dominated' which we have seen in the examples of interaction between Agama villagers and (non)-governmental workers and in the interaction between villagers and their natural environment. However, both in the political ideology and as in the participatory ideology of NGO's, project plans and policy models are formulated in the abstract, in isolation from what its future members – as the villagers in Agama – actually do which implies a generalization of the 'target' population in a sense that it subordinates the self to category.

If the logic of the practice in which actors are situated is *not* that of participation, then it is difficult to carry out participation when actors are within the flow of activities of that practice. It needs personal conviction and a sense of 'personal empowerment' (sources) to develop self-reflective understandings of abilities and capacities to consciously make effort to make other choices. And this reveals a difficulty in performing participatory projects in Agama. Because the

ones who are supposed to 'bring empowerment' have to reckon themselves with dispositions and self-reflective beliefs of powerlessness, while the ones who need to 'receive empowerment' have sometimes more beliefs in their capacities than presumed.

There is the long history of an autocratic working culture in Ethiopia creating a fear to question power from above or lose power stretching downwards, also diffused into the local (non)-governmental offices involved in practicing PFM in Agama. Although there is a strong image of an 'up there' and 'everywhere' state, this should not lead to determinacy. In the context of Agama, villagers showed a sense of personal empowerment in relation to governmental officials, for example by refusing to go to meetings, and the story of the facilitator showed that creative thinking and independency from this image is possible, even though it needs to be fought for in everyday practices.

### 1.1.3 HOW HAS PFM AFFECTED THE FIELD OF FOREST PRACTICES IN AGAMA?

As became clear from chapter II, the element added from PFM situates itself more in people's story telling, reflections and social theorizing - as for example the idea from the traditional users that forest destruction increased since Kambata people became member of the FC or "controlling system" - than in the actual performance of the forest utilization and management patterns, as for example Kambata respondents did not start to collect coffee, spices or honey in the forest, but used from the forest as before the FC was established and if they are planning to do so, then arrangements are not made through the forest cooperative. It is not to say that the intervention did not change people's life-worlds, it did, but they situate it more in the development activities of Farm Africa than in the FC and on an individual level than in deep rooted social interactions, as one farmers mentioned "*This social life is here, one side, participation in forest conservation on the other side.*" This is also reflected when people give reasons why Farm Africa intervened in their locality. Although normative perspectives differ related to personal backgrounds, traditional users, settlers, even non-members mention that "*it gives more awareness about the longevity of the forest*", while the agroforestry activities - seedlings to plant in the garden, animal rearing projects - are pointed to as long lasting benefits of the intervention. Although the intention to include forest related activities was translated in the design of the FAP - the six forest guards one for each zone in Agama forest who needed to control the area and report to the management committee, collective harvesting of dead wood for selling purpose and replanting activities - these activities were not taken up by the people of Agama. Thus, the intervention did influence individual's life, but got more internalized in collective sayings than collective doings concerning forest management. This does not have to be

problematic though considering forest destruction was not the main issue in Agama's locality and 'collective sayings' increased environmental attention.

## 1.2 FUTURE ORIENTATION RESEARCH?

First, in my perspective, the PBA has proved its value to research PFM practices in Agama. It fits well with a 'value rational' turn as described by Flyvbjerg considering the space to focus on problems that rise in the flow of the research and the possibility to work iteratively. Furthermore, PBA allows to 'expand imagination' as different theoretical concepts can be used and integrated which follows more closely the richness of reality. The strength of PBA however is simultaneously its difficulty because it takes some effort to come to grips with the concept of 'practices' and to understand what one is talking or thinking about.

For research in PFM, a focus on the practices is necessary to separate the actual from the ideal and what should be done from what is actually done. That does not mean that we have to give up believe in what should be done, but to the contrary, that the ideal becomes more close to the actual. It does not always have to be focused on practices in local communities. NGO and governmental offices and their members' lives are important as well. Furthermore, I believe an integration between natural and social science methods, not necessarily by separate researchers, could also contribute to PFM research. For example, simultaneously carrying out political anthropological and agricultural or forest research could bring new perspectives.

Finally, I would recommend each future researcher to search for a theme that motivates and inspires him or she as that is the fundamental force underlying the creation process a research is.

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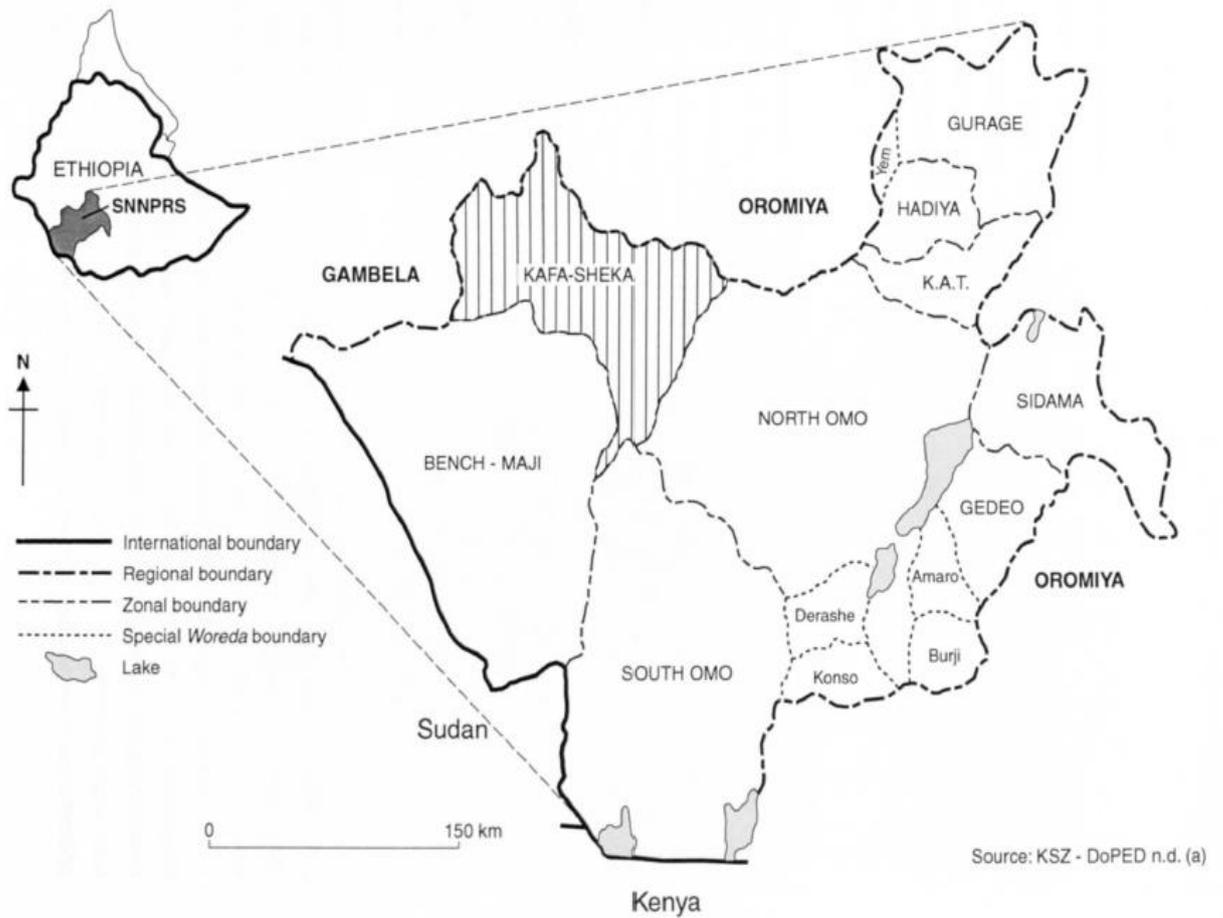
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# ANNEXES

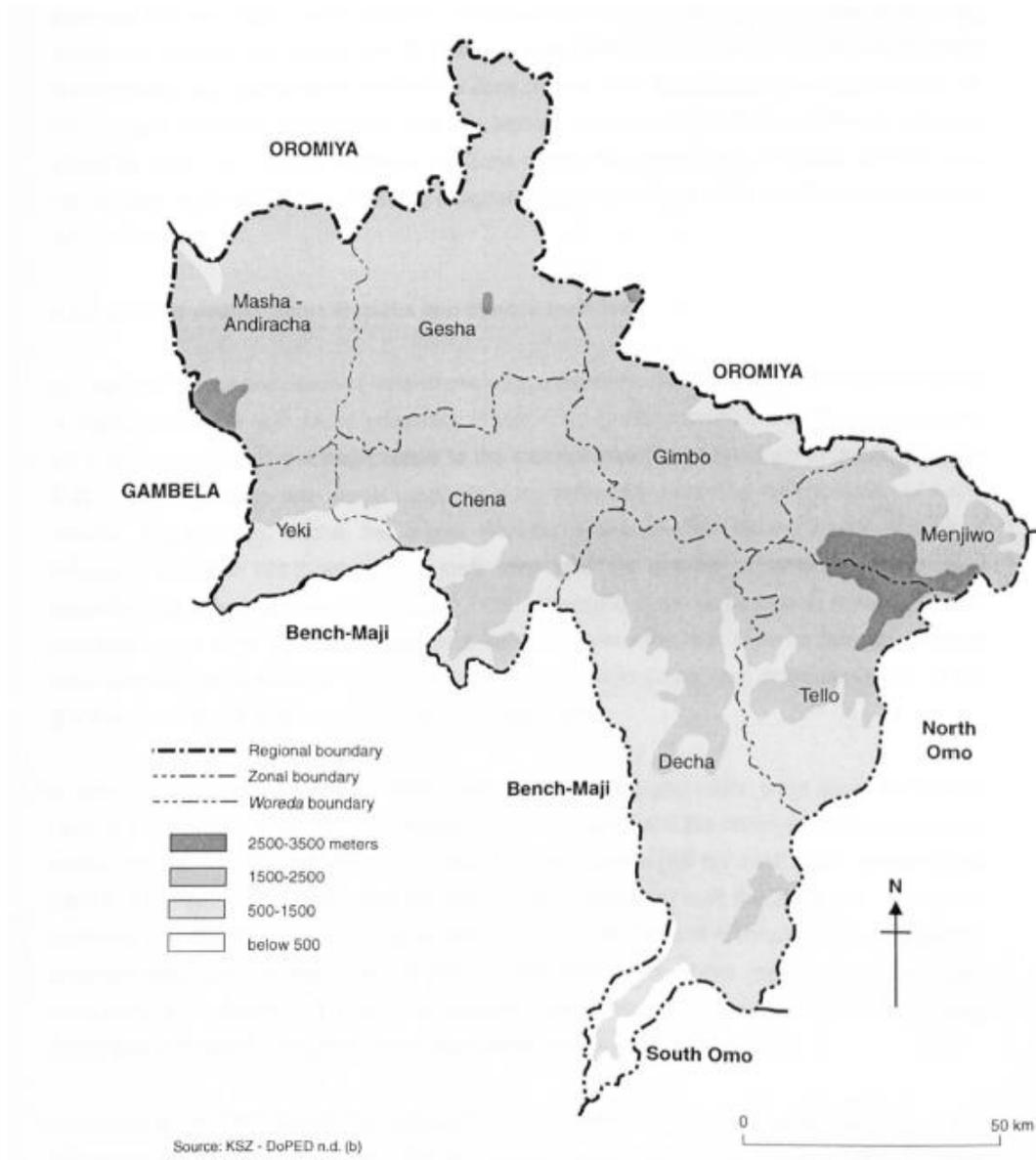
## ANNEX 1: LOCATION OF THE CASE STUDY AREA



Administrative map Ethiopia with the different regions. The case study was conducted in the SNNPRS. (FAO / GIEWS 2000 in Zewdie Yihenew 2002)

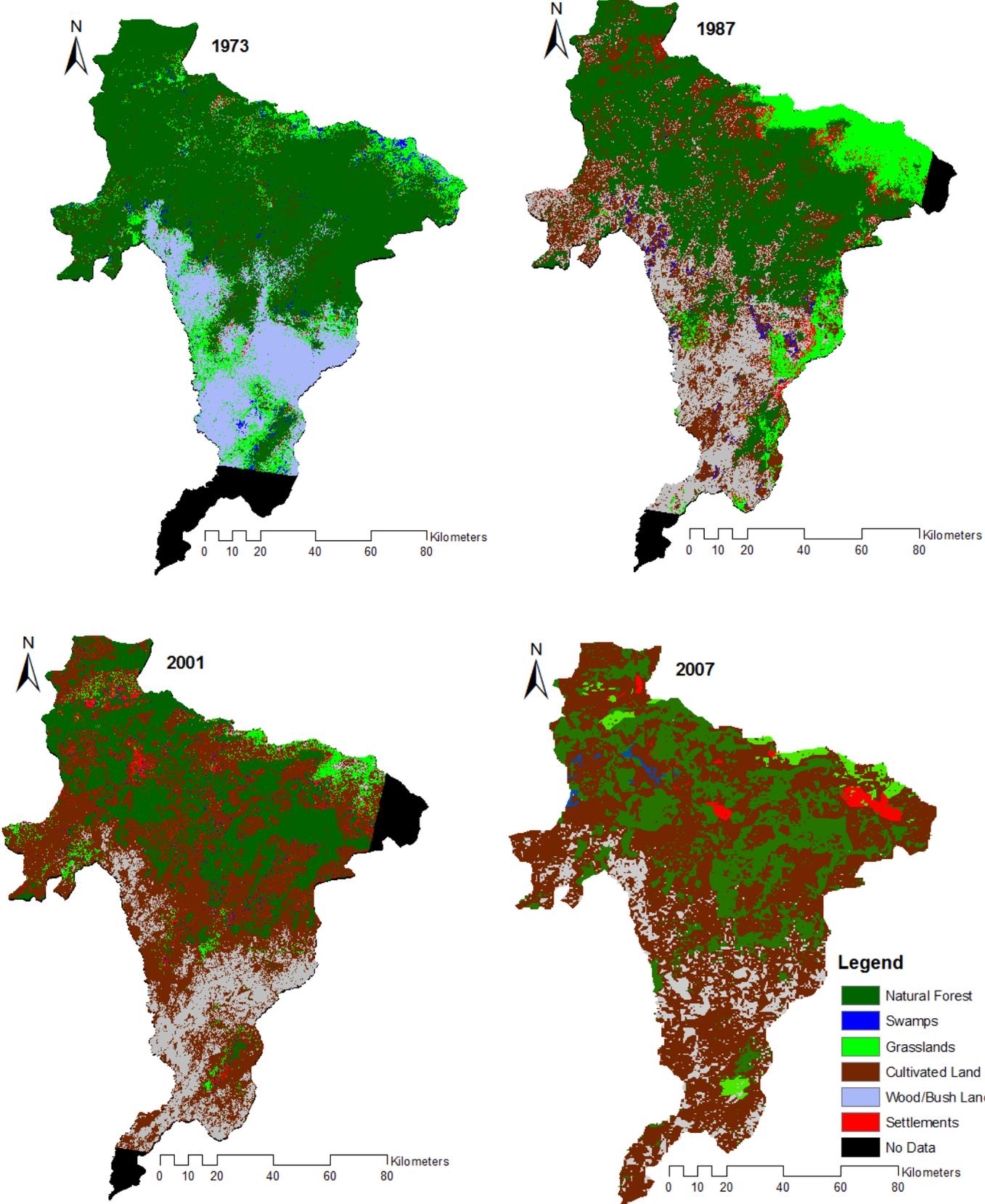


Kaffa-Sheka zone in SNNPNRS in Ethiopia (Zewdie Yihenew 2002). Remark that currently Kaffa and Sheka are separated into two zones and the study was conducted in Kaffa.



Administrative division and elevation of Kaffa-Sheka zone (now separated). The study area was located in Gimbo woreda (Zewdie Yihenew 2002).

ANNEX 2: LAND USE AND LAND COVER CHANGE IN KAFFA ZONE FOR RESPECTIVE YEARS  
(MENGISTIE KINDU, UNPUBLISHED)



ANNEX 3: MAIN ACTIVITIES IN WHICH I PARTICIPATED IN YEYEBITO RELATED TO FC AND PFM CHRONOLOGICALLY ORDERED BETWEEN 1/03/2012 AND 15/05/2012

• Nursery of the Forest Cooperative: activities
• First big meeting under the tree at the kebele office: about farming practices and education
• Visit to the land of Manja farmer with facilitator, Secretary FC and Separation Leader
• Iddir on forest destruction (supposed to be from Kambata people) in Agama 4 (Kambata iddir)
• Audit of forest cooperative: preparation on Saturday and audit on Tuesday
• Visit to Wacha forest (near Bonga town): suing the woreda because of delayed payment (there was a letter)
• Possible 'election' (by appointment of the woreda) of a new kebele chairman
• Iddir on forest destruction on Sunday (all Agama villages)/ idea of Kambata people who are main forest destructors
• Manja farmer who bought his land from former kebele chairman: discussion and all the information about former kebele chairman (court case)
• Meeting in Gimbo on cooperatives function (and a lot more. DA was present) and evaluation of workers
• At the same time of Gimbo meeting: iddir on forest destruction on Friday under the big tree
• Meeting where Woreda people were present: head of Agricultural Office and head of Administration Office: they went to all kebeles to participate in meetings and evaluate the result followed by another urea and DAP meeting the next day
• Meeting of the forest cooperative in their office with the separation leaders and control committee
• Short meeting of forest cooperative opened by kebele manager and calling of names
• Meeting where FC management committee and kebele were supposed to talk together but chairman and other committee members did not come (called by DA) and the people who did come got a lesson from DA and kebele chairman.
• The day in DA his house: Nabu nursery worker and supervisor came to discuss a thing of NABU
• Subsequent meetings on economic situation and village problems: starting of Friday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.
• Forest cooperative meeting with Nabu nursery supervisor about court cases
• Forest cooperative meeting: conflict on Nabu between the facilitator and DA
• Visit of NABU nursery with the DA
• Control of woreda Bureau of Agriculture in Yeyebito kebele of nurseries
• Coming of the researchers of Forestry Research Centre to Agama forest
• Case of federal forest destruction: Kebele cabinet who goes and see what happened

- Visit of the student in the community who did sociological surveys on livelihoods of FC members

#### ANNEX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW WITH AGAMA VILLAGERS

The interviewing does not follow a fixed structure as I use a narrative approach, but off course there are some main themes that are discussed. Beforehand, I also clearly discussed my questions with the translator so that there were no confusions between us during the interview.

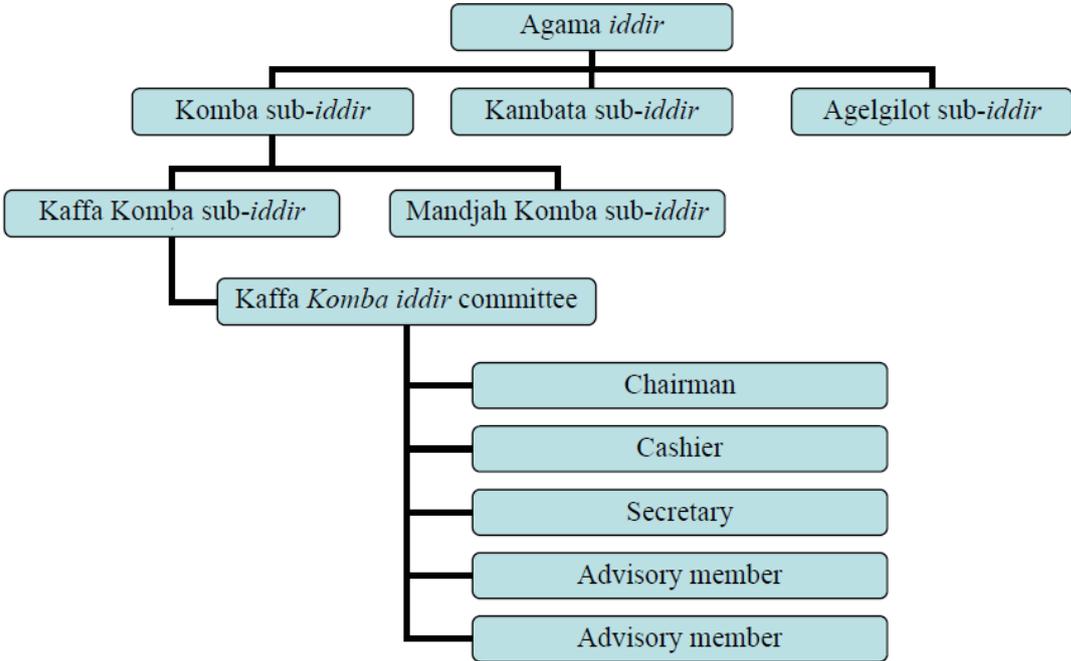
The interview starts with an introduction of myself and my research and the question if it is possible to make notes or to record the conversation. If there are no comments or further questions beforehand I start with the first question:

- Can you tell me more about your background and how you came to live here (important because there is a difference between indigenous people from the forest – other indigenous people – Kambata people and newcomers).
- Can you tell me about the forest management before FarmAfrica (FoA) came and the forest cooperative was established?
- How is the forest management now compared with the situation before FoA? This question evolves mostly into talking about ownership (if not, then it comes surely when talking about the government).
- What are the criteria to become member? What is your personal motivation to become member? What about the relationship between members and non-members? And the relationship between members and management committee? This evolves mostly in talking about the impact of forest cooperative on the daily forest practices of people: are people still taking wood out of the forest? Who and what is seen as forest destructors/destruction?
- The previous question mostly evolves into talking about the election procedures of the management committee and the role of the government. As such I ask more deeply about the practices of the government and how this relates to the forest cooperative. Because I was present in some meetings about forest destruction I can use this to deepen the conversation and to relate the story with real practices.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When talking about the government, I ask more about the interviewee's belief in the court system and the efficiency of the woreda to halt forest destruction. I also ask about the possibility of <i>iddirs</i> and meetings to do something about the forest destruction (again with reference to reality). The conversation sometimes evolves to the case of investors which again relates to feeling of ownership.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are the bylaws enforced? Are they put into practices and effective? This also concerns the agreement with the government concerning utilization of the forest</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does membership of the forest cooperative has an impact on your income? Or other benefits from forest cooperative?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point of combining the life of a farmer with keeper of the forest.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you believe in the continuity of the forest cooperative? What are the main challenges in the future you think?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you heard about NABU (local NGO that started activities in the community's forest a couple of months ago and did not give any information to the forest cooperative)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments to add or do you want to ask a question to me (this leads to interesting questions!)</li> </ul>

REMARK: the interview did not follow a fixed structure because I tried to listen carefully to the themes the interviewee put forward, but at least the above mentioned themes were covered during a conversation (I say at least because each interview gives more information, but depending on the interviewee: about UNESCO, Kambata people, wild animals and farming, the case of the road construction without compensation for the forest cooperative, etc.) I asked more deepening questions next to the ones mentioned above so to have more understanding of the story told. Also, because I knew some aspects of the interviewee's life (I've met him or she before) I can ask some specific questions. For example: I interviewed a Kambata man who was very silent during the forest cooperative meeting and I could ask him why he did not express his opinion that time.

ANNEX 5: ORGANIGRAM OF YEYEBITO KEBELE IDDIR ASSOCIATION



Although the sub-iddirs are organized along ethnic lines, there are often gatherings with all sub-iddirs together (Agama iddir). Komba refers here to the village Agama three (Stellmacher 2007).

ANNEX 6: OWN SUMMARY OF THE DOCUMENT “FIRST ROUND EVALUATION REPORT OF AGAMA PFM COOPERATIVE (ABIY GEBREMICHAEL. 2006)”

Members differ from non members by the planted forest seedlings, coffee seedlings and minimum of 4 varieties of fruits they took from the project. Agroforestry was very special to the area during the project activity which changed the livelihood of members. In terms of forest product utilization, members are not different from non members at the time of this evaluation due to absence of proper administration by committee. The profit share to members was not started at the time so that members are not more beneficial than non members. ...The forest seedling plantation was very less. It was below 10% relative to development plan indicated on main PFM action plan document. This problem was due to absence of strong participation in members to plant seedlings. ... There was no report from guards in the plot which can show there is problem by illegal users or not. So we can say it is for only the formality fulfillment. However it was orally reported to me that, one cordial was cut for lumber from *Qidda* plot and illegal person got in prison after report from the plot forest guards to cooperative. ... No clear application of utilization of forest products according although indicated in original action plan. The committee did not start to apply utilization plan due to absence of confidence which was

related to less awareness about PFM. Members and non member use similarly which affects the participation as a whole. However no significant illegal tree cutting and selling observed there. Non timber products in the forest are not managed and utilized by members but illegal users collect season by season. It shows less management system and coordination by committee and less support from government bodies. ... [F]orest development, protection and utilization action plan. Also the roles, responsibilities, rules and regulations of all individual sectors (PFM members, government sectors, kebele administration, DA's, etc) ... Its application was very less ... less participation of members was main factor. Its composition or quality is very good (no over or under planning)... According to attendance, there exist a member who did not come for meeting or development works till from starting of PFM (only registered). ... This was due to non difference in member and non member's benefit. This is also attributed to traditional non member users of forest at starting period of PFM. Since most forest dependents (direct users of forest are *Menja clan*) they were registered without their interest but they did not participate in PFM due to less awareness. ... Generally, members are not participating according to the main action plan document set. They do not obey the rules and regulations properly. The meeting time is also very less. Motivation of participants is in general very less.

They learned the importance of forest by going to non-forested land in other areas by the sponsorship of the project. Before that, they did not give value to their forest. After restriction of use by the project to members, many farmers of the kebele asked to be a participant but due to the logic of capacity of forest, they are not accepted by cooperatives. This made high tension or disagreement between members and non-members (low inter-social relation).

## ANNEX 7: REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

In an EPRDF document (EPRDF 2003:31 in Mulugeta Abebe 2005:227) revolutionary democracy is explained as

The liberal democracy option under the leadership of the bourgeoisie is foreclosed. Given that the road to liberal democracy option is closed for the next several decades, Ethiopian state should only rely on the peasantry. Only a party or government that primarily depends on the peasantry as a social base and rallies the industrial workers and the urban poor can become the champion of democracy and at the same time successfully carries out capitalist socio-economic construction in Ethiopia. therefore, not only should there be an organization which can usher in democracy and accomplish capitalist construction in radical and revolutionary fashion, but also should ensure that the broad masses of people (the peasantry, the industrial workers and the urban poor) are the primary beneficiaries of the outcomes of revolutionary and radical reforms. This order or social system can be labeled as revolutionary democracy, for the revolution is rigorously carried out in a radical and

revolutionary fashion. It can also be considered as a petty bourgeoisie democratic revolution, for the core social base of the revolution is the peasantry. The only political organization that has exclusive realms on building revolutionary democratic political order in Ethiopia, is therefore, EPRDF (...) EPRDF unequivocally and firmly stands for the most radical and fundamental socio-economic reforms in the country. ... EPRDF is in the driving seat of these reforms. The successful accomplishments of the re-forms are clearly linked with the existence of the EPRDF. In the absence of the EPRDF, neither basic socio-economic development nor radical reforms materialize, nor do the prospects bode well for a thriving society in Ethiopia.

## ANNEX 8: RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND STRATEGIES EXTRACT

To explain about the Rural-and Agriculture-Centered Development as a Means of Ensuring Rapid Economic Growth, we read in the document (2003:10)

In Ethiopia, we observe that there is an acute shortage of capital. This is expected to remain a constraining factor over the short and medium term. By contrast, labor is abundant as Ethiopia has a large working population. Also, there is an adequate supply of land. Rapid economic growth can be realized only if we can adopt a strategy that promotes the economic uses of our limited capital resources and more extensive application of our labor and land resources particularly the former. If we pursue a development strategy that does not make much use of labor and land resources in economic activity, the contribution of such factors of production to Ethiopia's development will be forestalled, thereby causing a pace of development that is well below potential. If, on the other hand, we rely too heavily on capital as a basis of our development effort, then our efforts will be curtailed by the limited availability of this resource. Our development strategy that is centered on agriculture and rural development promotes a judicious use of factors of production. Some eighty-five percent of Ethiopia's population lives in rural areas and is engaged in agricultural production. Although capital is especially scarce in rural Ethiopia, the bulk of the land is in the hands of the rural population. Thus, strategies that promote the use of the country's labor and land resources while relying less on capital should embrace rural development and agricultural production that provides the basic livelihood of most of Ethiopia's rural population. Such a focus will allow the extensive and/or intensive use of both labor and land without the need for much capital. Agriculture is a sector in which our resource potential can be used to a high degree for rapid and sustained economic growth.

## ANNEX 9: POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

In the RDPS we read about participation (65-74):

[T]he most important manifestation of farmers' participation in rural development is the production and investment activities which they undertake on their farms. ... Stating the importance of the participation of the people in rural development is one thing; addressing correctly the question of what should be done to ensure participation is quite another. Farmers should be involved out of conviction and commitment and not on instructions and orders handed down from above. This should not however mean that government cannot and should not take measures to promote genuine participation in the development process. It can and it should. ... Participation means that the people should be able to discuss and consult among themselves the various development alternatives **presented to them**. They should **receive** clear explanations on issues that are not clear to them. ... In order to motivate farmers to participate in rural development with interest and commitment, the first priority is to present them with a development alternative which they believe will maximize their welfare and gains ... It should be explained to farmers that the alternative presented is the one that maximizes their welfare most ... **The explanations should be given repeatedly**, indicating various scenarios and strategies ... It is obvious that the efforts being to ensure that women, who comprise half of the population, get their share of the benefits and gains from such development... But this is not the only reason. Trying to undertake rural development without their participation actually means numerically putting out of use some 50 percent of the potential productive capacity of the country. No meaningful rural development can be realized without their participation. ... When argued that emphasis should be placed on mothers and children in disease prevention and primary health care, **the idea is not to give the impression that their lives and health carry greater value than those of other people. This is absolutely not the case**. The point to be made is that the emphasis given to women's health education is derived from the reality that women care for more people than just for themselves, and as such their contribution to the health of the nation in general carries more weight. ...

Energies of the people can be mobilized only when they are organized, or when they have effective and well functioning organizations of their own ... Therefore, the task of convincing people, and having them implement development strategies is closely associated with the task of strengthening popular organizations ... Particularly kebele councils should be bodies that can reliably ensure the participation of the people. **Efforts should be made to enable all members of kebele councils, particularly those kebele members with great social influence, to fully understand and appreciate the development path being pursued**, to be fully convinced of its merits and to implement it on their own farm plots and backyard horticulture, and also to mobilize the people at large to actively take part in the development

work. ... it is the kebele council forums which are decisive ***in persuading the people and mobilizing them for the execution of development tasks***. The persuasion campaigns should be aimed at members of kebele councils. The intention is to encourage members of kebele councils to reinforce development paths and strategies with their own legal decisions, ***after being convinced of the merits of these development directions***, to actively participate in the development efforts as coordinators of the people, and to act as vanguard executors of the development strategies in their own backyard gardening or in collective development ventures. (emphasis added)