

Forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia

Histories, arrangements, and practices

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ACP	Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific
ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
AFC	Agama Forest Cooperative
AI	Agricultural Intensification
BERSMP	Bale Eco-Region Sustainable Management Programme
BFCDP	Bonga Forest Conservation and Development Project
BNFPA	Bonga National Forest Priority Area
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCD	Convention to Combat Desertification
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CF	Consolidated Fund
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CPR	Common Pool Resource
CRGE	Climate-Resilient Green Economy
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
CSE	Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia
DAG	Development Assistance Group
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DP	Design Principle
DSW	‘Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung’
ECFF	Environment and Coffee Forest Forum
EEPFE	Environmental Economics Policy Forum for Ethiopia
EFA	Ethiopian Foresters’ Association
EFAP	Ethiopian Forestry Action Program
EHRS	Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study
EIAR	Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
EWL-NRA	Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FARM-Africa	Food and Agricultural Research Management–Africa
FAWCDA	Forest and Wildlife Conservation and Development Authority
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FfE	Forum for Environment
FMA	Forest Management Agreement
FRC	Forestry Research Centre
FSS	Forum for Social studies
GDP	Gross Domestic Products
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation

GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
KFCFCU	Kaffa Forest Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union
IFMP	Integrated Forest Management Programme
IFRI	International Forestry Resources and Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAFG	Multi-Actor Forest Governance
MLFG	Multi-level Forest Governance
MSCC	Most Similar Cases Comparisons
NABU	Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union
NCS	National Conservation Strategy
NFP	the Netherlands Fellowship Programme
NFPA	National Forest Priority Area
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Product
NTFP-PFM-RD	Non-Timber Forest Product-Participatory Forest Management-Research and Development
OFWE	Oromiya Forest and Wildlife Enterprise
PAA	Policy Arrangement Approach
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PBA	Practice Based Approach
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PFM-WG	Participatory Forest Management Working Group
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council
PNMU	Participatory Natural Resource Management Unit
RCS	Regional Conservation Strategies
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RDPS	Rural Development Policy and Strategy
SEPDM	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SNNPR	Southern Nation, Nationalities, and People's Region
STD	Sequential Theory of Decentralization
SUPFM	Scaling-Up Participatory Forest Management
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASS	Wageningen School of Social Sciences
WCS	World Conservation Strategy
WFP	World Food Programme
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Preface and acknowledgements

In November 1998, after obtaining my BSc degree in forestry from Haramaya University (formerly known as Alemaya University of Agriculture), I was employed as a professional forester in one of the 58 national forest priority areas in Ethiopia, located in the south-east of the country. I started the new job with a lot of energy and enthusiasm to apply the knowledge and skill that I had gained at university relating to forest management and natural resource conservation. I started my new assignment with a preliminary study to have an overview of this forest priority area and familiarize myself with the surroundings and the people. According to the cadastral map found in the forestry department, the area of the forest estate was about 21,000 hectares. After my first reconnaissance however, I discovered that the actual forested area was not more than 5000 hectares. More than two-thirds of the so-called national forest priority area was occupied by settlement villages and had been converted into a mosaic of scattered trees on agricultural land, including coffee and 'khat' (*Catha edulis*) plantations, and pasture lands. To my surprise, most of the coffee seedlings planted inside the forest reserve had been supplied to the 'illegal' settlers by a government office through the agricultural extension programme. These settlers had access to other agricultural extension services also, such as improved cereal seeds and animal husbandry.

I started to question how the government could promote agricultural extension inside the state forest reserve. The forest proclamation effective at the time states: 'no person shall cut any tree, utilize the products thereof, or perform other activities in protected forest.' This proclamation clearly stipulates that either temporary or permanent settlement, grazing domestic animals, hunting activity, or keeping beehives inside a protected forest reserve are strictly prohibited. However, what I saw in practice contradicted not only this legal provision but also the often-proclaimed principle of 'sustainable forest management.' Thus, my immediate priority was to develop an operational plan on how to enforce the forest law and stop the on-going forest 'destruction.' This included a plan for how and where to relocate the settlers and establish a clear boundary for the forest estate. To implement this plan, the legal team in the forestry department initiated a court case against about 250 settlers. The court unanimously decided that all settlers were in violation of the 1994 forest law and should be evacuated immediately. However, this evacuation never happened and, paradoxically, the number of illegal settlers doubled within a two-year period. This was a very shocking and challenging moment in my professional career. At first, the problem appeared to reflect ineffective law enforcement and a lack of awareness about forest management and nature conservation. However, this event stimulated me to consider the challenge as not merely a technical issue of law enforcement and forest management but rather as a complex and dynamic social problem. I started to investigate the reasons why the settlers encroached onto forest land, why the court's ruling about the evacuation of the illegal settlers was not enforced, and what other conflicts of interest and political games were going on that militated against the implementation of sustainable forest management.

After three and a half years of field experience as both an expert and a project coordinator in this forest priority area, I joined the then Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization (EARO), now renamed as the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR). Working in this organization gave me several opportunities to visit and observe the situations in the other national and regional forest priority areas in the country. In all cases, the relationships between forestry personnel, local administrations, and the surrounding community were far from harmonious. They had not only conflicting interests but also contrasting views concerning the problems and solutions relating to forest resource management. In view of these observations, I decided to pursue my MSc and PhD studies at Wageningen University, focusing on the economic and socio-political aspects of forest and related natural resource governance in Ethiopia.

In my master's degree, I tried to understand and address institutional factors that affect collective action and sustainable management of common property resources. After graduation, I was engaged for four years in action research on the subject. I started to feel increasingly the need to further deepen my scientific/theoretical knowledge and decided to start a PhD study, the result of which is the present dissertation.

This PhD study has been a long journey into the breadth and depth of the scientific world in order to search for theoretical tools that can help to comprehend and elucidate the persisting social riddles in relation to sustainable management of forest resources in Ethiopia. This journey brought me into contact with several people who helped me in many ways to achieve my goals. Among these people, I am profoundly grateful to Prof Bas Arts for giving me the chance to be his PhD student at the Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group. His kindness and guidance in science were my constant sources of energy and inspiration throughout the long and demanding research process. Besides his close supervision and guidance during my studies at Wageningen, his visits to my field work in Ethiopia were very helpful in strengthening my research process. Bas also invited me (together with other international PhD students) to his house and hometown, Nijmegen. I would like to thank Bas and his partner, Miriam, for their hospitality. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to my co-promoter Dr. K. F. Wiersum. His unwavering support and guidance from the conception to the completion of this thesis were unprecedented and will always be remembered. Dr. Wiersum also generously translated my summary into Dutch and for this I am very grateful.

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My profound gratitude goes to my Dutch family Hans Vos and Iteke Looijenga, who made The Netherlands my second home. Hans and Iteke are my real friends and social caretakers to whom I returned for all my needs and support. Dear Hans and Iteke, I will treasure forever your friendship and hospitality. Finally, but not least, I would like to extend my deep gratitude to my wife Merge Kebede, our children Nathan, Samuel and Yeri, my mother Keneni Geleta, and my brothers and sisters. Thank you very much for your consistent encouragement and moral support throughout my study period.

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Alemayehu Negassa Ayana

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Chapter 1

Introduction



Rural landscape in West Ethiopia. Photo by the author.

Most things, even the greatest moments on earth, have their beginnings in something small.

~ Lauren Oliver

1.1 The research setting

Owing to the regressive practice pursued for quite a long time and despite the existence of favorable conditions for forest resource development, conservation and utilization, our country was not able to harness the expected economic, social and natural benefits from the forest sub-sector. Deforestation for agricultural land as a result of ever increasing population growth, increase in demand for fuel wood and construction material, illegal settlement within forests, logging and the expansion of illegal trade are at the forefront of the factors contributing to the stated nominal benefits from forest resources. This has resulted in the deterioration of our forest resources, reduction of biodiversity, incidences of soil erosion, land slide, land degradation and desertification, and recurrence of drought and famine. (FDRE, 2007: Preamble).

This thesis deals with forest governance in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is an agrarian developing country where renewable natural resources constitute the foundation of its economy (EPA, 1997; Kefauver, 2011). Forests are one of the vital renewable resources that support the livelihoods of millions of people in Ethiopia. They provide a wide range of goods and services including food, medicine, energy, shelter, clean water, land stabilization, erosion control, and regulation of climate change (Mulugeta and Tadesse, 2010). Despite their significance, Ethiopia is fast losing its forest resources due to intense and unsustainable human uses coupled with institutional and policy deficiencies (Tadesse, 2001; Yonas, 2001; Melaku, 2003). For example, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) reported that the country lost over 2 million hectares of forest between 1990 and 2005 alone, with an annual average loss of 140,000 hectares (FAO, 2010). Currently, the country has about 12.2 million hectares of forests, nearly 12% of Ethiopia's total land area. This is considerably lower than the 20.8% average forest cover for East Africa (Hommeier, 2011). Since forest loss and forest degeneration are often inherently linked to weak governance structures and processes (Umemiya *et al.*, 2010), amongst other things, forest governance has been selected as the key theme of this research. Moreover, experiences drawn from the study of forest governance can provide common lessons for other related natural resources such as biodiversity and nature conservation areas.

Over the course of history, a number of forestry-related policies in the form of guidelines, laws, and regulations have been formulated and implemented in Ethiopia to address forestry issues and problems. These policies have changed considerably over the last half century, with rapid changes from the 1990s onwards. A number of factors contributed to these changes, including fluxes in the broader political economy, the continuous challenge of deforestation and the associated environmental problems, and the dynamics in international forest-related discourses. These changes were manifested not only in terms of policy content such as objectives and steering instruments, but also in terms of the general policy framework within which these objectives are embedded, as well as in terms of the steering processes through which these objectives are translated into practice. These changes, which thus involve content, context, and process, are referred to as *governance dynamics* in this thesis. Hence, governance encompasses the *content* of steering (policy), the *process* of policymaking (politics), and the *system* of rule (polity) (Treib *et al.*, 2007). This conceptualization of governance is taken as a point of departure for exploring changes and continuities in Ethiopian forest policy over the past five decades. The thesis thus presents a comprehensive and dynamic perspective on forest governance in Ethiopia by focusing not only on the contents of policy, but also on the framework that defines the fundamental assumptions and principles for that policy, and on the question of who should be involved or excluded from decision-making processes

and policy implementation. It also systematically links the dynamics in forest governance in Ethiopia with the broader political-economic development in the country and international forest-related processes and trends. This kind of comprehensive and systematic forest governance analysis is scant in Ethiopia.

Given the above considerations, the general objective of this study is *to contribute to the scientific analysis of governance from the perspective of a country under-represented in the burgeoning governance literature and to provide comprehensive explanations of the institutionalization and performance of the various forest governance reforms in Ethiopia*. It is hoped that the output of this study will assist in designing more applicable strategies or systems for forest and related natural resource governance in Ethiopia and in other more or less similar countries and contexts.

In this thesis, reform refers to a structural change in governance (including change in policy content, framework, and/or process) deliberately induced in order to redress perceived errors in the prior and existing governing system (see Grindle and Thomas, 1991). Here, ‘structural’ implies change that goes beyond incremental or autonomous changes of policy and governance that would have happened anyway.

This chapter provides a general introduction to the study. First, it specifies the context of the study by giving an overview of the dynamics in forest governance in Ethiopia (1.2), followed by a brief background to the political economy in the country (1.3). Then, it outlines the theoretical concepts that guided the study and the analytical framework (1.4) and identifies the specific research objectives and questions (1.5). Next, the overall research design and methodology are explained (1.6). And finally, the structure of the thesis is presented (1.7).

1.2 Dynamics in forest governance in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has been experiencing multiple challenges in governing its forest and related environmental resources for quite a long time. These challenges have become more significant in the last five decades as a result of considerable changes in the socio-economic and political spheres in the country and the growing impact of global trends and processes. Successive regimes in Ethiopia have attempted to effectively govern forest resources. The governance approach and emphasis have varied greatly over time along with the prevailing national economic and political orientation and the dynamics in global forest-related discourses. The first professionally organized forest management intervention started in Ethiopia during the brief period of Italian annexation (1936–41) (Melaku, 2003). The Italians issued about twenty decrees and circulars on forestry, focusing mainly on forest inventory and exploitation. In 1937, they established the first forest administration called *Milizia Forestale* (Forest Militia). However, the Italians were expelled from the country before adequately implementing their forest management plans. After returning from exile, the Imperial government established a new forestry institution in 1944 (Tadesse, 2001). The primary policy focus of the Imperial government at the time was agricultural modernization and fast economic growth (Melaku, 2003), and forest resources were primarily considered as a potential input to realize this modernization drive. The activities of the forestry agency focused largely on redistributing forest land for conversion to the expanding commercial agriculture and on the issuance of permits for the exploitation of forest products. In 1965, the Imperial government issued a new forest law that was mainly geared toward exploitation. This law has been characterized as being weak and vague (Tadesse, 2001; Melaku, 2003).

A new era in forest governance started in 1975 after a new socialist government came to power. This government gave high political attention to forestry. The forest development initiatives were converged with socialist principles such as nationalization of land and natural resources. These initiatives resulted in the delineation of large tracts of national forest reserves and the establishment of grand state-owned production forests covering about 4.8 million hectares of land (Kidane, 2002). Notwithstanding these efforts by the socialist government in forestry development and capacity building, deforestation and forest degradation continued unabated (Melaku, 2003). The top-down, command-and-control arrangement of the socialist government only buttressed the organizational muscle of its forestry agency, while proving weak and inadequate in terms of coordinating other stakeholders to realize its objectives. Particularly, the relationship between local communities and the state forest agency was very hostile (Yeraswork, 2000; Tadesse, 2001). Consequently, following the fall of the socialist regime in 1991, the forestry organization became weakened. This resulted in catastrophic forest destruction, and during the transition period (1991–95) the country's forest cover was reported as being halved (Melaku, 2003). The institutional void was aggravated by the worsening economic situation during the transition period and communities' retaliation against the socialist government's coercive and non-participatory policies (Yeraswork, 2000; Aspen, 2002).

In response to the alarming scale of deforestation and within the framework of social, political, and economic changes initiated since the early 1990s, two major forest governance reforms took place in Ethiopia. The two reforms were embedded in the on-going processes of socio-political changes at both national and international level. On the one hand, the government initiated a process of decentralization of the forest management authority to subnational units of government. This reform has evolved within the broader political framework characterized by the change from a unitary state to a federal arrangement, involving the transfer of major policy issues from the central state to regional governments. Within this framework, a new forest law was enacted in 1994, specifying the competencies of federal and regional states. The regional states are also mandated by the constitution to formulate and implement their own regional forest laws. At the same time, a second reform was initiated around the mid-1990s that enabled non-state actors, such as NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs), to be involved in forest governance. This reform was greatly stimulated by international policy processes and the shift in socio-political trends, particularly the growing recognition of the scope of forest co-governance that reconsidered the role of local communities in tropical forest management (Ostrom, 1990; Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; Arnold, 2001; Carlsson and Berkes, 2005). In order to achieve better environmental, social, and economic outcomes compared to the conventional state-led forest management approach in Ethiopia, environmental NGOs introduced the participatory forest management (PFM) arrangement around the mid-1990s. PFM is a co-governance institutional arrangement where forest management responsibilities and use rights are legally shared between a government agency and a CBO. The development of the PFM arrangement has rapidly expanded and transferred the management responsibilities of more than one million hectares of forests, nearly one-third of the country's high forests, to organized local communities (PNMU, 2013). Besides experimenting with and piloting the new approach in the field, NGOs have played key roles in stimulating intellectual discussions, mobilizing resources, and eventually inserting PFM objectives into mainstream forest policy and practice. As a result, the PFM arrangement was formally recognized in the new forest law issued in 2007.

The degree of institutionalization and performance of these two forest governance reforms has been controversial among scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and international development partners.

Although some analysts claim a major change (Asafw *et al.*, 2001; Jagger *et al.*, 2005; Bradstock *et al.*, 2007; Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009; Takahashi and Todo, 2012; Aklilu *et al.*, 2014), most commentators are sceptical about the progress of these reforms (Yihenew, 2002; Keeley and Scoones, 2003; Melaku, 2003; Stellmacher, 2007; Abrar and Inoue, 2012, 2013). The sceptics emphasize a continuity of the conventional state-centric and hierarchical resource governing system in Ethiopia, illustrated, for example, by the continuation of the state ownership of land and forest resources and the mandate vested in the federal government to set standards and formulate policy frameworks concerning these resources (Keeley and Scoones, 2003; Davies, 2008; Melaku, 2008; Chinigo, 2011). Moreover, the question of how and to what extent non-state actors such as NGOs have been involved in policymaking, given the closed policymaking tradition in Ethiopia, remains contentious in the on-going debates.

Although previous studies provide useful insights and background, they do not give a systematic analysis of the currently on-going multi-dimensional and complex forest governance processes in Ethiopia. This lack of systematic assessment is caused by three main factors. First, forest policy research is a new field of attention in Ethiopia. Much of the previous body of work focused on technical forest management issues, with policy and institutional analysis receiving less research attention. As noted by Melaku (2003:14), ‘most research in the forestry sector in Ethiopia has been technical while the socio-political side has remained largely ignored. Technical forestry research, as vital as it is, could achieve little in a situation where constraints outside the technical domain remained unidentified and unresolved.’ Second, the scattered forest policy studies that have recently been carried out focus mostly on local level institutional analysis and address specific issues such as property rights and livelihoods (Yihenew, 2002; Stellmacher, 2007; Yemiru, 2011). These studies often emphasize the institutional characteristics of innovative cases, such as the PFM arrangement, but devote little attention to how the new arrangement fits in the overall processes of socio-political changes. Third, many of the forest policy-related studies in Ethiopia are descriptive or at best base their analysis on a limited theoretical framework, mainly the rational choice model and institutional theory; thus, they fall short of thoroughly analysing the dynamic and complex forest governance processes and practices (see section 1.4.2). In light of this knowledge gap and other limitations, this thesis examines the forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia in order to understand and explain factors and events that shaped these dynamics, and reflects on the competing views concerning the performances of the two forest governance reforms. The dynamics in political economy in Ethiopia and their relationship with the evolution of forest governance is thereby closely scrutinized.

1.3 Dynamics in Ethiopia’s political economy

The process of forest governance change in Ethiopia is not autonomous; rather, it is embedded in a more general process of political economy in the country. Although the aims of curbing deforestation and satisfying the people’s socio-economic aspirations were the common defining characteristics of all successive forest governance arrangements developed in Ethiopia, both the interpretation of deforestation and intervention measures have continuously been reshaped in tandem with the frequently shifting political economy of the country. The Imperial regime that ruled until 1974 sought to address forestry issues within the dominant agricultural modernization paradigm that aimed to transform the country from an agrarian to an industrial economy. Although there was an effort to halt deforestation, forestry issues were largely overshadowed by the political drive for agricultural expansion. Besides the Imperial government’s total

disregard of sustainable forest management, the prevailing resource ownership system, where a small landed class owned about seventy-five percent of the forest areas, did not provide an incentive for local communities to engage in forest development and conservation (Tadesse, 2001). This landed class, which controlled both the legislative and executive arms of the state, also shaped the forest policy objectives during this period (Melaku, 2003). The Imperial regime's agricultural modernization paradigm eventually failed either to halt deforestation or to meet the envisaged target of economic transformation (Clapham, 1988; Tadesse, 2001).

The socialist government that came to power in 1974 associated the persistent deforestation with the Imperial regime's policy failure. This is illustrated in the preamble to the 1980 forest law, which reads, 'Ethiopia's forest which formerly covered most of the country has been depleted by the defunct feudo-bourgeois order for selfish interest of the aristocracy and the nobility.' The nationalization of forest resources and the establishment of a strong bureaucratic authority were seen as a solution to deal with the problem of deforestation and to enhance the contribution of the forestry sector to the national economy. Although forestry and environmental issues undoubtedly received growing policy attention under the socialist government, the institutional measures did not bring about major results in sustainable resource management. Most commentators blamed the highly centralized and technocratic approach for the failure of forest management interventions under the socialist government (Yeraswork, 2000; Tadesse, 2001; Melaku, 2003). Tadesse (2001) noted that all development policies during this period hinged on the lofty socialist principles of constructing a new socio-political order in which the state assumes a central role in governing rather than on genuine environmental and economic considerations.

The incumbent government that came to power following the demise of the socialist regime in 1991 adopted a decentralized federal polity and a democratic political process (Young, 1997; Vaughan, 2003). Parallel to the change in polity and politics, the principal economic policy also shifted from a command to a free-market economy (Keller, 2002). The 1995 constitution underpinned this remarkable shift in the political economy and reconfigured the nation-state as a federal democratic republic (FDRE, 1995). Despite the economic liberalization pursued since 1991, the new government has largely preserved the land policy inherited from the previous socialist government – which prevents the private ownership of land – against pressure from international donors and advice from domestic scholars (Davies, 2008). However, departing from its predecessor, the new policy provides for a decentralized framework of land administration, including forest lands.

Given these dynamic changes and continuities in Ethiopia's political economy, one can wonder how and to what extent these macro political and economic processes have shaped the development of forest governance. This inquiry is important not only because of the unique social, political, and historical features in Ethiopia, but also because of the complex and paradoxical forest governance practices that have emerged in the country. For instance, the inception of forest governance reform that enabled the involvement of non-state actors such as NGOs and CBOs in forest governance appears paradoxical to the mainstream perception that portrays Ethiopia as a 'semi-authoritarian' state with a closed policymaking tradition (Ottaway, 2003; Vaughan, 2003; Mulugeta, 2005; Aalen, 2011; Kasleder, 2011). These new actors have been playing an important role in forest policymaking in recent decades – for example, in catalysing the adoption of a new PFM approach into mainstream forest policy and practice. Yet, there is no formal mechanism or clear rules for the involvement of these actors in decision making. Consequently, it is not

clear how and to what extent these actors have influenced the decision-making process. Moreover, the dispersion of forest management authorities across multiple administrative tiers implies that decision making is no longer the sole mandate of the national government and its agencies. On the other hand, the national government has remained mandated to set standards and policy frameworks on affairs concerning environmental and natural resource management; this has bestowed a vital decision-making role to the central government. Against this backdrop, this thesis assesses how and to what extent the broader development of Ethiopia's political economy has shaped the dynamics in forest governance, i.e., the thesis examines the link between the broader political-economic framework and the dynamics in the forest governance domain. To conduct this assessment, the concepts of governance and change in governance are employed.

1.4 Concepts and theoretical framework

1.4.1 Governance and change in governance

To analyse and explain the dynamics in the forest governance domain within the framework of the broader political and economic process in Ethiopia, this thesis employs the concepts of *governance* and *change in governance*. These concepts have recently been widely studied in the political sciences and international relations, development studies, and public administration, as well as in forest policy science (Kooiman, 2003; Kjaer, 2004; Treib *et al.*, 2007; Rametsteiner, 2009; Behagel, 2012). Although different scholars and proponents define governance differently, in most of the literature it is seen as processes or practices of governing (Behagel, 2012). Whether governing is undertaken by government or non-governmental actors, or by a combination of the two, is at the heart of most governance definitions. For example, Arts and Visseren-Hamakers (2012:242) broadly define governance as 'the many ways in which public and private actors from the state, market and/or civil society govern public issues at multiple scales, autonomously or in mutual interaction.' This definition of governance recognizes that the current trends of governing practice involve not only the central institutions of the state, but also private and voluntary actors and organizations. The definition also acknowledges the multiple scales and the various styles of governance arrangements.

As mentioned in section 1.1, according to Treib *et al.* (2007), governance encompasses the process of policymaking (politics), a system of rule (polity), and steering instruments (policy). The political dimension concerns the ways and means in which citizens' divergent preferences are translated into effective policy choices. The polity dimension represents the institutional structure or system of rule that shapes actors' actions, for example, as hierarchical, centralized, or dispersed styles of decision making. The policy dimension is about instruments that define how particular policy goals should be achieved. Examples of the various governance instruments include legally binding or non-binding (soft) provisions, a rigid or flexible approach to implementation, and coercive or incentive-based instruments. This conceptualization of governance in the three dimensions of politics, polity, and policy is particularly apt for this study, as it ties together the broader political processes and system of rule with the policy outcomes in a specific domain – in this case, the forestry sector.

The term governance is also used to distinguish one mode of governing from another (e.g., to contrast

the traditional hierarchical or state-centric governing with 'new' forms of multilevel or multi-actor governance), or as a way of encompassing all modes of governing (Colebatch, 2009). Treib *et al.* (2007) argue that the narrow classification of modes of governance as 'old' or 'new' is of little analytical value and cannot grasp a broad range of different decision-making patterns and policy outputs. Thus, this thesis adopts an encompassing conception of governance and focuses on *changes* in the forms, mechanisms, scales or locations, and temporal sequences of governing (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004; Behagel, 2012). Broadly, three interrelated changes can be discerned in the on-going discussions concerning governance – *horizontal change*, *vertical change*, and *temporal change*. Horizontal changes signify the increasing involvement of non-state actors from the market and civil society in the governance process (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004; Rhodes, 2007). This perspective stresses the growing destabilization of the traditional state-centric steering in the face of advancing roles and leverages of non-state actors in the governing process. The horizontal change in governance is described variously as multi-actor governance (Rametsteiner, 2009; Newell *et al.*, 2012), network governance (Rhodes, 2000), and co-governance (Kooiman, 2003). Despite the variation in the nomenclature, they all deal with the new form or mechanism of governance through negotiation, coordination, and collective roles between actors, rather than command in decision making (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004; Newell *et al.*, 2012). In the forest policy domain, for example, this horizontal change in governance has witnessed the emergence of a broad constellation of new actors that challenged the conventional state-centric governing style, where state actors predominately shaped forest policy paths (Humphreys, 2008; Howlett *et al.*, 2009). Prominent amongst these new actors are the NGOs (both local and international) that have diversified their sphere of engagement from their conventional policy implementation role to advocacy, policy evaluation, and monitoring activities (Arts, 2005). The appearance of the new actors corresponded with the introduction of new approaches to forest governance such as PFM and forest certification (Arts and Visseren-Hamakers, 2012).

The second perspective in the study on changing governance is about vertical change. Vertical change essentially focuses on the dispersion of the locus of governance across different territorial levels or administrative scales – from local level to nation-state and beyond. This dimension of governance is described in the literature as multilevel governance (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Van der Zouwen, 2006) or decentralization (Ribot, 2002a; Agrawal *et al.*, 2008). Both conceptions imply that decision-making authority has been dispersed from the central state both downwards to regional and local units of government and upwards to supranational organizations such as UN agencies, also called *supranationalization* (Newell *et al.*, 2012). Much of the debate on the vertical change in governance focuses on the extent to which national government share decision-making authorities with actors on the other levels (Arnouts, 2010). It is about where policy decisions are made. In line with this, some scholars have reported that local and global actors have been gaining more authority and stake in decision making in recent decades (Arts and Visseren-Hamakers, 2012; Bernstein and Cashore, 2012). By contrast, others are critical of the degree of vertical shift in governance. These critics argue that the central government still retains massive power regardless of globalization and decentralization discourses (Ribot *et al.*, 2006; Nelson and Agrawal, 2008; Nelson, 2010; Alden Wily, 2011; Hajjar *et al.*, 2012).

The third perspective in the governance change studies focuses on the temporal sequence of change. This perspective specifically focuses on chronological sequences of change in which different governance arrangements (state centric, hierarchical, multi-actor, multilevel, and so on) appear at different points in time (Arnouts, 2010). Most of the literature suggests a sequence of change from the *old* hierarchical or

state-centric steering to the *new* multi-actor or multilevel governance (Peters, 2000; Kooiman, 2003; Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004). For instance, Pierre (2000) recognizes governance as a continuum ranging from the hierarchical or state-centric steering to society-centred governance or *governing without government*. In this view, state-centric, or old, governance relates to governing activities where governmental actors dominate the policy process; whereas, in the society-centred, or new, governance, the governing activities are allegedly dominated by non-governmental actors (Peters, 2000). On the other hand, Arnouts (2010) reported a reverse process of change from *new* to *old* governance in nature governance in the Netherlands.

The fundamental question in all three conceptualizations concerning governance change is whether or to what extent the change has occurred from one governance arrangement to the other. In order to systematically assess these changes and ascertain whether and to what extent the dynamics in forest governance in Ethiopia comply with the claim in the scientific literature, a theoretical searchlight or analytical framework is required. The following sub-section presents this analytical framework built on the *policy arrangement approach*.

1.4.2 The policy arrangement approach

Several theoretical approaches have been applied to analyse forest and environmental governance. Rational choice models and institutional theories are the two dominant approaches in this discipline (Arts, 2012). One of the premises of the rational choice model is that policy actors base their decisions on clear and rational cost-benefit calculations (Sabatier, 2007). These models also assume that policymaking is a linear and administrative (politically neutral) exercise (Grindle and Thomas, 1991). Both assumptions have been criticized. Concerning the first assumption, scholars argue that policy actors are socially, cultural, and politically bounded; and the world is less amenable to individual preferences (March and Olsen, 1989; Sabatier, 2007). Scholars have also challenged the plausibility of the rational choice model from the logic that policymaking is embedded within a complex socio-political and historical process at work in the real world (Hill and Hupe, 2002; Arts *et al.*, 2013). In line with this argument, Newell *et al.* (2012) claim that policymaking is the result of competing interpretations of problems and alternatives as well as attempts by political actors to influence the direction of political change. Kooiman (2003) also argues that policymaking is much more than a linear and technical-administrative exercise; it is a complex governing process involving resistance, evasion, and manipulation. Institutional theories focus on rules, norms, and beliefs, referred to as *institutions* that mediate human actions and interactions (Arts, 2012). Much institutional analysis tends to overstate the role of social structures such as political institutions, power hierarchies, and cultural convictions (Schmidt, 2008). Thus, this approach is often criticized as *deterministic*, i.e., favouring structural forces more than the role of agency and rational decision making and emphasizing stability over change (March and Olsen, 1989).

In order to overcome the shortcomings of both approaches, this thesis uses the policy arrangement approach (PAA) as an organizing analytical framework to understand and explain forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia. It is a suitable policy analysis tool for a specific field of study, such as forest governance (Arts and Leroy, 2006; Arts and Buizer, 2009). This tool was initially developed to study environmental policy dynamics (Van Tatenhove *et al.*, 2000; Arts and Leroy, 2006), and it has subsequently been elaborated by a number of authors to understand and explain the governance process and its performance in other

disciplines, such as forest and nature policy (Van der Zouwen, 2006; Arnouts, 2010), rural development (Boonstra, 2006), cultural heritage (De Boer, 2009), spatial planning and water governance (Wiering and Arts, 2006), and public health policy (Stassen *et al.*, 2010). The PAA is built upon other policy theories in the fields of institutionalism (March and Olsen, 1989), networking (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992), advocacy coalition (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1999), and discourse analysis (Hajer, 1995); therefore, it offers a comprehensive framework that addresses agency, structure, interests, and ideas in a dynamic perspective (Arts and Buizer, 2009). It takes a midway position along the agency–structure continuum; thus, the PAA framework bridges the daily policy processes with the social and political structures within which actors operate and policy change takes place (Lieberink, 2006; Van der Zouwen, 2006). For example, the PAA framework enables one to assess and relate the day-to-day activities of policy actors, including forestry agents, with the subtle change in the organizational practices. By employing the PAA framework, this study adds a new dimension to the previous forest and environmental policy studies in Ethiopia (Yihenew, 2002; Melaku, 2003; Stellmacher, 2007; Stellmacher and Mollinga, 2009) that, as already stated, based their analysis mainly on the rational choice model and institutional theories.

A policy arrangement refers to the way in which a certain policy domain – such as forest policy – is temporarily shaped in terms of four interrelated dimensions: *discourses*, *actors' coalition*, *rules*, and *power and resources* (Arts and Leroy, 2006). Arts and Buizer (2009:343) conceptualized policy discourses as ‘interpretative schemes, ranging from formal policy concepts and texts to popular narratives and story lines, which give meaning to a policy issue and domain.’ Actors’ coalition is comparable to *discourse coalition*, as distinguished by Hajer (1995), and can be defined as a group of actors who share a policy discourse as well as policy-relevant resources, in the context of the given rules of the game. Actors can be organizations or individuals involved in a specific policy issue. The rules dimension consists of various instruments and procedures that define responsibilities, access, and interaction among actors (Van der Zouwen, 2006). The fourth dimension of a policy arrangement is power and resources. Power concerns the ability of actors or actor coalitions to mobilize resources and influence policy outcomes (Arts and Buizer, 2009). Resources relate to assets that policy actors have or can mobilize to achieve certain policy goals (Wiering and Arts, 2006).

These four PAA dimensions also address the three aspects of governance – polity, politics, and policy – introduced above as organizing concepts for this thesis. In this study, the rules dimension addresses both the institutional framework (polity) and the steering instruments (policy) embedded within this framework. The discourse and actors’ coalition dimensions focus mainly on the processes of policymaking (politics); and the power and resources dimension can relate to all three aspects of governance. For instance, the institutional framework (polity) depends on whether power and resources are centralized or dispersed; the nature of a policymaking process (politics) depends on how the actors involved in the decision-making process share power and resources; and the type of steering instruments (policy) depends on how these instruments distribute power and resources to the various actors. The PAA dimensions together also explain the interrelationship between polity, politics, and policy. For example, the PAA dimensions enable us to examine how the nature of the institutional framework affects possible actor constellations and also how the composition of actors involved in policymaking might affect the resultant policy instruments. Therefore, despite it being called a policy arrangement approach, the framework encompasses insights of polity, politics, and policy; thus, it is a suitable analytical tool to understand and explain the complex and dynamic forest governance process in Ethiopia.

In summary, this thesis employs the concepts of governance and change in governance as organizing (meta) theoretical concepts to sketch the broader picture of forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia. The PAA is used as the main analytical framework to understand and explain the mechanisms behind forest governance dynamics, and the related institutional changes and continuities. However, the *sequential theory of decentralization* (STD) and the *practice-based approach* (PBA) are employed in chapters 3 and 5, respectively, to complement the PAA analysis. These theories opened up new perspectives and could answer new sub-questions that the PAA could not.

1.5 Research objectives and questions

On the basis of the general research objective and the selected theoretical approach and conceptual framework, this thesis examines how forest governance has developed in Ethiopia over the years (temporal analysis), at multiple politico-administrative levels (vertical analysis), involving multiple actors (horizontal analysis). Also, its effect on local forest management practices is assessed. To address this specific objective, four research themes are elaborated in this thesis. The first theme focuses on the longitudinal evolution of forest governance from the post-World War II era to the present. It explores how forest governance has developed under the frequently shifting national political orientation and economic priorities on the one hand and the dynamics in global forest-related discourses on the other. It situates the development of forest policy in Ethiopia within the evolving international forestry-related debates and national policy contexts, including the dominant agricultural development paradigm. The second theme goes in-depth to examine the degree of institutional change in the decentralized or multilevel forest governance (MLFG) reform that has emerged in the last two decades. It explores how this new governance reform has developed and institutionalized at multiple politico-administrative levels by focusing specifically on national and regional (meso) administrative levels. It pays attention to how reform in the forest policy field is related to broader political economic development in the country. The third theme concerns the emerging role of non-governmental actors in forest policymaking, that is, the multi-actor forest governance reform or the horizontal diffusion of roles and responsibilities. It explores the dynamic link between the ongoing processes of socio-political changes, both at national and international level, which stimulated the involvement of non-governmental actors in policymaking processes and their achievements in the forest policy field since the early 1990s. The fourth theme critically reflects upon the local performance of the emerging multi-actor forest governance reform. Through an ethnographic case study, this theme examines the experiences and practices with PFM in one village in southwest Ethiopia, where this approach has been jointly implemented by NGOs and government agencies for nearly two decades. These four research themes conform to the four central research questions:

1. *How has forest governance historically evolved and changed over time in Ethiopia?* This question was further elaborated into the following specific sub-questions: What ideas have guided the changing process? What interests have been served, by whom, and by what means? What forest institutions have been built over time? And to what extent have the national (forest) policies been shaped by international forest-related discourses?
2. *How has the emerging multilevel forest governance reform institutionalized at federal and regional state level in Ethiopia?* This central question includes three specific research questions: How has

multilevel forest governance developed in Ethiopia? To what extent has the ‘new’ multilevel forest governance arrangement moved away from the ‘old’ centralized hierarchical governing system? Does the institutionalization of multilevel forest governance vary between regional states of Ethiopia, and if so, what explains the different degrees of change?

3. *To what extent has the emerging multi-actor mode of governance enabled non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to impact the development of forest policy in Ethiopia?* This central question addresses two specific research questions: What strategies did non-governmental actors such as NGOs use to impact the development of forest policy in Ethiopia? To what extent were NGOs themselves responsible for the adoption of the PFM approach in the formal forest policy?
4. *How has multi-actor forest governance reform – in the form of participatory forest management (PFM) – performed in practice at local level?* The specific research questions are: How has the PFM arrangement developed in Ethiopia in general and at local level in particular? How was the PFM arrangement acted upon locally? And to what extent has the PFM arrangement affected local forest practices, and the other way around?

The relevance of this thesis is threefold. (1) From a general scientific point of view, it sheds light on the mechanisms behind governance change and continuity from the perspective of a country that has unique social, historical, and political settings; hence, the study provides novel empirical information that can contribute to the on-going scientific debates on governance and change in governance. (2) From the point of view of the scientific literature on governance in Ethiopia, it introduces three new theoretical approaches – the PAA, the PBA, and the STD. The PAA offers a comprehensive framework for governance analysis, thus overcoming the limitations of most previous policy studies in Ethiopia that focus mainly on the role of traditional policy actors, such as state agents or political institutions. By employing PAA, this thesis reveals the often neglected role of non-state actors in forest policymaking. An insight from STD complemented the PAA framework to shed light on the contextual factors that influence the degree of institutional change in the MLFG reforms. The PAA framework was also combined with the practice based approach (PBA) to examine how externally introduced institutional changes are acted upon by embedded agencies. The PBA introduces the *logics of practice* that enable researchers to understand and explain how a specific forest governance arrangement is carried out in practice – the extent to which the new arrangement affects forest management practices and how a community situates itself in those practices or acts in relation to the new institutional arrangement. (3) From a more practical point of view, the thesis provides comprehensive empirical insights into how and why the new Ethiopian forest governance reforms are progressing or stagnating. It offers alternative explanations for the often conflicting views concerning the successes and failures of the institutionalization and performance of the multilevel and multi-actor forest governance reforms in Ethiopia. By analysing governance at multiple politico-administrative levels and from multi-actor perspectives, the thesis provides the comprehensive evidence necessary to draw lessons for designing more compatible strategies for natural resource management or for suggesting better ways of making policy.

1.6 Research methodology

This section introduces the overall research design and research method (techniques of data collection and analysis) employed in this thesis. The overall study consists of a series of four empirical case studies, each addressing one of the central research questions. Each case study used a specific set of methodologies, which are explained in this section only briefly. The detailed methodological specifications used in the various case studies are described in chapters 2 to 5, which report on the respective studies.

1.6.1 Research design

The selection of a research design depends on the question to be answered and the complexity of the phenomena to be studied (Yin, 1994). A case study is a suitable design to address the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions typical in social studies where the researcher has no control over the events, such as historical incidents. Yin describes a case study as an enquiry process that is particularly useful for thorough investigation and detailed understanding of complex and subtle social phenomena and their relationship with the context in which the events are occurring. The forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia, the primary object of this thesis, are responsive to diverse factors including the broader political and economic framework in which they are evolving and the dynamics within the forest policy domain itself. Thus, a case study is an appropriate research design as it allows an in-depth exploration of the phenomena under study (forest governance dynamics) and their relationship with the policy framework (the broader political and economic incidents). This thesis adopted a *nested* approach to case study research (see figure 1.1) in which a range of different case studies is situated within a broader case (see Lotz-Sisitka and Raven, 2004). A nested case study approach enables the researcher to select different methods and techniques to be used in different situations or to probe the different questions to be addressed in comprehensive research such as that for a thesis.

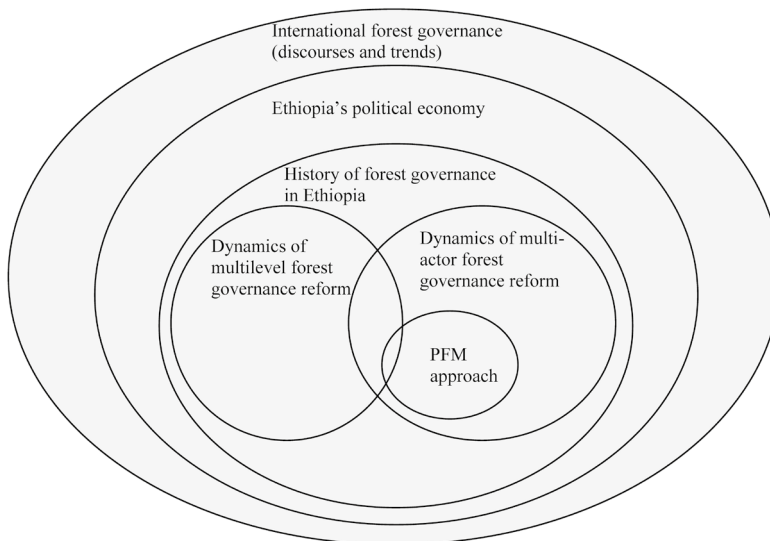


Figure 1.1 A nested case of Ethiopian forest governance dynamics

In accordance with this nested case study approach, the individual case studies addressing the four central research questions of this thesis adopted a specific research design. The first question was addressed by using a qualitative historical analysis approach. This approach follows the traditions of *process tracing* (George and Bennett, 2005), which involves systematic and theoretically informed analysis of historical narratives and processes. Process tracing enables the researcher to use multiple sources of evidence and to collect data not only from historical and contemporary documentation but also by direct measurement through observation and systematic intervention. The second question was approached by using the most similar cases comparisons (MSCC) approach for selecting and analysing two comparative cases. The MSCC approach is suitable for cases that have a number of common features but differences in contexts that are assumed to affect the phenomena or events to be studied (Mahoney, 2007). This approach allows a researcher to study complex social issues where the boundaries between the phenomena to be studied and the contexts in which they are occurring are not clearly evident (Yin, 1994; George and Bennett, 2005). In view of its similar orientation to the first research question, the third question was also addressed by the process tracing approach. In this case, the trajectories of change in the forest governance process in Ethiopia were systematically examined in light of the theoretical framework adopted (see Collier, 2011). The analysis started from the mid-1990s, when non-governmental actors introduced a new forest governance approach. To assess the fourth research question, a qualitative in-depth ethnographic case study approach was employed. The selection of an in-depth ethnographic approach was guided by the need to generate a thick and holistic description of the phenomena under investigation (the local social and forest management practices) and their settings. In all the cases, therefore, the research design was selected in accordance with the nature of the research question at hand and the empirical phenomena under investigation.

1.6.2 Research methods

This thesis adopted an eclectic approach and combined multiple data sources and data collection methods. Three main data collection methods were used: in-depth interviews, participant observation (ethnographic data collection method), and document analysis. The combination of different methods is useful both to validate the data and to collect comprehensive information about a complex process.

In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews are used to gain ideas and activate memories of people who have been involved in the case in question. This person can be an expert who is in charge of, or who has privileged knowledge or professional expertise about, the subject under investigation. An expert interview is particularly useful in disclosing the problem perceptions and the social constructions of reality beyond written rules (Yin, 2003). The interviewees in this study were selected on the basis of their roles and experiences in the forest and related environmental governance issues in Ethiopia, including land administration, environmental protection, and agricultural and rural development policies. These interviewees included politicians and bureaucrats working at different administrative levels (from federal to lower administrative levels), NGO and donor officials, policy consultants, academics, and research scientists. The number of, and techniques for selecting, interviewees varies for each research question. However, given the nature of the case study design adopted and the overall aim of the thesis to gain better insights into the complexities of governance processes and practices, the interviewees were selected to ensure variety of opinion, but not statistical

representation. The in-depth interviews also included key representatives of local communities who directly use the forest and are affected by the forest policy outcomes. Community members were selected for interview on the basis of their local institutional cluster, such as forest users' group, association, or cooperative. Such local institutions were established in response to the new forest governance reform; they are groups of forest users who work together to accomplish joint activities and objectives with rules, policies, and guidelines (see IFRI, 2007). Overall, a total of 223 interviews were conducted during the entire study period from 2010 to 2013. The people interviewed comprised 94 persons from various governmental agencies (ranging from the federal to the lower administrative level), 68 persons from non-governmental organizations, and 61 representatives of local communities.

Participant observation

Participant observation as an ethnographic data collection method focuses on the study of people's everyday ways to produce orderly social interaction, i.e., how people make sense of the world and accomplish their daily actions (communicating, making decisions, and reasoning) (Silverman, 2005). It pays attention to the detail of interactions, common-sense practices, observable and reportable speech, and face-to-face behaviour. The participant observation method requires a researcher to spend long periods watching people and processes in naturally occurring settings. It is also combined with talking to the people in question about what they are doing, thinking, and saying in order to understand how the actual process operates in real life. Participant observation is used to comprehend political and policy process beyond formal rules and procedures. It reveals insights that are difficult to capture merely through interviews, such as tacit knowledge and actors' perspectives, and it enables comparisons between ideals or principles and actual practice in social life. Therefore, participant observation circumvents the limitations of interview, for example, the discrepancy between the proclaimed principles and the actual practices of policy actors and their commitment to the principles. Participant observation was extensively used in this thesis, in various ways including workplace studies in regular settings, and participation in meetings, workshops, policy dialogues, and academic conferences. The author has been working in the national forestry research institute since 2002. Thus, he closely followed the forest policy process over a decade both as an insider and as an observer. Particularly since 2010, this observation was systematically organized following scientific methods. Moreover, a researcher (MSc student supervised by the author) lived in a village and participated in the daily practices of the local community for three months (from March to May 2012) to generate in-depth, ethnographic data for the fourth research question (see Vandenabeele, 2012).

Document analysis

In this thesis, both published and unpublished documents were used, not only as background material, but also as a source of empirical information. They were systematically analysed in order to understand their meaning, social or institutional representation, and convictions. Coffey and Atkinson (2004) assert that documents are social facts that are produced, reproduced, and used in socially organized ways; thus documents provide rich, naturally occurring, and accessible data. However, they are not transparent representations of organizational routines, decision-making processes, or professional dialogues (Silverman, 2005). Thus, documents need to be treated critically in order to comprehend what they are and what they are used to accomplish. The documents perused related to the theme of the thesis research – forest governance in Ethiopia. These documents were comprised of policy and legal codes, academic

literature (both published and grey documents), consultancy reports, project reviews and annual reports, statistical data, newsletters, and newspaper articles (both print and web formats). These documents were accessed by using the search engines and libraries of Wageningen University, Addis Ababa University, Wondo Gent College of Forestry and Natural Resources, and the University of Michigan. In addition, significant numbers of documents were retrieved from the libraries and office archives of the people and organizations studied, for example, Forum for Social Studies and Farm-Africa.

Data analysis and triangulation

All the data from the interviews, observations, and documentary sources, including visual images, were systematically analysed – classified, compared, interpreted, and synthesized along the theoretical concepts introduced in section 1.4. In a qualitative study where the researcher has no control over the events, prior development of a conceptual stance significantly facilitates both data collection and analysis (Yin, 2003; George and Bennett, 2005). De Jong *et al.* (2011:3) also note that ‘theory provides a rationale for the information that is to be collected and how it is to be interpreted.’ All text blocks and core ideas emerging from interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary sources were reconstructed along the PAA theoretical concepts, first into several thematic areas. Then, the thematic areas were step-by-step and systematically synthesized into four themes or codes (discourse, actors’ coalition, resources and power, and rules). The revised codes were further used to interpret and synthesize the rest of the datasets. This method of data analysis also included manual tabulation into logical categories and iterative processes of data interpretation, analysis, verification, and report writing. One source of information was used to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources to increase the validity of the findings. For example, information from the literature was supplemented by interviewing the author(s) or those who are currently working on the topic of interest. Data generated through these different techniques from multiple sources have helped to triangulate the reliability of the information gathered (Yin, 2009). In each of the individual case studies, these data collection and analysis methods were further adjusted to the nature of the case study. The precise methods used in each study are explained in chapters 2 to 5.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is comprised of six chapters, including a general introduction, four empirical chapters designed as independent scientific papers, and a final chapter with conclusions and reflections. This first chapter introduces the research setting, an overview of the dynamics in forest governance in Ethiopia, and the political economy of the country. It also outlines the theoretical concepts and framework that guided the study, research objectives, research questions, and the methodologies adopted in the subsequent chapters. Each empirical chapter deals with a specific research question. These chapters discuss the forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia (the central research theme of this study) from different analytical as well as empirical focuses.

Chapter 2 analyses the historical trajectories of forest governance in Ethiopia over the last five decades. This chapter situates the development of forest policy in Ethiopia within the evolving international forestry-related discourses and national policy contexts, including the dominant agricultural development paradigm and other environmental drivers. Chapter 3 investigates the degree of institutional change in the

decentralized or multilevel forest governance reform that has emerged in Ethiopia in the last two decades. It explores how this new forest governance reform is related to the broader political-economic development in the country and how this process has institutionalized at national and regional administrative level. Chapter 4 explores the emerging role of non-governmental actors in forest policymaking; it focuses on the multi-actor forest governance reform, or the horizontal sharing of responsibilities and decision-making power. It investigates the various strategies employed by non-governmental actors to institutionalize a new forest governance approach and their impact on forest policymaking. Chapter 5 critically reflects on the local performance of the emerging multi-actor forest governance reform. This chapter illustrates the relationship between the implementation of the PFM approach and the resultant change in the local social and forest management practices. Finally, chapter 6 provides the conclusions of this research, focusing on the key manifestations of forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia and the underlying mechanisms of policy change and continuity. The conclusions regarding the dynamics in forest governance are followed by a reflection on the theoretical framework and the research methodology, respectively. Then, a final conclusion on the scientific relevance of the study, including recommendations for future research on forest governance dynamics, is presented.

Chapter 2

Historical development of forest policy in Ethiopia: trends of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization

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Veteran Forester, Ato Dechasa Jiru, explaining the importance of forestry sector in Ethiopia to policy-makers at EIAR headquarters. Photo by the author.

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Abstract

The aim of this chapter is to analyse and explain the historical development of forest policy in Ethiopia from post-World War II era up to present. The analysis was conducted by tracing competing ideas, interests, institutions, and power configurations over a period of time. We employed a qualitative historical analysis method to collect and interpret data along the analytical dimensions of the so-called Policy Arrangement Approach (discourse coalitions, rules, resources and power). The development of forest policy in Ethiopia exhibits a dynamic process of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization. The institutionalization and deinstitutionalization process was co-shaped by a complex interplay of structural factors such as national political orientation and economic priorities, environmental calamities; and the dynamics in the global forest related discourses. Forestry was, most of the times, marginalized or integrated into the dominant agricultural development paradigm, where the integration also failed to maximize the synergy between the two sectors. The findings indeed confirm the usefulness of Policy Arrangement Approach to understand and explain such nuanced and dynamic process of (policy) change and continuity.

Keywords: policy arrangement approach; policy evolution; forest discourses; actor coalitions; institutional dynamics; Ethiopia

2.1 Introduction

The development of forest policy in Ethiopia is strongly intertwined with the evolution and vicissitude of its state structure. Although some accounts claim the beginning of modern Ethiopian state as early as the second-half of the 19th century, it is generally acknowledged that an organized and elaborated state structure only emerged after the Second World War (Bahiru, 1991; Teshale, 1995). Since then, the country went through a series of changes in its polity and politics. The long monarchical rule was replaced by the socialist dictatorship in 1974. Despite the differences in approach (the former used ‘divine right’ to legitimize its system of rule and the latter was guided by Marxist-Leninist ideology) both regimes were highly authoritarian and governed through centralized power structure (Ottaway, 1990; Young, 1997). The incumbent government that stepped to power following the demise of the socialist regime in 1991 espoused a markedly different system of governance – a decentralized federal polity and a democratic political process (Young, 1997; Vaughan, 2003). Parallel to changes in polity and politics, the principal economic policy also shifted from a kind of ‘laissez-faire’, to a command economy, and to a free-market (Keller, 2002; Vaughan, 2003; Dessalegn, 1994; 2004). Those fluxes have had significant implication for the development of forest policy. Forest policy is broadly conceptualized in this study as a social and institutional arrangements designed to steer and guide the use and management of forests; which ranges from different regulatory instruments to a general framework defining fundamental assumptions, principles, objectives and priorities (see: Krott, 2005).

Although the incidences of deforestation and forest management interventions by the state was recorded since the beginning of twentieth century (Gebremarkos and Deribe, 2001), formal forest policy started in Ethiopia during the brief period of Italian annexation (1936 - 41). Italians issued various forest laws and regulations and instigated the first structured forest administration called *Milizia Forestale* (Forest Militia) (Melaku, 2003). However, Italians were expelled from the country before adequately introducing their forestry policy. The predominant policy preoccupation of the so-called restored Imperial period (1941–1974) was ‘modernization’ following Western industrialized countries (Bahiru, 1991). Modernizing agriculture with emphasis on large scale commercial farming was sought to transform the country from agrarian to industrial economy. Forest development and conservation issues were mostly sidestepped during the restored Imperial period. However, after two decades of competitions between actors advocating different ideas and interest, the first forest law within the country’s sovereignty was issued in 1965 (Gebremarkos and Deribe, 2001; Melaku, 2003).

Nevertheless, forestry as an autonomous sector has come to high policy attention and institutional profile after mid-1970s when the socialist military council, popularly known as ‘Derg,’ deposed the Imperial regime. The 1975 revolution induced land reform that extinguished all the pre-existing property rights to land and nationalized its holdings including private forests and large estates of agricultural farms. The national political and economic changes coincided with the rise of global fossil fuel prices and the associated energy crisis of the early 1970s that triggered the surge of interest in biomass energy as an alternative source (Arnold *et al.*, 2003). Those international drives manifested in Ethiopia in a strong focus on production forestry and in enhancing fuel wood plantations with exotic fast growing tree species (Davidson, 1989; Demel, 2001; 2004; Mulugeta and Tadesse, 2010). Sizable flows of funds from donors earmarked to forest development and the enthusiasm of the socialist government toward the same end contributed for the establishment of what later become described as the ‘strongest’ forestry organization in

the country's history. Following the 1984–85 catastrophic drought and subsequent famine, the country's attention gradually shifted from production to multi-functional forests and a broader conceptualization of environmental conservation. Since mid-1990s and up until now both forestry and environmental conservation issues have been overshadowed by the thrusts of accelerated economic growth via agricultural intensification. Such shifts in attention were also reflected in institutional arrangements. For example, forestry as an autonomous sector has gradually disappeared from the scene without installing alternative institutions with similar functions and strengths (Yonas, 2001; Melaku, 2008; Birhanu, 2009; Tibebe and Negusu, 2009).

This paper attempts to analyse and explain the historical development of forest policy in Ethiopia from post-World War II era up to present. It seeks to answer the following central questions: How has forest policy evolved and changed over time in Ethiopia? Which ideas have guided the changing process? Which interests have been served, by whom and what means? What forest institutions have been built over time? And to what extent have the national (forest) policies been co-shaped by the international forest related discourses? Analysing the evolution of forest policy in Ethiopia offers an exceptional case that can add to our knowledge because (i) unlike many other African countries where colonial heritage laid its institutional foundation, Ethiopia has been an empire with a long history of independence, (ii) the country has experienced series of radical political changes only within four decades (from semi-feudal monarchy to socialist dictatorship, to decentralized democratic system) which have had impact on the development of forest policy, (iii) forest policy experienced change during the authoritarian socialist regime that followed extreme shock events such as drought and subsequent famine. In light of these distinctive backgrounds, examining the development of forest policy in Ethiopia contributes towards a better understanding of how historical settings affects the dynamics of contemporary (forest) policy processes and practices. Moreover, this paper shed light on the mechanisms behind institutional change by introducing a new theoretical perspective to the field of policy analysis in Ethiopia. By doing so, unlike most previous studies that emphasize the stagnation of forest policy (Gebremarkos and Deribe, 2001; Yonas, 2001; Melaku, 2003; 2008; Tibebe and Negusu, 2009), our analysis reveals a continuous and dynamic process of institutional transformation co-shaped by a complex interplay of national politico-economic orientation and global forest related discourses.

2.2 Analytical framework

The aim of this paper is to analyse the dynamics of forest policy over a certain period of time. It will do so by tracing competing ideas, interests, and institutions served by different parties over a period of time. The so-called Policy Arrangement Approach (from now on PAA) is taken as an organizing analytical framework to understand and explain the institutionalization and deinstitutionalization process of forest policy.

PAA was selected as analytical framework due to several reasons. First, PAA as elaborated by Van Tatenhove *et al.* (2000), Arts and Leroy (2006) and Arts and Buizer (2009) distinguishes four interrelated analytical dimensions (discourses, actors, power and rules) to understand policy practices, thus offering a comprehensive approach. Second, PAA is built on other policy theories in the field of institutional, network, and discourse analysis; thereby, it addresses agency, structure, interests and ideas in a dynamic

perspective (Arts, 2006; Arts and Buizer, 2009). Third, although it has only recently been developed to study policy dynamics in the environmental field, PAA has already proven to be a suitable analytical tool in various policy fields, including environmental policy, rural development policy, natural resource and forest policy (see: Van der Zouwen, 2006; Wiering and Arts, 2006; Buizer, 2008; Arts and Buizer, 2009; Veenman *et al.*, 2009; De Boer, 2009). Fourth, PAA takes a midway position along the *agency-structure* continuum, thus, it connects the daily policy process in which actors interact with structural forces of social and political change (Van der Zouwen, 2006). In our case, for instance, PAA enables us to understand and explain the extent to which the institutionalization and deinstitutionalization process of forest policy has been shaped by changes in polity and politics.

Policy arrangement refers to the way in which a certain policy domain such as forest policy is temporarily shaped in terms of *discourses, actors, power and resources, and rules of the game* (Arts and Buizer, 2009; Arts and Leroy, 2006). Arts and Buizer (2009:343) conceptualized *policy discourses* as ‘interpretative schemes, ranging from formal policy concepts and texts to popular narratives and story lines, which give meaning to a policy issue and domain’. Ideas, concepts, and narratives that constitute discourses are continuously produced, reproduced, and transformed into a particular social and policy practices (Van Tatenhove *et al.*, 2000; Arts and Leroy, 2006). In the policy arrangement approach, it is generally assumed that more than one competing discourse exist together at a time that enable actors to group together in coalitions to enhance certain discourses and challenge others. *Actors* are comparable to ‘discourse coalition’, as distinguished by Hajer (1995), and can be defined as a group of players who share a policy discourse as well as policy-relevant resources, in the context of the given rules of the game. *Power* refers to the dominance of one coalition over the other. It concerns about the ability of actors or actors’ coalition to mobilize resources in order to realize their preferred policies (Arts and Buizer 2009). The fourth dimension of policy arrangement - *rules of the game* - delineates a policy domain by defining the possibilities and constraints of actors to act within those boundaries or certain realms (Van Tatenhove *et al.*, 2000). The rules of the game determine how politics is played and delineate the boundaries of policy coalitions (Arts and Buizer, 2009).

Often, a PAA analysis focuses on existing policy arrangements characterized by a specific institutional configuration at a given moment in time. However, this study particularly pays attention to the historical dynamics of change and continuity of such arrangements. Drawing on Van Tatenhove *et al.* (2000) and Van der Zouwen (2006) *institutionalization* is conceptualized in this study as a dynamic processes of ‘construction and reconstruction’ of policy arrangements, for example, when new ideas, concepts and narratives emerge, find their way into policy practices, and become reflected in new actor coalitions, new rules, new organizational setups and new resource mobilizations. Since the concept of institutionalization is well-known, as it has been extensively studied by policy and institutional theorists (see: March and Olsen, 1989; Hajer, 1995; Hall and Taylor, 1996; Hay, 2006; and Schmidt, 2008), we pay more attention to the ‘newer’ concept – *deinstitutionalization* – below.

Broadly defined, *deinstitutionalization* concerns the process of how the once established institutional arrangement start to destabilize by the emergence of new ideas(s) and interests and undergo a dynamic process of institutional metamorphosis. Deinstitutionalization sometimes resembles institutional restructuring in which a once established policy arrangement is reconfigured into a new one, intending to fulfil the normative and procedural goals of its predecessor. However, in the ‘strict’ sense Mol (2009)

defined deinstitutionalization as a process of continuing stagnation, erosion, decline, or even disappearance of institutions, without the emergence of new institutions that fulfil similar functions and have similar strengths. Examples of such a process in environmental policy include significant downscaling or even dismantling of environmental state agencies, the abolishment of environmental laws, the systematic downsizing of nature protection rules and resources, the removal of environmental standards and licensing systems, and the de-legitimation of environmental protection and nature conservation without successfully installing alternative environmental institutions (ibid).

2.3 Research methodology

Qualitative historical analysis is employed to understand and interpret the forest policy process in Ethiopia from post-World War II era up to present. The historical analysis follow the traditions of George and Bennet (2005) and employs ‘process tracing’ that involves systematic and theoretically-informed analysis of historical narratives to examine changing patterns of dominant policy discourses and practices. We have made use of the theoretical concepts introduced above (PAA) to guide the qualitative in-depth analysis. Yin (2003) and George and Bennett (2005) justify that in a historical analysis where researcher has no control over the events, prior development of theoretical stance will significantly facilitate data collection and analysis. De Jong *et al.* (2011) note “theory provides a rationale for the information that is to be collected and how it is to be interpreted”. Data was collected using semi-structured key-informant interview and document analysis during field study from June 2010 to December 2011 in Ethiopia. In total, seventy eight (78) in-depth interviews have been carried out with key-informants directly and indirectly involved in forest policy process of Ethiopia (politicians, bureaucrats, NGOs officials, academicians and research scientists). Since the overall aim of this study is to gain better insights into the complexities of policy process and make sense of patterns in historical perspective, the interviewees were selected to ensure variety of opinion, but not statistical representation (see: Yin, 2003). Thus, informants assumed to have different opinions, knowledge, and interest in the forest policy processes were chosen by integrating cluster and snowball sampling techniques (see: Kumar, 2005, for details of these techniques). Qualitative and quantitative content analysis was conducted on documentary sources including: Policy and legal codes, academic literatures both published and grey documents, statistical records, newsletters, and newspaper articles. One source of information was used to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources to increase the validity of the findings. For example, when possible, information from the literature was triangulated by interviewing the author(s) who wrote or currently working on the issue related to the topic of interest. All text blocks and core ideas emerged from interview transcripts, and documentary sources were interpreted along PAA theoretical concepts, first into several thematic areas. Then, the thematic areas were step-by-step and systematically decomposed into few themes or codes. The revised codes were further used to reconstruct policy discourses and synthesize the rest of the data sets.

2.4 Development of forest policy under different historical periods

2.4.1 The ‘restored’ Imperial period (194–1974)

Forest policy has evolved in Ethiopia very lately and in a distinct way as compared to many other African countries where a colonial forest service laid its institutional foundation (Turyahabwe and Banana, 2008; Kirchberger, 2010). The first recorded forest management intervention by the state has begun a century ago through introduction of fast growing exotic species notably *Eucalyptus* to augment the supply of fuelwood and construction material from natural forests (Demel *et al.*, 2010). The *Eucalyptus* that initially introduced around major urban centres later became the main components of farm forestry practices in the country (Davidson, 1989; Pohjonen and Pukkala, 1990). The first organized forest administration was started during the brief period of Italian annexation (1936–41). Italians issued various forest legislations and instigated the first structured forest administration called *Milizia Forestale* (Forest Militia) for inventory, supervision, and extensive exploitation plans (Gebremarkos 1998; Gebremarkos and Deribe, 2001; Melaku, 2003). However, Italians were expelled from the country before adequately introducing their forestry policy.

The development of forest policy during the so-called restored Imperial period is best understood by examining (1) the competition between *discourse coalitions*, (2) the emergence of certain *power relations*, and (3) the formulation of specific *rules*. When the Imperial government returned to throne after five years of exile in UK, the overwhelming political discourse was consolidating territorial control and modernizing the country following the model of ‘Western’ countries (Ottaway, 1990; Bahru, 1991; Teshale, 1995). The Imperial ruling elite sought commercial agriculture as a main vehicle to realize their modernization drive. Readily available natural resources such as timber from the forest was turned to be the main source of income to fuel the economy and forest land was considered as wasteland or frontier to expand the emerging commercial agriculture. The five years Imperial government plans that officially stipulated agricultural modernization encouraged investors to convert forest lands into commercial farms like coffee and tea plantations in southern and southwest Ethiopia. Some of the incentives for private investors include exemption of land tax during the early years of agricultural investment, granting lease for long duration, and converting forest ‘waste’ land to ‘valuable’ agricultural land was used as a precondition to claim for land ownership rights (Gebremarkos and Deribe, 2001; Dessalegn, 2008). Moreover, in the continuous effort to re-establish the functioning of the government after the ruins of war, the Emperor ‘too generously’ distributed hundreds of thousands hectares of forestlands to the royal family members and the dignitaries, civil servants, military forces, and war returnees. The recipients were also encouraged to convert the forestland into agricultural land with the aim of increasing state revenue and create a landed class loyal to the Emperor (Melaku, 2003).

At the same time, forestry professionals, often expatriate, problematized the fast depletion of forest resources, and advocated the need for strong protection (see: Melaku, 2003:16 – 17 for the detail reports advocating protection discourse¹). All reports stressed the fast depletion of forest resources, the negligence

¹ Some of the most prominent reports advocating forest protection discourse were: the report of the American forester David Rusu (1944–46), Logan (1946), and H. F Mooney (1953–61) from British Colonial Forest Service, Swain (1954), F. Breitenebach (1961–62) the German Forest advisor to Ethiopia, and Ethiopian veteran botanist and forester Wolde-Michael Kelecha (1961).

of the forest sector by the imperial government, and the urgency to formulate forest laws and establish an autonomous forestry organization that helps to implement the law and take care of the forest. For instance, the report of Mooney in 1955 cited in Melaku, (2003:79) described the forest depletion in western Ethiopia as follows:

I notice with regret and great apprehension the dangerous and short-sighted tendency that exists to make quick money out of these forests without any thought for the future. This is certainly not in the national interest. Throughout my tour in the west I saw on all sides the destruction of forests in progress.

Melaku (2003) described that the highland forests estimated to be 5.5 million ha around mid-1930 was declined to about 3 million ha in the early 1960s. Then the next question is why the Imperial ruling elites were negligent to the forest sector and why the protectionist discourse was unable to impact the institutional setups during much of the imperial period. Our analysis reveals that the balance of power between the two discourse coalitions was not proportional. The modernization discourse was advanced by the ruling elites that controlled all state machineries. As clearly manifested in the five years perspective plans, the interest of the ruling elites was economic gains from the forest, whereas a strong forest law and an autonomous forestry institution was assumed to hinder such short-term exploitation (Melaku, 2003). The modernization discourse also anchored in other hegemonic discourse, e.g. that modernization based on the Western model could protect the territorial integrity of Ethiopia and safeguard it from colonial encapsulation that encircled the country from east, west, north, and south in Africa (Clapham, 1988; Ottaway, 1990; Bahru, 1991; Vaughan, 2003). On the other hand, the major impulses and support for the protectionist discourse often came from colonial forest services and 'trans-imperial' networks of scientists in the colonial protectorate of Africa, India, and Australia (Melaku, 2003; Kirchberger, 2010). Specifically, the ruling Ethiopian elites mistrusted the pressing reports to protect the highland forests written by expatriates, mostly British foresters. They considered these as an expression of the British desire to conserve the upstream of the Blue Nile to control the erosion risks to the downstream irrigation projects in the former colonial Sudan and Anglo-Egyptian possessions. The common belief that the colonial interests in Africa were driven by the exploration of the Blue Nile made the successive Ethiopian rulers cynical about any discourse in connection to this river and its basin. The Nile Treaty that was signed between Menelik II of Abyssinia (present Ethiopia) and the UK government in May 1902 was one such example. Article III of this treaty clearly demand Ethiopia not to construct, or allow to be constructed, any work across the Blue Nile basins including along the inland Lake Tana except in agreement with UK government, a pact that persists to the contemporary Nile debate.

In addition to the political sensitivity of the issue, the protectionist argument was often founded on the conventional story that forty percent of the Ethiopian highland was once covered by high-forests and has been dwindling at an alarming rate (150,000 - 200,000 ha deforestation per year) and that recommended the urgency of protecting the remaining forests (Gebremarkos, 1998; Hoben, 1995; Wøien, 1995). According to Melaku (2003) these unsubstantiated narratives about forest cover and rate of deforestation probably entered into academic writings towards the end of 1950s through FAO reports. The same author claims that although such argument persisted for more than five decades, it failed to convince decision-makers and created rather a pessimistic attitude towards the potential of forest resources in the country.

In summary, the continuous effort by protectionist coalition to establish a professional model of forest administration was not successful until early 1960s. This can be grasped from H. F Mooney eleventh report compiled in 1961 and cited in Melaku (2003:93):

In spite of the advice that has been given by professional foresters over the past ten years, I regret to say that, so far no serious effort has been made to protect and manage any of the forests of this country.

After two decades of competition between the two coalitions, eventually the need for formulating legislation for stimulating improved forest management was accepted. The first draft forest legislation was presented to the Imperial parliament in 1953. It faced stiff resistance from the parliament ostensibly that it contradicted the constitutional article about private free-holdings and confusion between public and private forests. The initially, said to be, comprehensive draft forest law was dissociated into three weak and inconsistent forest proclamations (State, Private, and Protective) to appease the members of the Parliament (*de facto* nobility and the landed class) (Melaku, 2003). Finally, the first forest law within the country's sovereignty was enacted in 1965, twelve years after submitting the first draft bill, and after having been rejected four times by lawmakers. Some of the reasons for such drastic move to pass the law that was blocked for more than a decade were: (1) during the amendment processes the draft law became softer so that the final version was weak enough to be acceptable by the nobility and the landed class. For instance, articles demanding strong forest protection were made less strict for private forests (Geberemmarkos and Deribe, 2001). (2) After a long impediment of the draft bill the protectionist coalition compromised their stance to overcome the stiff resistance from parliament to have at least a 'weak' forest law. Since the nobility and the landed class controlled both the legislative and executive arms of the state, they again mobilised their power to delay and manipulate the subsequent implementation instruments and resource allocation (Melaku, 2003; Vaughan, 2003). The detailed regulations were issued in 1968 after four more years of fight over meaning and interest. By the time that the regulations were issued the organization that was supposed to implement the plan remained weak, understaffed, and without sufficient financial resources. For example, Melaku (2003) reported that the semi-autonomous forestry department was downsized to section level within the ministry of agriculture and the only forestry-training centre in Ambo Agricultural School was closed a couple of years before the law was issued. The same report indicated, only 10 percent of the budget that the sector demanded was allocated between the years 1968 – 1973. In general, the impact of the 1965 forest law on institutional setups and other power arrangements were less significant (Melaku 2003). Some analysts characterized the Imperial forest law as weak, vague and geared toward exploitation (Geberemmarkos and Deribe, 2001; Melaku, 2003).

2.4.2 Early socialist era (1975–1985)

Although the need to institutionalize a professional model of forest management was recognized well before the downfall of the monarchy, forest policy only received high political attention and institutional profile following the mid-1970s Ethiopian revolution. The revolution among others induced land reform guided by Marxist political ideology that extinguished all the pre-existing property rights to land and nationalized its holdings, including many of the private forests and commercial farm estates. The 1973-74 great Ethiopian famine that precipitated the collapse of the Imperial regime signalled the failure of modernization driven by commercial agriculture (Clapham, 1988; Dessalegn, 1994). The revolution and

the subsequent weakening of the modernization discourse created a policy space for the *protectionist coalition* to reorganize itself and push its agenda within the socialist context. The socialist government on its part wanted to replace the vast agricultural lands confiscated from the feudal aristocracy and nobility with grand State-owned plantations for political and economic purposes. Politically, they wanted to destroy the economic base of the landed elite (Clapham, 1988; Ottaway, 1990). Economically, they sought to tap the growing demand for wood products by enhancing production forests, particularly with fast growing exotic species (Mulugeta and Tadesse, 2010). The convergence of professionals' enthusiasm and political priority created high time in the history of Ethiopian forest policy. However, the top-down command-and-control system of the socialist military government did not allow open competition between groups advocating strong production forestry and/or other land use options. Yet, dissent and unheeded response to the dominant policy were expressed through idiomatic expressions, jokes, and poetries (Pausewang, 2002). One of such popular poetry coined in Amharic (Ethiopian national language) during this period reads as:

Deh'ina deh'ina mere't ba'hirza'flebesse
Yeme'yarso a'tito hizbu iya'lekese (Fekade, 2002)

Literally translated, “all the fertile lands are covered with eucalyptus while the masses/peasants are crying in need of land for farming.” Beside the non-participatory demarcation of agricultural lands for tree plantation, the ill-defined use right to the planted trees created long-lasting hostility between the peasant population and the state (Alemayehu and Wiersum, 2006). The socialist government established an autonomous forestry institution - Forest and Wildlife Conservation and Development Authority (FAWCDA) within two years after the revolution. This institution has been characterized as the strongest forestry authority ever having been active in Ethiopia (Gebremarkos and Deribe, 2001; Yonas, 2001; Melaku, 2003). Several studies documented various success stories during the operational period of FAWCDA. For instance, Birhanu (2009) noted that the period of FAWCDA was the ‘golden age’ of forestry, characterized by intensive forest development activities, the outcome of which are most of the currently existing plantations; including the extensive fuel wood plantations around urban areas. On top of the national political and economic changes the global trend, particularly the discourse on fuelwood crisis around the mid-1970s, contributed to the increasing focus on forestry (this will be elaborated below). Such global discourse attracted sizable funds from multilateral and bilateral organizations including FAO, UNDP, and SIDA earmarked to forest development, capacity building, and human resource enhancement. The establishment of new research centres and academic institutes geared toward production forestry such as Forestry Research Centre, Wood Utilization Research Centre, and Wondo Genet College of Forestry are often mentioned as success stories under the auspice of FAWCDA (Yonas, 2001; Demel, 2004; Tibebeba and Negusu, 2009).

The enactment of the new forest law in 1980 further strengthened the institutionalization of forestry. This law was an extension of the 1975 rural land reform, which according to some commentators, guided by radical political precedence without considering ‘rational’ economic, social, and environmental objectives (Dessalegn, 1994; Melaku, 2003). As a reflection of the then dominant political discourse, the preamble of the 1980 forest law states:

*Whereas, Ethiopia's forest which formerly covered most of the country has been depleted by the defunct feudo-bourgeois order for selfish interest of the aristocracy and the nobility; [...] Whereas, immediate and decisive action must be taken in order to avert this disasters situation by **agitating** and coordinating the **broad masses** to plant, conserve, develop and administer the country's forest and wildlife resources;*

Although the proclamation recognized the role of grass-root organization such as Peasant Association (PA) in forest development, enormous discretionary power was bestowed to FAWCDA, a central government agency, to designate, demarcate, and administer all forested land where the authority deemed it necessary for conservation and production purposes. Consequently, the authority undertook extensive demarcation works and established 58 National Forest Priority Areas (NFPAs) covering an area of about 4.8 million ha (Demel *et al.*, 2010). In many cases these NFPAs incorporated private agricultural lands and communal grazing areas through blanket notification or forceful eviction. In order to administer all NFPAs, FAWCDA increased its staffs about ten folds. And the size of forest estate plantations increased from 42,300 ha in 1973 to about 250,000 ha in 1985 (Demel *et al.*, 2010). This was made possible by a comparatively adequate annual budget that had already increased seven folds as compared to the years before the establishment of FAWCDA (Melaku, 2003).

Parallel to the development in the forestry sector, the socialist government took various measures to enhance agricultural productivity and transform the rural economy. Some of those measures include:

- Implementation of radical land reform that abolished the tenant-landlord relationship and private ownership of land (realization of a popular slogan 'Land to the Tiller')
- Introduction of a new village level government structure, Peasant Association (PA) entrusted with the administration of local affairs
- Organization of smallholder farmers into producers cooperatives (collectivization program)
- Clustering of small and scattered villages into mega villages (villagization and resettlement programs), ostensibly to overcome fragmentation of farmland and to offer efficient rural infrastructures and social services

However, many of these measures were later found to be counterproductive, and agricultural sector grew less than planned during the socialist regime. Habtemariam (2008) indicated that agriculture grew at an average rate of 0.6% per annum from 1973 to 1980 and 2.1% from 1980 to 1987. Factors that contributed to low agricultural growth included increased incidences of drought, extended civil war and political unrest, 'strict' centralized planning and government price control, forceful resettlement and villagization program, and the conscription of young and productive peasants for military purpose (Hoben, 1995; Dessalegn, 2008; Habtemariam, 2008).

2.4.3 The late socialist era and the transition period (1986–1994)

The ascendancy of production forestry discourse with an overemphasis on fast growing exotic species during the late 70s divided the former *protectionist coalition* into two rival groups: the one that merged its interest with the then prevailing discourse (production forestry) and other group that criticized exotic species in favour of indigenous ones and proclaimed the adverse effect of the former on the environment (Davidson, 1989; Mulugeta and Tadesse, 2010). However, due to the vanguard political nature of the then socialist military regime the underlying *environmental conservation coalition* had never posed visible challenge to the then dominant *production forestry coalition* until mid-1980s. Following the 1984–85 devastating drought and subsequent famine in the country, the conservation coalition nonetheless got policy space to bring their argument into the forefront. It conceptualized the value of forests and other woody vegetation primarily for environmental functions such as land stabilization, erosion control, regulation of climate and hydrologic flows. The proponents of this discourse were predominantly pooled from soil science, agro-forestry, conservation biology, ecology and similar disciplines. The problem associated with promoting monoculture exotic species such as the alleged ecological drawbacks of Eucalyptus and the mysterious mass-dying of Cyprus species in some parts of Ethiopia was presented as evidence against the production forestry stance (Davidson, 1989).

Simultaneously with the episode of drought and famine in Ethiopia, a shift in global discourse (see section 5) also helped to switch the balance of power from production forestry to environmental conservation. A visible breakthrough was observed when the environmental conservation coalition secured a gigantic fund, popularly known as the Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study (EHRS), from the Swiss government. The findings of this extensively sponsored program have been published in several series since 1986. A range of key data and statements about soil loss and land degradation in Ethiopia were produced and entered the policy debate, enabling the coalition endorsing environmental conservation (Hoben, 1995; Keeley and Scones, 2003). Following the research of EHRS, this coalition framed an influential discourse that directly linked the devastating famine in Ethiopia to environmental degradation, specifically the loss of soil fertility and the subsequent reduction in agricultural productivity. It recommended building extensive soil conservation measures through food-for-work program, sponsored by several donors as a ‘win-win’ solution to fill the food shortage in the short run and increasing agricultural productivity through soil conservation measures in the long-run (Hoben, 1995; Keeley and Scones, 2000). Hoben (1995) noted that the ‘invention’ of this discourse enabled the Western donors to justify the massive aid programs to the socialist dictatorial regime through local-level environmental reclamation projects that address the long-term underlying causes of famine, rather than merely alleviating its symptoms. For instance, the World Food Program (WFP) had implemented ‘project 2488’, the largest single food-for-work project in Africa, to support the country-wide soil conservation program of the Ministry of Agriculture (Pausewang, 2002). Woien (1995) reported that between 1985–90 the ‘project 2488’ mobilized 35 million man days per annum and constructed more than 1 million kilometres of bunds on agricultural land and half million kilometres of terraces on hillsides.

While the dominant discourse markedly shifted towards environmental conservation after mid-1980s, the weak production forestry coalition continued advocating the importance of an autonomous forestry, however, without significantly impacting the institutional setups. Among others, this coalition produced the Ethiopian Forestry Action Program (EFAP) in 1994, a comprehensive four volumes document, with

a support from FAO and UNDP. EFAP was prepared following the general framework of the Tropical Forestry Action Program (TFAP) that was initiated at the ninth World Forestry Congress held in Mexico in 1985. The EFAP initiative basically emerged from the FAWCDA's ten years plan (1984 – 1993) that targeted to increase the forest cover of Ethiopia to 24% in the planned period (Melaku, 2008).

The primary programs of EFAP include tree and forest production, forest industry development, forest resources and ecosystem management, and wood energy development (EFAP, 1994). It is clear from its contents that the EFAP programs were dominated by the classical production forestry paradigm. Owing to the weakening of such discourse at that time and the fall of the socialist regime in 1991, EFAP has never been able to impact the formal policy arrangement neither was it accompanied by an adequate implementation mechanism. The document remained an in-house reference for forestry sympathizers who voiced alarm about the danger and the consequences of not establishing an autonomous forestry sector. The Tropical Forestry Action Program was also unable to coordinate international support to forest related programs at the national level and it ceased to serve as an international framework in June 1995 (Melaku, 2008). As the period between mid-1970s and mid-1980s was often mentioned as a 'golden age' in the history of Ethiopian forestry, the time since mid-1990s has been marked as a period of institutional 'stagnation' by most foresters. The next section examines whether forest policy has further stagnated since mid-1990s as most foresters believe, or has been going through an institutional metamorphosis or adaptation to fit to the dominant discourse.

2.4.4 Development of forest policy under the Federal Republic (1995 to present)

Mid-1990s witnessed landmark reforms in social, economic, and political spheres of the country. The most significant one was the adoption of a new Constitution in 1995 that heralded a decentralized federal polity and a democratic political process (see: FDRE, 1995). The intention of decentralization in Ethiopia was to transfer constitutionally specified authorities from central government to autonomous regional states and local governments. The constitution bestowed substantial decision-making autonomy to the sub-national units including the authority to manage resources under their jurisdiction (Meheret, 2007; Young, 1998). Within this broader policy framework, forest management authority has been legally shared between government agencies at different administrative tiers. The new plural political platform also enabled the involvement of non-state actors, including community-based institutions and NGOs into forest governance. Nonetheless, the national government remained mandated to set standards and policy frameworks on affairs concerning environmental and natural resource management. Article 51, sub-article 5 of the 1995 constitution particularly vested the power to enact laws for the utilization and conservation of land and other natural resources, including forestry, to the Federal government. Therefore, this is why our current analysis concerns the development of forest policy at federal level which is in congruence with Mol's (2009) assertion that – regardless of globalization and decentralization trends – the 'nation-state' remains vital to understand political processes and outcomes.

The Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) that stepped to power following the demise of the socialist regime in 1991 declared accelerated economic growth through *Agricultural Intensification* (AI). Proponents of this AI discourse proclaim that improving the performance of agriculture will not only increase the income of rural households but also increases market surplus that eventually provide more agricultural products and raw materials to the urban economy and the industry.

This in turn will promote industrial production and will dynamically bond rural-urban economies (FDRE, 2001: Amharic version; Dessalegn, 2008). Since its official inauguration in 1993, AI has accorded a very high political attention and popularized through all means of government communications including extensive media campaigns. Several strategy and policy documents were issued that revealed government commitment toward accelerated economic growth and agriculture as a centre-piece of its development policy (see: Habtemariam, 2008). Rural Development Policy and Strategy (RDPS) document drafted in mid-1990s and issued in 2001 is one of such document disclosing government plans and strategies concerning agricultural and rural development including forestry. Content analysis of the RDPS document revealed how government perceived the role of forest in supporting the envisaged rapid economic growth. Forestry issues were given marginal attention and are mentioned only in ten lines in the document of 280 pages. It is conceptualized as an agro-forestry intervention where trees are grown on agricultural lands to ameliorate soil fertility and thereby boost crop production or to serve as livestock feeds. The RDPS document note:

Forestry activities shall not be performed for the sake of forest development per se. Trees to be planted shall provide tangible economic benefit to the people. It must be an agroforestry undertaking. (FDRE, 2001:125) [Amharic version translated].

Explicitly, the strategy focuses on how forests or trees supplement agricultural production and contribute to the planned rapid economic growth rather than developing the forest sector by its own virtues. The message in the RDPS document clearly implied the shift in government priority from forest development to agricultural intensification. The shift in government attention is also manifested in organizational setups. The former forest department in the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environmental Protection was downscaled to a sub-section under the Ministry of Agriculture with fewer than six professional staffs. From 2008 to 2010 forestry team was almost non-existent at federal level and some of its activities were subsumed under Sustainable Land Use and Watershed Management Case Team (Mulugeta and Tadesse, 2010). Again, in 2011 Forestry was reorganized as a Case Team under the Natural Resources Conservation and Development Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Government claims that the integration of forest development with crop and livestock production has enhanced the synergy between the two sectors. It advocates the aptness of the new arrangement and the progress in resource management including the increase in forest cover from 3% to 9% following the implementation of the strategy (MoA, 2010). However, adversaries of this view argue that AI overemphasize crop production and marginalize other components. For instance, Tilaye (1998) and Yonas (2001) note the marginalization of forestry where substantial amount of financial and human resources were relocated to intensify crop production. According to these authors, forestry professionals in the Agricultural offices are intentionally assigned to undertake extension activities aimed at enhancing crop production which further undermine the already limited capacity of the forestry sector. Habtemariam (2008) notes that natural resource sectors including forestry, soil and water conservation altogether accounted for less than 5% of the total extension work between 1995 and 2004. Mulugeta and Tadesse (2010) also reported that during the last decade, forestry sector received less than 10% of the overall budgets allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture both at the federal and regional levels. Similarly, Yonas (2001:17) comments ‘while crop and livestock have a relatively better airtime and print space in the media, such is not the case for forestry, missing out an important opportunity’. He summarizes the dominance of agriculture over forestry as:

‘the intention of integration has actually resulted in forestry being completely assimilated by agriculture’ (Yonas, 2001:15-16).

While AI remained inviolable government policy priority, a weak coalition of actors has been advocating to bring a strong and autonomous forestry back to the policy scene (Yonas, 2001; Birhanu, 2009; Tibebwa and Negusu, 2009; Mulugeta and Tadesse, 2010). To fit into the government policy priority (rapid economic growth) and to get the approval of the decision-makers, these proponents emphasized the potential contribution of forests to the envisioned accelerated economic growth. Series of meetings and workshops aimed to promote economic forestry have been organized over decades and policy briefs were presented to the decision-makers.² These briefs stressed, amongst others, the inaptness of the existing institutional arrangement both for sustainable management of the resources and for enhancing the contribution of forestry sector to the economic growth and unanimously called for the establishment of a strong and an autonomous forestry sector. In the continuous effort of reinstituting a strong forestry sector, a new forest policy was ultimately approved in 2007. It emphasizes *economic forestry* which focuses on how to meet forest product demands of the society and increase the contribution of forest resources to the national economy. Its general objectives read: ‘to meet public demand in forest products and foster the contribution of forests in enhancing the economy of the country through appropriately conserving and developing forest resources’. Given the long stand and position of advocates for forest conservation in Ethiopia, it is rather strange to have such one-dimensional, production-focused policy objectives. However, these advocates already recognized that conservation stance remains weak in the era of the dominant AI discourse, and compelled to compromise and align their position with the government’s overarching priority for rapid economic growth (Melaku, 2008; Mulugeta and Tadesse, 2010). The policy document recognized two types of forest ownership (state and private). It paid special attention to encourage the engagement of the private sector in forest production and industrial development. It also demanded the establishment of an autonomous forestry organization to implement the policy objectives.

Although the enactment of the 2007 forest policy was considered as an achievement, its impact on the other institutional arrangements (particularly, organizational setup and resources for implementation), is less significant. First, the process of formulating the implementation instruments such as directives and guidelines has taken more than five years, and it is not issued yet. Second, the plan to establish an autonomous forestry organization that supposed to coordinate forestry activities, particularly at national level has not realized yet. Third, partly due to the above two factors, the much desired involvement of the private sector in forest development, particularly large and medium level investment in forestry has remained insignificant. On the other hand, although tree plantations and forest product marketing by smallholder farmers have significantly increased in the last two decades, the official statistics often underestimate the contribution of forestry sector to the national economy and rural livelihoods primarily due to lack of reliable data and methodological limitations (Ensermu and Abenet, 2011). Finally, the synergy between the new forest policy and the government overarching development priority (agricultural intensification) is weak. The status quo reflects the lingering tendency of an uneasy marriage between forestry and agriculture. Often, the adoption of the new forest policy is viewed by the advocates of a

² Some of the remarkable workshop with policy recommendation includes ‘Imperative Problems Associated with Forestry in Ethiopia’ in 2001, ‘Policies to increase forest cover in Ethiopia’ in 2007, ‘Ethiopian forestry at crossroads: the need for a strong institution’ in 2008, ‘Ensuring integrated forest development in Ethiopia in the era of climate change’ in 2009, ‘Multiple Roles of Forest in Ethiopia vs. Associated Challenges’ in 2011, and several discussion forums were also organized by Forestry Society of Ethiopia.

strong forestry sector as a breakthrough and a step forward (see: Melaku, 2008; Birhanu, 2009; Tibebeba and Negusu, 2009). However, under certain political circumstances, particularly in developing countries, policies and legislations can be introduced to appease certain groups, such as donors or NGOs, without having any intention of enforcing them (Young, 1998; Grainger and Konteh, 2007). Typical characteristics of such masqueraded policies may include lack of internal consistency, incompatibility with government overarching policies and discourses, and reluctance to allocate sufficient financial and human resource to implement their objectives. These characteristics also apply to the 2007 forest policy of Ethiopia, which has remained 'dormant' for almost five years.

We further examined why the proponents of strong and autonomous forestry institution were unable to win political support even after two decades of deliberation to bring forestry back to the forefront. A major reason is that forestry was not well aligned with the Agricultural Intensification (AI) policy. This policy was intensively promoted by the ruling party (Mulugeta, 2005) and formed the cornerstone of all other socioeconomic policies (Dessalegn, 2008). Policy-makers weighted forest development options mainly in terms of its contribution to this dominant paradigm. We identified several interrelated factors that explain why an autonomous forestry sector is less appealing to the ruling elite that promote the AI paradigm. The AI strategy is anchored on three main premises: ensuring accelerated economic growth, mobilizing the 'abundant' resources of the country (land and labour), and use of capital inexpensive technologies (see: FDRE, 2001). In respect to accelerated economic growth, the strategy asserts that structural economic transformation has to be based on the economic activities that the majority of the population are engaged in and that contribute significantly to GDP (Gross Domestic Products). Compared to the aggregate agricultural sector that accounts for about 42% of the GDP and employs more than 80% of the population, the forestry sector contributes only 4% to the GDP and employs less than five percent of the population (EFAP, 1994; FDRE, 2011; Ensermu and Abenet, 2011). Considering the mobilization of resources, in contrast to forestry, the smallholders dominated agricultural production system is better able to mobilize the rural population. And regarding the use of capital inexpensive technologies, smallholder agricultural development requires less physical capital (finance and technological innovation) than forestry. AI strategy also emphasizes accelerated economic growth that can be achieved within one election term (five years), and the relatively short-term agricultural development options strongly limit attention to the more long-term forest development options. Moreover, despite the intensification rhetoric of the AI strategy, the actual agricultural development practices resulted mainly in a spatial expansion of land under cultivation, most often at the expense of forest and wood lands. For example, the cultivated area in Ethiopia has increased from 9.44 million ha in 2001 to 15.4 million ha in 2009 (Ensermu and Abenet, 2011). The proponents of an autonomous forestry sector often consider that the ruling elites are purposively shunning away from the persisting urge to establish strong forestry institution due to their fear that such institution could constrain agricultural production (Yonas, 2001; Mulugeta and Tadesse, 2010; Ensermu and Abenet, 2011). The strong elitist process through which AI policy has been initiated and maintained hegemony over two decades reflects the 'closed' policy-making tradition in Ethiopia (Pausewang, 2002; Mulugeta, 2005; Meheret, 2007). The hegemonic position of the agricultural policy is a typical example in which the ruling party leaderships translating their ideological pre-commitment into policy instruments with little or no input from professional experts (Keeley and Scones, 2003; Mulugeta, 2005). Under these circumstance where ideological pre-commitment set the frame of references for a policy and the means for its implementation, divergent views and its proponents have little or peripheral space to influence policy (Mulugeta, 2005). From such a point of view, it is no surprise that the proposals to establish a viable forestry institution are not heeded.

2.5 The impacts of global discourse on the national forest policy process

As indicated in the analysis above, the development of forest policy during the Imperial era saw very little input from the international policy processes (Hoben, 1995; Melaku, 2003). However, in the era of growing international forest related discourses and development cooperation (Umans, 1993; Singer, 2008; Arts and Buizer, 2009) global impact on national forest policies gradually increased. For example, the rise in global fossil fuel price in the early 1970s, particularly, the influential discourse on the 'other energy crisis' (Eckholm, 1975) significantly shaped the focus of national forest policy in developing countries including Ethiopia (Arnold *et al.*, 2003; Demel, 2001). Because of such international process, production forests with fast growing exotic species were emphasized in Ethiopia to tap the 'booming' demand in wood products (EFAP, 1994; Gebremarkos, 1998). Sizable funds and capacity-building programs from multilateral and bilateral agencies such as FAO, UNDP and SIDA further facilitated the institutionalization of such stance. Towards the end of 1980s, however, global attention gradually switched towards sustainable forest management where multiple-uses of forests such as maintenance of genetic diversity, watershed protection, and regulation of climate change were emphasized (Umans, 1993; Arts, 2006; Arts and Buizer, 2009). This shift of emphasis was reflected in Ethiopia when the production forestry oriented organization, FAWCDA, dissolved and merged with soil and water conservation sectors. In the aftermath of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, forestry was reconstituted under the newly established Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection.

In retrospect, one could argue that the impact of external factors on national forest policy remained negligible during the socialist era. This is not to neglect the significant role of the international organizations mentioned above, specifically, the remarkable contribution of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) in the field of forestry education and research. However, their influences were mainly restricted to the technical sphere and minimal in reshaping policy paths. For example, the preparation of the Ethiopian Forestry Action Program (EFAP), which was predominantly supported and pushed by the international community, took nearly ten years to convince policy-makers and translate into implementation instruments. The delay was predominantly attributed to the impenetrable tendency of the then socialist authoritarian regime. In contrast, the period since mid-1990s has seen a considerably increase in the influence of the international discourses on the national forest related policies (Young, 1998; Keeley and Scones, 2000; Melaku, 2008). Such marked increase is attributed to several changes in the global and national political contexts. Globally, the increasing pressure from donor countries and powerful international institutions such as the World Bank and IMF towards democratic governance (Arts, 2006; Singer, 2008) enabled the emergence and growing role of non-state actors in the national policy process. Internally, the demise of the socialist regime and the adoption of democratic system of governance enabled the process of sharing forest management authority between multiple governmental levels, as multilevel governance. At the same time, the new system stimulated the involvement of non-state entities from market and civil society organizations such as community cooperatives and NGOs in to the forest governance process, as multi-actor governance. As multilevel governance arrangement, for example, the regional states are empowered to not only administer land and forest resources, but also mandated to formulate and implement social and economic development policies including forest law. Within the multi-actor governance initiative, the number of NGOs and community-based institutions involved in forest and related environmental governance (e.g. Participatory Forest Management Program) steadily increased after the second half of the 1990s. Beside the rise in number, those actors diversified their level of engagement from the conventional policy implementation role to advocacy, policy evaluation, and

monitoring activities. However, examining the depth of institutional reform and the extent to which the non-state actors influenced the decision-making process are beyond the scope of this paper.

Moreover, the role and the involvement of Ethiopia in the international negotiations and the adoption of forest and environment related treaties have significantly increased since mid-1990. For instance, the country is a signatory of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Ethiopia is also a pilot country for UN and World Bank REDD+ initiatives and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto protocol since 2008. The Prime Minister of Ethiopia led the African heads of states on climate change negotiation at Copenhagen (COP 15). He is re-elected to chair the African heads of state and government on the UNFCCC climate change conference held in Durban, South Africa (COP 17). Despite the growing role of Ethiopia in the international (climate) negotiations and treaties, critiques point out that little effort has been made in the country to harness deforestation and land degradation (Melaku, 2008; Tibebe and Negusu, 2009; Demel *et al.*, 2010; Mulugeta *et al.*, 2010; Ensermu and Abenet, 2011). In reaction to this claim, the government of Ethiopia issued the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy in 2011. Unlike the other government overarching strategies such as RDPS (see above) that loosely mention forestry issue, CRGE strategy stipulates forestry as one of its four pillars (see: FDRE, 2011). However, it is too early to assess the effect of this new initiative on the Ethiopian forestry sector.

2.6 Discussion and conclusions

Throughout the history of modern Ethiopia, agricultural development paradigm has been firmly entrenched while forestry was mostly marginalized with the exception of the period between mid-1970s and mid-1980s. In this paper, it is argued that the dynamics in the global forest related discourses and the national political orientation and economic priorities constitute the most important factors shaping the evolution of forest policy in Ethiopia. The prime time in the history of Ethiopian forestry was recorded when the global discourse shifted towards biomass as alternative sources of energy for the rising fossil fuel price that coincided with the national political and economic change in favour of forest development. The 1984-85 catastrophic drought and subsequent famine, the shift in global attention towards multi-functional forests and broader environmental conservation issues gradually undermined forestry as autonomous policy field. Most of the times, forestry was integrated into agricultural sector with the intention to maximize the synergy between the two sectors. However, as it is extensively argued in this paper, the integration of the two sectors did not yield positive outcomes. Throughout the successive regimes, the development of agricultural policy was marked by unbalanced objectives and priorities that hampered the potential to capitalize synergy between the two sectors. The Imperial government overemphasized commercial agriculture run by a few landlords and neglected the majority of smallholders engaged in production of subsistence and non-cash crops. The socialist regime abolished landlordism and prioritized state and collective farms at the expense of smallholder individual farmers and stiffly discouraged private initiatives. The agricultural policy under the current government overstates the potential of smallholder agriculture and crop production, with very limited attention to other sectors such as natural resource conservation and forest development.

The institutionalization and deinstitutionalization process of forest policy in Ethiopia revealed trends of change and continuity. The interplay of complex structural factors including the national politico-economic change, and environmental calamities coupled with the global discursive shifts contributed for the dynamic processes of forest policy development. The structural factors delineated the broader context and enabled or constrained one discourse coalition over the other. Such complex interaction of ideas and structural factors, on one hand, stimulate the institutionalization of dominant discourse that reflected in the emergence of new coalition, new rules, and new organizational arrangement. On the other hand, it can also pave the way for the deinstitutionalization of the once established policy practices aligned with the weak or receding discourse. For example, the once celebrity production forestry discourse that founded the autonomous forestry sector gradually weakened and lost its essence with the emerging concept of multi-functional forestry and a broader environmental conservation discourse. Both discourses were later overshadowed by the drive for rapid economic growth through agricultural intensification that reflected in the significant downsizing of the forestry sector in its mandate, power or autonomy, and resources (see table 2.1). The findings indeed confirm the usefulness of PAA to understand and explain such nuanced and dynamic process of policy change and continuity. It is a suitable analytical approach to explain the role of ideas, structure, and actors' action and interactions in a dynamic perspective.

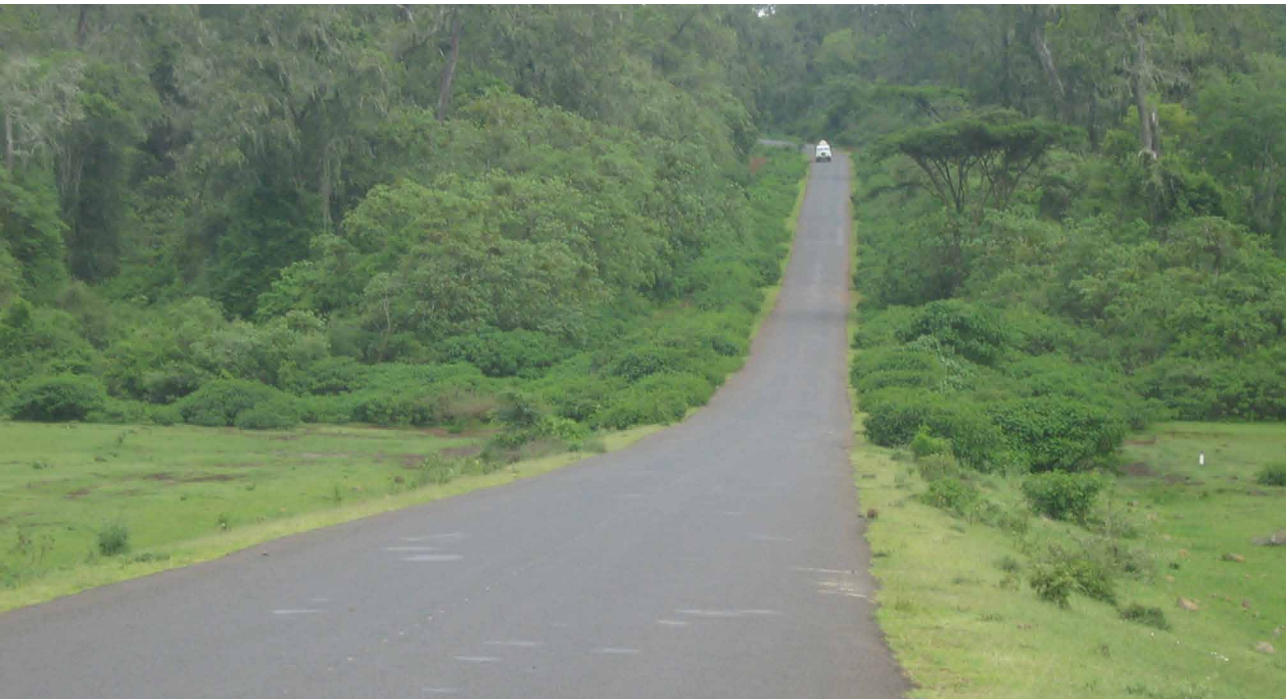
Table 2.1 The evolution of forest policy arrangement over different historical periods

Policy arrangement dimensions	Historical periods		
	Imperial era (1941–1974)	Early socialist era (1975–1985)	Late socialist era and the transition period (1986–1994)
Dominant discourse coalition	Agricultural modernization: Imperial ruling elites (the landed class and the nobility)	Production forestry: classical foresters, FAO, UNDP, and SIDA	Environmental conservation: ecologists, soil scientists, agro-foresters, and biologist
Competing discourse coalition	Forest protection: Forestry professionals (mostly expatriates)	Multi-functional Forestry: ecologists and conservation biologist	Economic forestry: forestry professionals
Power configuration	'Absolute' power in the hand of the Emperor and the nobilities who owned most of the forest lands	Highly centralized power arrangement: Top-down flows of command and little or no room for open competition between different views.	Decentralized democratic system, continuation of some elements of the past authoritarian tradition, increasing role of non-state actors
Rules	The five years Imperial Government Plans, the 1965 Forest Law, geared towards exploitation of resources and modernization	The 1975 Land Reform, State ownership of land and all natural resources including forests, the 1980 Forest Law, enormous discretionary power to the State Forest Agency (FAWCDA)	The 1995 constitution, the 2001 Rural Development policy and strategy, and the 2007 Forest Policy, continuation of the State ownership of land and forests

Chapter 3

Understanding the depth of institutional change in the emerging multilevel forest governance in Ethiopia

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Megada regional state forest, South-east Oromiya. Photo by the author.

(This chapter is in process of submission to a peer-reviewed journal)

Abstract

Despite the growing interest in decentralized natural resource governance, multilevel institutional analysis has received little systematic attention. Drawing on the theoretical insights of the multilevel governance literature and the policy arrangement approach, this chapter demonstrates how the emerging forest governance reform has developed in Ethiopia over the past two decades. It argues that an observable institutional shift has occurred from the 'old' centralized system to the 'new' multilevel forest governance arrangement. However, the degree of institutional change varies between regional states. The findings suggest a strong link between the socio-political and historical settings within which the new policy reform has developed and the different degree of institutional change, as observed in two regional states in Ethiopia. Relatively deep institutional change was observed in the regional state where the multilevel forest governance (MLFG) reform matched with the broader socio-political structure and the historical aspiration of regional policy actors. In contrast, shallow institutional change was detected in the regional state where the MLFG reform mismatched with the broader socio-political structure and the demands of regional actors. Therefore, designers of decentralization reform should pay attention to such shared historical visions and socio-political preferences in a society and carefully capitalize on these norms and values to foster reform processes in desired directions.

Keywords: decentralization, multilevel governance, institutional change, policy arrangement approach, forest governance, Ethiopia

3.1 Introduction

Since the early 1990s, Ethiopia has been experimenting with new forms of forest governance to curb the persistent problem of deforestation and to balance social, environmental, and economic goals. The new governance initiatives have, on the one hand, enabled the process of sharing forest management authority between central and subnational units of government – as multilevel forest governance (MLFG). At the same time, the new initiative has stimulated the involvement in forest governance of non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) – as multi-actor forest governance (MAFG). Although the two governance systems overlap, the impetus of their emergence and the main actors involved in the two processes are different. The MLFG initiative in Ethiopia has evolved within the broader political reform designed to disperse decision-making authorities within a multi-layered government structure. This political reform was characterized by the change from a unitary to a federal polity involving the transfer of major policy issues from the central state to regional governments. Thus, the MLFG arrangement in this study does not concern governance arrangements beyond or above the nation-state or the power-sharing arrangement between government and non-state entities. MLFG represents a forest governance structure, and the process of policy reform that leads to the MLFG arrangement is commonly called decentralization (Ribot, 2002b; Falleti, 2005).

The specific nature of the reform process discussed in this chapter can be denoted as a *politico-administrative decentralization*. This reform has introduced two substantial changes to the forest governance field compared to the former centralized hierarchical system. On the one hand, it has transferred the rights and responsibilities to manage natural resources, including forests, to the subnational units of government. The reform has also granted the regional state (the meso-administrative level) the authority to formulate and implement social and economic development policies (Meheret, 2007; Tegegne, 2007; Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010). The politico-administrative decentralization experiment in Ethiopia differs from similar reforms such as *administrative deconcentration*, which involves transfer of responsibilities and functions to the appointees of the central government or *devolution* in the sense of transfer of national and subnational authority to local community or civil society organizations (Ribot, 2002b; Alem, 2004; Babili and Wiersum, 2012).

The vast literature on decentralized natural resource governance focuses mainly on administrative deconcentration and devolution processes in order to understand the interactions and balance of power between central and local government and their constituencies (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999; Ribot, 2002b; Ribot and Larson, 2005; Andersson and Gibson, 2006; Larson and Soto, 2008; Babili and Wiersum, 2012). Unfortunately, few attempts have been made to understand experiences of politico-administrative decentralization in countries with a multilevel governance structure, such as federal states (Gregersen *et al.*, 2005). In particular, the role of the meso-level institutions between central and local levels of government has received scant research attention (Larson and Ribot, 2004; Gregersen *et al.*, 2005; Mwangi and Wardell, 2012). The existing empirical studies on decentralized forest governance in Ethiopia (Alemayehu and Wiersum, 2006; Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009; Yemiru, 2011; Abrar and Inoue, 2012; Takahashi and Todo, 2012) also exclusively emphasize the characteristics and performances of local institutions. In doing so, they devote little attention to the macro and the meso-level policy processes that provide the political and legal basis for local level policy outcomes. Consequently, the existing studies provide interesting, but incomplete, information on the structure and process of the new forest governance reform. For instance,

still little is known about whether the politico-administrative decentralization process is a uniform one or whether region-specific variation does occur. To fill this knowledge gap, this chapter examines the MLFG institutionalization processes at macro and meso level in Ethiopia. It attempts to answer three main research questions: 1) How has MLFG developed in Ethiopia? 2) To what extent has the ‘new’ MLFG arrangement moved away from the ‘old’ centralized hierarchical governing system? 3) Does the degree of change with respect to MLFG institutionalization vary between regional states of Ethiopia, and if so what explains the different degrees of change observed between the regional states? Drawing on the theoretical insights of the policy arrangement approach (PAA, see section 3.2), these questions are addressed by examining: (i) whether the dominant policy discourse changes overtime (e.g., from centralization to decentralization), (ii) whether the discursive change is translated into implementation instruments such as binding rules and a new organizational setup, and (iii) whether new actor coalitions and new power relation have emerged between levels of government. The degree of change manifested through the policy discourses, rules and organizational setup, actor coalitions, and resource mobilization indicates how deep or shallow the institutional changes are along a continuum from centralized hierarchical steering to a decentralized MLFG arrangement (cf. Wiering and Arts, 2006). Finally, the MLFG institutionalization processes in two regional states of Ethiopia were compared, first to understand and explain the degree of institutional change at meso-administrative level, and second to reflect on the regional contexts that have a bearing on the degree of institutional change.

Analysis of the MLFG arrangement in Ethiopia offers an interesting case that can contribute towards a better understanding of how decentralized forest governance reform develops under specific political settings. First, the MLFG reform in Ethiopia occurred as a result of the broader political change – rather than just an administrative reform within the forestry sector itself (Taye and Tegegne, 2007; Melaku, 2008; Taye, 2008). Therefore, the structure and the process of forest governance have been strongly impacted by the overall socio-political reforms. Second, unlike many countries that have stimulated decentralized forest governance, the MLFG arrangement in Ethiopia was built on an especially turbulent historical legacy in which the country experienced a series of radical political changes within only four decades, all of which have had a substantial impact on the development of forest policy (Melaku, 2003; Alemayehu *et al.* 2013, see chapter 2). Third, according to some analysts, the broader politico-administrative decentralization process and the establishment of the MLFG arrangement in Ethiopia were more impelled by internal political expediency than by outside pressure from the international community, such as a structural adjustment programme (Ribot, 2002b; Alem, 2004; Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010). Finally, our analysis focuses on MLFG institutionalization at a meso-governmental level that was granted substantial decision-making autonomy to formulate and implement regional policies, including the administration of natural resources such as forests under their jurisdiction. This chapter therefore aims to complement the existing body of knowledge on decentralization at central and local level by focusing specifically on forest governance at meso level and its embeddedness in the broader political reform. A better understanding of the process and structure of forest governance at multiple levels in turn might contribute to designing more applicable strategies for (forest) resource management or to suggesting better ways of making policy.

Section 3.2 introduces the theoretical framework employed to understand the process of institutional change and explain the different degrees of change and continuity. After describing the research methodology, the rest of the chapter discusses the evolution of MLFG in Ethiopia and the extent to which the new arrangement moved away from the old centralized system. The final sections elaborate the

institutionalization processes of the MLFG arrangement in two regional states and draw conclusions from the analysis.

3.2 Analytical framework

As discussed in section 1.4.2, this chapter uses the PAA as the analytical framework to examine how MLFG has developed in Ethiopia and to understand the degree of institutional change and continuity. The PAA was selected as the analytical framework for several reasons. First, this approach as elaborated by Van Tatenhove *et al.* (2000), Arts and Leroy (2006), and Arts and Buizer (2009) built upon other policy theories in the field of institutional, network, and discourse analysis; therefore, it offers a comprehensive framework to understand policy processes. Second, the PAA takes a midway position along the agency–structure continuum; thus, it connects the daily policy processes with the social and political structures within which actors operate and policy change takes place (Van der Zouwen, 2006). In sum, this approach enables us to analyse institutional change and continuity empirically and thoroughly.

A policy arrangement refers to the way in which a certain policy domain – such as forest policy – is temporarily shaped in terms of four analytical dimensions: *discourses*, *discourse coalition*, *rules*, and *power and resources* (Arts and Leroy, 2006). Arts and Buizer (2009:343) conceptualized policy discourses as ‘interpretative schemes, ranging from formal policy concepts and texts to popular narratives and story lines, which give meaning to a policy issue and domain.’ A discourse coalition, as distinguished by Hajer (1995), can be defined as a group of actors who share a policy discourse as well as policy-relevant resources, in the context of the given rules of the game. Actors can be organizations or individuals involved in a specific policy issue, for example, formulation and implementation of the MLFG reform. The rules dimension consists of different instruments and procedures that define responsibilities, access, and interaction among actors (Van der Zouwen, 2006). The fourth dimension of a policy arrangement is power and resources. Power, in this case, concerns the ability of actors or actor coalitions to mobilize resources and influence policy outcomes (Arts and Buizer, 2009). Resources relate to assets that policy actors have or can mobilize to achieve certain policy goals (Wiering and Arts, 2006).

Drawing on the four analytical dimensions of PAA, this chapter examines whether the dominant forest policy discourse has changed over time (e.g., from centralized to decentralized forest governance), and the extent to which the new policy discourse has been translated into implementation instruments (laws, regulation, and directives) and has altered actor coalitions and power relations. The change in actor coalitions is analysed by assessing the qualitative and quantitative shifts in the participation of new actors, interaction patterns, and coalition formation at different levels of government over time. Changes in power and resources are analysed in terms of which actors possess which resources, the degree to which these resources are mobilized, and how differences in the capacity to mobilize resources resulted in a specific policy outcome. Finally, the degree of institutional change was operationalized into deep and shallow change by building upon the work of Wiering and Arts (2006). Table 3.1 summarizes the main manifestations of the different degrees of institutional change analysed according to the PAA analytical dimensions.

Table 3.1 Conceptual framework to understand the degree of institutional change

Policy dimensions	Manifestations of institutional change	
	Deep institutional change	Shallow institutional change
Discourse	Decentralization as a dominant or guiding policy ideal	Mix of centralization and decentralization as underlying or guiding policy ideal
Rules	Increase in number and importance of new rules such as a constitution and legal reform fostering the decentralization process	Continuity of most of the rules sustaining hierarchical governing style
Actors' coalition	Increase in number and strength of subnational actors and their coalitions	Weak coalition of subnational actors and strong interference of central actors
Power and resources	Development of new power relations between national and subnational actors in policymaking and implementation Increase in actors' mobilization of resources to enhance the decentralization process	Power remains skewed towards the centre Subnational actors have insufficient resources available or are unable to mobilize resources and therefore remain dependent on central sources

PAA analysis often focuses on the process of institutional change and continuity from the perspective of agency, structure, interests and ideas (see Arts and Buizer, 2009). In addition, this chapter explores the link between the different degrees of change and institutional contexts, i.e., why institutional changes are deep in some contexts and shallow in others. For this, we draw upon Falleti's *sequential theory of decentralization* (STD) to shed light on the factors or contexts that have a bearing on the degree of institutional change and continuity. Falleti (2005) distinguishes three dimensions of decentralization (*political*, *administrative*, and *fiscal*) based on the type of authority devolved to the subnational units of government. Political decentralization consists of constitutional or legal reforms designed to devolve political authority to subnational actors and to create or activate spaces for the political representation of subnational polities (Falleti, 2010). Administrative decentralization concerns the transfer of bureaucratic procedures and functions from central government to the subnational units of administration (Ribot, 2002b; Awortwi, 2011). Fiscal decentralization involves the transfer of fiscal authority from central government to subnational governments; this principally includes autonomy of revenue collection and control over expenditure allocation (Ribot, 2002b; Paulos, 2007).

Falleti (2005) argues that the sequence of implementing the three dimensions (political, administrative, and fiscal) and the context in which the policy reform takes place matter in determining the degree of empowerment of subnational governments or the progress in the decentralization reform. Concerning the sequences of decentralization, she argues that political and fiscal decentralization policies that take place early in the sequence tend to increase the power of subnational governments, whereas early administrative decentralization reforms tend to result in little or no change in the redistribution of power to subnational authorities (Falleti, 2005). Falleti's explanation of contextual factors is built on the concept of *path dependence* of the institutional evolution, referring to the dynamics of self-reinforcing or positive feedback processes in the political system (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002; Falleti, 2010; Awortwi, 2011). The concept of path dependence in this context highlights how the dynamics triggered by an event or process at one point in time reproduce themselves, even in the absence of the recurrence of the original event or process (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002). Falleti (2010) argues that, once certain policy ideals are established in a society, they have the potential to create their own constituencies who defend the gained policy terrain and continue building on those reforms to maintain and advance the benefits derived from them. Drawing on

this theoretical argument, we propose that the underlying historical impetus that triggers a decentralization reform determines the degree of change, even in the later stages of the reform process. The decentralization drive in Ethiopia was the follow-up to the regionalization programme after decades of struggles between ethnic political elites for self-government (Young, 1998; Assefa, 2006; Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010). Consequently, some of the regional states were established on the basis of their longstanding quest for regional autonomy and self-rule, and thus have strong subnational political organizations that also played a role in the ‘liberation’ of their territory (Young, 1997, 1998; Assefa, 2006). According to Falleti (2005), such political organizations form the basis of strong subnational coalitions that continue to push the reform in the direction of further decentralization. In contrast, other regional states were created just on the occasion of the reform to establish the federal structure and were thus more driven by administrative expediency (Vaughan, 2006; Aalen, 2011). Hence, the historical impetus of decentralization, or the political-institutional setting within which reform has evolved, vary significantly between regional states in Ethiopia. Informed by these arguments, this chapter systematically traces the link between the various degrees of institutional change between regional states and the timing and context of the MLFG reform.

3.3 Research methodology

Given the central thrust of this study to understand and explain the degree of institutional change in a specific context, the case study approach is a suitable research design (Yin, 2003). A case study approach also enables us to answer questions on how multilevel forest governance policy has evolved under different historical and institutional settings. Yin (1994) asserts that a case study approach is useful when a researcher is trying to uncover a relationship between a phenomenon and the context in which the phenomenon is occurring. We selected two cases for comparison following the most similar cases comparisons (MSCC) method (George and Bennett, 2005; Mahoney, 2007). This method departs from the classical comparative methodology that tries to control all context variations except the variables to be studied (Mahoney, 2007). However, this classical method does not fit with a case study where the relationship between variables and contexts is not clear (George and Bennett, 2005; Van der Zouwen, 2006). However, the MSCC approach allows us to select cases that have some common features but differences in contexts that are assumed to affect the degree of institutional change. On the basis of the theoretical arguments presented above and the identification of the regional contexts that have bearing on the degree of institutional change, we opted for two cases with similar characteristics in terms of biophysical resources and socio-economic features, but with differences in political history. Following these premises, we selected Oromiya and Southern Nation, Nationalities, and People’s Region (SNNPR) from the nine regional states in Ethiopia as suitable cases to compare (figure 3.1). The specific reasons for selecting these cases were as follows. First, more than eighty-two percent of the country’s remaining closed forest resources are found in these two regions (WBISPP, 2004; Hommeier, 2011). Second, Oromiya and SNNPR are often praised for their steady progress in the broader decentralization reform (Meheret, 2007; Garcia and Rajkumar, 2008; Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010). Third, the existing literature suggests variation between Oromiya and SNNPR in terms of the historical impetus of decentralization, thus conforming to the theoretical proposition of contexts that influence the degree of institutional change (Young, 1998; Keeley and Scoones, 2000; Meheret, 2007; Taye and Tegegne, 2007). Whether this variation has a link with the degree of institutional change in MLFG is a topic of empirical investigation in this chapter.

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, participant observation, group discussions, and document analysis during field study from January 2011 to May 2012. In total, we consulted 127 informants with both direct and indirect roles in the decentralization process and in the implementation of forest policy at federal, regional, zone, and *woreda* level (see figure 3.1).

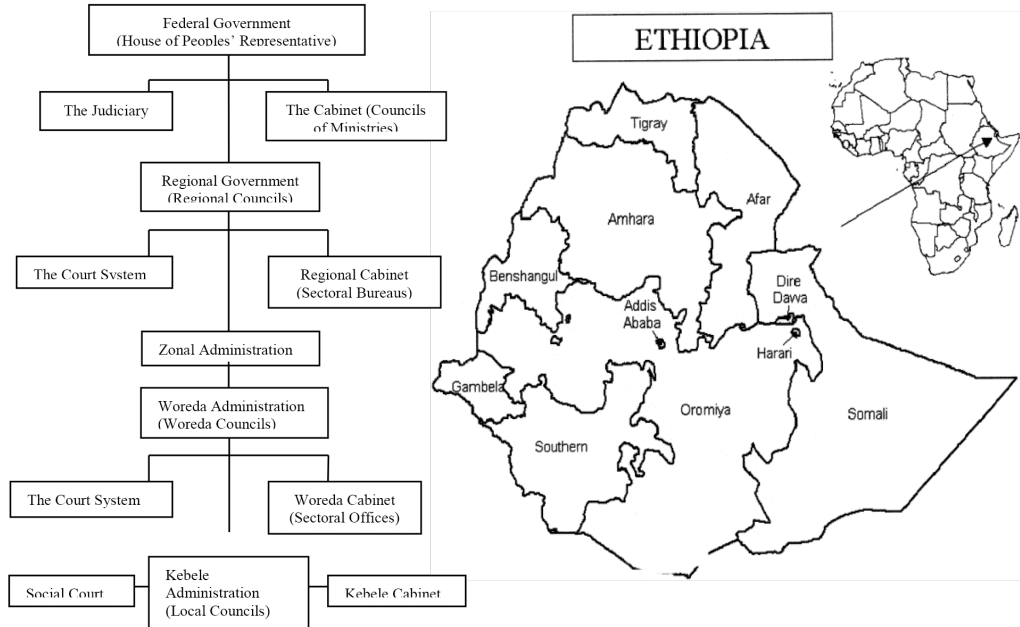


Figure 3.1 The multilevel governance structure and map of the regional states of Ethiopia

Source: adapted from Meheret (2007) Note: *Woreda* is an administrative unit similar to a county or district. *Kebele* is an administrative unit similar to a ward.

These informants include politicians, bureaucrats, NGO and donor officials, academics, and research scientists. The interviewees were selected to ensure a variety of opinions but not statistical representation (Yin, 2003). Informants assumed to have different opinions, knowledge, and interest in the decentralization processes were chosen by integrating cluster and snowball sampling techniques (Kumar, 2005). During the extended field study, the first author participated in several consultative meetings, workshops, and policy dialogues, and observed several regular office settings.

The theoretical concepts and framework introduced in sections 1.4 and 3.2 were used to guide the data collection and analysis process. Qualitative and quantitative content analysis was conducted on documentary sources including policy and legal codes, academic literature (both published and grey documents), statistical records, newsletters, and newspaper articles. The rest of this chapter presents the evolution of MLFG and the manifestation of the degree of institutional changes analysed according to the four analytical dimensions, and highlights the MLFG institutionalization processes at subnational level.

3.4 Institutional change from an old to a new system of governance

This section presents how MLFG has evolved and the extent to which the new arrangement moved away from the old centralized system. We first examine the extent to which the dominant policy discourse that frames the problem and sets its solution has changed over time from the early 1990s to the present. If significant change is observed in the discourse dimension from an old to a new policy assumption and concept, we trace further the extent to which these discursive changes are translated into new laws and a new organizational setup. We also analyse whether the new policies and legislations support or constrain the participation of new actors who are in favour of the emerging MLFG arrangement and the degree to which the new actors are able to mobilize resources to influence policy outcomes and develop new power relations between multiple governmental levels.

3.4.1 Shift in dominant policy discourses

Since the early 1990s, a decentralized form of governance, locally known as *yaltmakele astedader* (in Amharic, the lingua franca of Ethiopia) has been accorded very high political attention and has been popularized through all means of government communications from electronic to print media and policy outlets. In particular, the policy and strategy document entitled (in Amharic): *Be ityopiya ye dimokirasiawi sirihaat ginbata gedayoch* (The issues of building a democratic system in Ethiopia), drafted in the early 1990s by the ruling party and issued in 2002, extensively disclosed the rationales and detailed strategies for instituting multilevel governance structure (see FDRE, 2002). Eventually, the constituent units of the nation-state were re-demarcated along the geographic boundaries of *nations, nationalities, or peoples*.³ Some commentators claim that the re-demarcation of the nation-state in terms of nations, nationalities, and peoples was influenced by the Marxist-Leninist ideology, which assumes that ethnic groups can more effectively engage in their own political development and collective advancement if mobilized from within, with their own members, in their own language, using their own cultural tradition and knowledge system (Young, 1998; Keller, 2002; Vaughan, 2003). These analysts also agree that the influential Marxist-Leninist discourse entered the political arena in Ethiopia during the so-called student movement of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Therefore, unlike most other cases where decentralization was a response to an external push such as a structural adjustment programme imposed by the international community, the impetus of decentralization in Ethiopia was more a response to the internal social and political movements to settle the perennial struggle for state power and resources between the ethnic political elites (Alem, 2004; Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010). At the same time however, the new governance arrangement matched the dominant global discourse of democratic governance based on political pluralism and devolution of power to lower institutional levels, as promoted following the end of the cold war (Vaughan, 2003; Praeg, 2006). In other words, the Western donors and international community played more of a supporting role than an initiatory one in the decentralization process in Ethiopia. The concurrence of internal political interests and the demands of the international community has led some analysts to claim that the Ethiopian experience is a ‘big push decentralization’ that is different from the deconcentration or delegation experiments of most countries in Africa (Alem, 2004; Praeg, 2006; Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010; Hashim, 2010).

³ ‘Nations, Nationalities, or Peoples’ is defined in the 1995 Ethiopian constitution as a group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory (FDRE, 1995:article 39, sub-article 5).

The evolution of forest policy was also strongly intertwined with the macro-level political orientation and economic priorities of successive regimes (Alemayehu *et al.*, 2013, see chapter 2). As a result, it is not plausible to analyse the development of MLFG in isolation from the broader socio-economic and political context in the country. The administration of natural resources, including forest and land, had been actively centralized since the establishment and consolidation of central government in the second-half of the nineteenth century. Particularly during the socialist regime, all forests and forested land were put under state control (nationalized) and governed by hierarchies of commands radiating from the centre. From the early 1990s on, the language of forest governance has shifted from centralization to decentralization. Several policy and strategy documents issued after the fall of the socialist regime swiftly shifted their problem definition and terminology usage from a focus on centralization to a focus on decentralization. A notable example is the Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia (CSE, the basis for both forest and environmental policy in Ethiopia) (Melaku, 2008), which was initially designed for a unitary state and emphasized the pivotal role of the central government and its bureaucracy in the management of natural resources. Shortly after the fall of the socialist regime, the same document was rewritten to represent the new governance structure and culminated in the development of the Regional Conservation Strategies (RCS), written in different regional languages (Melaku, 2008). The new lexicon was framed within the changing macro-political discourses and was based on pragmatic and ethical justifications. The pragmatic view holds that management efficiency can be achieved when decisions are made close to the citizens. The ethical perspective on the other hand conforms to the notion of the new political process advocating for the right of nations, nationalities, and peoples to administer their own affairs, including management and use of forest resources. Interestingly, both perspectives resonate with the global decentralization discourses. Sections 3.4.2, 3.4.3, and 3.4.4 discuss the extent to which the change at discourse level has been reflected in the other policy dimensions: rules, actors' coalition, and power and resources.

3.4.2 New rules and institutions

The commitment to reform the forest governance system from a centralized to a multilevel arrangement first became a legal contract under the 1994 forest law. This law for the first time defined three types of forest property regimes: federal, regional, and private. Forests with a unique national importance such as genetic resource conservation and those that crossed the boundaries of more than one region were designated as federal forests. Forests that were neither federal nor private and that were found within a specific region were designated as regional forests. Reflecting the then dominant tone of decentralization and regional autonomy, only one out of fifty-eight national forest priority areas (NFPAs) was designated as federal forest, whereas the rest were distributed to the newly constituted regional states.

The 1995 constitution further legitimized the new governance arrangement by reconfiguring the country as a *federal democratic republic* constituting nine semi-autonomous national-regional states, also called regional states or regions, determined on the basis of settlement patterns, language, and ethnic identity; and two chartered cities: Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The regional states emerged as meso-governments mandated to formulate and implement their own constitution and other laws, to enact and execute social and economic development policies, to administer land and other natural resources including forests, and to levy and collect taxes (FDRE, 1995). With the autonomy granted to them by the constitution, the regional states issued their own forest laws, for example, Oromiya in 2003 and SNNPR in 2004. The regional states established their own bureaus, e.g., agriculture, environment, and forestry, more or less analogous to the federal ministries and granted executive authority under their jurisdiction.

The 2007 federal forest law that replaced its predecessor further clarified the powers and duties of federal and regional states. Article 18 of this proclamation vested regional states with the power to administer all types of forests in their region, including the authority to set the royalty rate, and collect and utilize revenue from forest products. However, unlike the 1994 forest law that emphasized decentralization, the new proclamation signalled the possibility of recentralization as well. For example, Article 17 specifies the conditions under which the federal ministry may take over the administration of a state forest, when and if necessary. Such conditions include: failure by the regional states to properly conserve and develop the forest, a request by the regional states for help from the federal ministry to manage the forest, and on occasions when issues of national and international significance require the assistance of the federal ministry (FDRE, 2007). Despite these safeguards and stipulations, no regional forests have yet been put under federal government administration. Rather, we observed a reverse trend in which the only remaining federal forest was transferred to regional state control after the 2007 forest law was passed. This indeed reflects the strength of centrifugal as compared to centripetal forces when the trends in a forest governance domain are taken into account.

3.4.3 Change in coalitions of policy actors

The ascendancy of the decentralization discourse has placed actors that support regional autonomy and a multilevel governance arrangement in the forefront of policymaking. This is a new development for a country where historically the centralizing forces dominated the political processes for more than a century (Vaughan, 2003; Mulugeta, 2005). In the forest policy domain as well, advocates of decentralization and the new MLFG arrangement have taken a central role in decision making, whereas those who were sceptical about decentralization were distanced from key decision-making processes. One informant from the federal ministry of agriculture expressed his experience during the early phase of decentralization:

The situation in the beginning was tense. If you don't speak the same language [decentralization, self-rule, and etc.] and share the same euphoria, most likely you are out of the next meeting [...] I was no longer invited to the discussion after I made a critical remark on the rush for decentralization (Interview with former forestry expert, Addis Ababa, April 2011).

The MLFG process has also attracted more and new players to the forest governance policy field. Non-professional politicians in favour of regional autonomy and self-rule have increasingly become active players in the governance of natural resources, including land and forests. This is a marked departure from the past when, particularly during the socialist regime, professionals played a decisive role in the area of forest management. Although both professionals and political actors share the decentralization discourse, their frame of reference and priorities are different. For the former, the most pressing problem is the marginalized and under-resourced forestry agency at federal level, and these professionals view decentralization as the path to institutional healing (Yonas, 2001; Mulugeta and Tadesse, 2010; field notes). For political actors, the most critical problem in the forestry sector is the unjust property regime created during the former defunct and highly centralized forest administration. These politicians pursue decentralization to maximize the resource pool under their jurisdiction driven by the motive of 'more for my constituency'; and resource conservation is a secondary priority (field notes). Because the process of decentralization brought together such divergent and sometimes competing actor coalitions, the boundaries of the forest policy field have become blurred and fuzzy. The former top-down flow of command has

also shifted to a more intensive interaction among actors located on the same administrative level, e.g., at regional state level. However, systematic co-operation and efficient task-sharing between actors at different levels has remained sub-optimal after many years of MLFG implementation. The subsequent sections of this chapter illustrate why efficient co-operation between levels of government is a challenging task, although the degree of the problem varies between the regional states under investigation.

3.4.4 Resource mobilization and new power relations

Building a centralized unitary state had been the principal goal of the ruling elites since the establishment of the modern state in Ethiopia. No surprise, then, that the capital city was the political, economic, and administrative powerhouse until the early 1990s when the abrupt wave of decentralization was initiated. In what seems to correct the historic power imbalance between the centre and the peripheries, the 1995 constitution not only annulled the instruments and structures of the previous centralized regime, but also granted a considerable degree of formal authority to the subnational units of government. Particularly, article 39 of the constitution bestowed on the regional states enormous power leverage, including independence, if the central government should fail to meet their demands. Following the establishment of regional governments, a substantial number of resources and responsibilities were transferred to the regional bureaus. The function of the central ministry has been limited to setting standards and enacting policy frameworks. Partly as a result of the new reform and also because of other factors explained in chapter 2 (Alemayehu *et al.*, 2013), the former relatively strong forestry department at national level was downscaled to third-level subordination under the ministry of agriculture with fewer than six professional employees. The regional bureaus that assumed the new responsibilities were also constrained by weak institutional capacity and critical financial shortage, particularly during the early phase of decentralization (Million, 2001). The disorganized transfer of rights and responsibilities created a chaotic condition in the institutional setup that negatively affected the management of forest resources. For example, Melaku (2003) reported a reduction of more than forty-nine percent of the existing forest area due to the power vacuum, or as he said, ‘open-access situation,’ until the regional government rebuilt their organizational capacity – a task that took a decade and even longer in some regional states (Hommeier, 2011).

Under the unitary government, all forest revenues ranging from minor fees for using non-timber forest products to large concession fees were deposited in the central treasury under the direct control of the ministry of finance (Million, 2001). The approval of this ministry was also needed to reinvest part of the revenue in forest development and conservation activities. When the administration of forest resources was handed over to the regional government, a special account called the Consolidated Fund (CF) was created in each region to deposit forest revenues. The regional bureau of finance administers the revenue collection process, and the regional council has authority for the allocation of the CF. However, despite the ‘big push’ claim of its proponents, fiscal autonomy remains the weak link in the multilevel governance arrangement in Ethiopia. In other words, the reform is advanced in terms of political and administrative decentralization, but the fiscal side is still overwhelmingly controlled by the central government (Paulos, 2007; Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010; Ishiyama, 2010).

However, this study reveals variations across the regional states in how they exercise their constitutional mandate and overcome fiscal constraints in administering their natural resources. For example, the Oromiya regional state devised an innovative mechanism to retain up to ninety percent of forest revenue

to finance forest development and conservation activities. In contrast, most regional states, including SNNPR, have no mechanism to retain and use forest revenues, and depend on block grants allocated from the central government to fulfil their administrative responsibilities (Million, 2001; Yilmaz and Venugopal, 2008). The variations between regional states on how they exercise their authority to mobilize resources are strongly related to the degree of institutional change towards the MLFG arrangement. The interplay between the degree of institutional change, autonomy to mobilize resources, and factors that explain the variation between regional states is elaborated in the next sections.

3.5 MLFG institutionalization at subnational level: a comparative perspective between Oromiya and SNNPR

This section presents the MLFG institutionalization processes in two regional states in Ethiopia and reflects on regional contexts that have a bearing on the degree of institutional change. Finally, a comparative degree of institutional change between the two regional states is summarized.

3.5.1 MLFG institutionalization in Oromiya

Oromiya regional state, delineated on the basis of ethnic demography, was established in 1991 following decades of political struggles for regional autonomy and self-government. The decentralization discourse was also framed within the historical drive towards regional autonomy and the quest for self-rule (Vaughan, 2003; Merera, 2007). Partly as a result of this historical impetus, decentralization, *alwaalta'iinsa* in *Afaan Oromoo* (official language in Oromiya), has been and is still a priority agenda in the region. Concerning the link between the historical frame of regional autonomy and the current process of decentralization, Mulugeta (2012:99) wrote:

Oromi(y)a, as a state, was one of the states where the issue of [the] national question, equity, underdevelopment and extreme marginalization used to be, and still is to a larger degree, an agenda of politicians and the people as a whole. With this regard at least in principle, on basic state documents the measure towards federalism and decentralization was a fundamental step.

The shared understanding about the underlying problems in the region (underdevelopment and inequality due to the hitherto marginalization by the past centralized regime) and its solutions (decentralization and regional autonomy) unified the perspective of political actors and professionals at subnational levels in Oromiya. This shared understanding enabled the subnational actors to form a strong coalition that has emerged as an active player in policy formulation and implementation processes (field note). For example, policy actors in Oromiya made use of their regional autonomy and enacted the first regional forest law in 2003. Departing significantly from the federal forest law that divides forest property regimes into public and private forests, the Oromiya forest law recognizes community forest. It reflects the discretionary space of regional actors to execute their regional mandates even to the extent of modifying federal policy to fit local realities. The wider decision-making space is attributed to the strong cooperation and networking between politicians and key bureaucrats in the region. This cooperation and networking facilitated opportunities to bring forestry issues onto the political agenda. Within this enabling condition, forestry professionals successfully lobbied key politicians and regional legislators to elevate the institutional profile of forestry

from a section within the bureau of agriculture to a first-level regional organization, Oromiya Forest and Wildlife Enterprise (OFWE). The intriguing innovation in this institutional transformation was how the professionals convinced the regional council (the regional decision-making body) to generate and use revenue for the development of forest resources and to run the new organization. In the words of the OFWE director general:

Foresters in this country have been lobbying for the establishment of an autonomous forestry organization for more than a decade without a meaningful achievement. Most of those previous efforts emphasized management approaches envisaged by professionals. But that did not work. Now we have formulated a comprehensive strategy that addresses the politicians' priority [contributing to economic development] while simultaneously ensuring sustainable conservation of the resources (Interview with director general of OFWE, Finfine, January 2011).

The regional forest regulation No. 122/2009 granted OFWE full authority to generate and use revenue for the development and conservation of more than 1.7 million hectares of forests, of which 74,215 hectares, 1,209,955 hectares, and 468,318 hectares are classified as plantations, natural forests, and other land uses, respectively. The OFWE concession also comprises two wildlife sanctuaries, thirteen controlled hunting areas, and five open hunting areas (Mulugeta and Tadesse, 2010; Hommeier, 2011). The enterprise's records indicate that the annual revenue from forest and wildlife resources has increased from US\$1.44 million in 2006/2007 when the enterprise was established to US\$10.5 million in the 2009/2010 fiscal year. The total capital of the enterprise had increased to about US\$83.8 million within four years of its establishment (field note). By doing this, OFWE overcame the most critical shortcoming of fiscal decentralization in the functioning of MLFG in Ethiopia. The existing evidence suggests that the cordial working relationship between professional bureaucrats and political decision makers contributed to these outcomes. Moreover, within the enabling working environment, OFWE managed to adopt a flexible job structure and attractive salaries. For example, OFWE set a relatively higher salary scale than the standard payment for similar professional positions in other regions. Most forestry experts interviewed mentioned that the autonomous working environment (independence from the agricultural bureau) and the relatively higher salary scale are the two most important incentives to work even in the remote forested areas. Consequently, Oromiya is relatively better staffed with qualified and competent personnel. This state of affairs has in turn strengthened the leverage of subnational actors while minimizing the interference from the centre.

However, despite the relatively better coordination observed between the regional office (OFWE headquarters) and the nine branch offices, resources and decision-making authority were not sufficiently devolved to the district and sub-district offices. For example, in Belete-Gera regional forest priority area, we observed that only five personnel were assigned to manage a forest of about 160,000 hectares located in difficult terrain with a poor road network. A similar situation was observed in Chilimo regional forest priority area in the central highlands, where only one expert was assigned to oversee the forest that is located ninety kilometres away from the office. Therefore, it can be concluded that, although the MLFG structure has been well established at regional state level, the capacity has not yet been adequately created at district and sub-district level to exercise formal authority in Oromiya.

3.5.2 MLFG institutionalization in SNNPR

The current SNNPR previously comprised five different regional states following the regionalization reform in the early 1990s. These regions encompassed large territorial units inhabited by more than forty-five ethnic groups with distinct languages and cultural identities (CSA, 2007). After a year of experimentation during the transition period, the five regions were merged to form SNNPR. Following the merger, twenty-one ethnic-based political parties were also united under the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM) to form one of the four members of the ruling EPRDF (Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front) coalition in 2001. The amalgamation of the multitude of ethnic groups, or what Vaughan (2003) termed 'repacking Pandora's box,' has created lasting discontent and polarized discourses between regional political actors (Aalen, 2011). One group (the regional ruling elites) has aligned with the central actors and advocates ethnic unification as a means to good governance, development, and economic progress. The other group (traditional ethnic elites) champions ethnic self-administration as the preferred way to mobilize the people of the region and criticizes the unification as a process of 'ethnic containment' by the central government (Vaughan, 2006; Aalen, 2011). The discontent in the political arena was also felt in bureaucratic circles and resulted in distrust and friction not only between bureaucrats, but also between bureaucrats and the regional decision makers (Young, 1998; Keeley and Scoones, 2000).

As a result of such division, policy consensus between regional actors has been a daunting challenge. For example, although the regional state issued its forest law in 2004, there were neither implementation guidelines nor an organization to realize the policy plan, and so this law was eventually repealed in 2012. Reflecting the dominant role of central actors in regional affairs, the contents of the 2004 forest law resonate highly with the federal forest proclamation. Although SNNPR is the second most forested region in the country, forestry activities are currently organized under the bureau of agriculture at team level. Most forestry experts interviewed complained about the ineptness of the current institutional arrangement, the overload of tasks without sufficient compensation, and the lack of most basic office requirements and facilities to fulfil their professional responsibilities.

The current operation of the forestry team within the bureau of agriculture reflects a lack of power and overall autonomy to mobilize resources and coordinate its regional mandates. The team is overshadowed by other priorities of the bureau of agriculture. For example, promoting agricultural investment is a key priority in the region as elsewhere in the nation; but, more than in other regions, there are several incidences of forest land allocation for agricultural investments in SNNPR where forestry experts in the bureau of agriculture have no power to defend the forest boundary (Tamru, 2006; field note). Most forest estates in this region are not gazetted, and the forestry services at regional and lower administrative levels lack clear legal titles to defend the forest land from the burgeoning agricultural investments.

A similar discussion with a group of experts from land administration, environmental conservation, and wildlife protection revealed weak relationships and networking between politicians and professionals in SNNPR that resulted in a half-hearted attempt to institutionalize the new forest governance. Keeley and Scoones (2000:113) also reported similar dissonance in SNNPR:

Although appointees of the central government and party exist, they do not necessarily have privileged access to the federal level, nor do they have the necessary political connections. Indeed, a distinct lack of confidence is exhibited, reflecting perhaps an insecure and uncertain political positioning.

In addition to the divergent political views and weak coalition between regional actors, there is a huge disparity in resource endowment between the various administrative units in SNNPR that complicates the institutionalization and functioning of MLFG in this region. The regional state can be roughly divided into four major sub-regions (Western, Eastern, North-central, and Southern zones) based on forest resource endowments and major economic activities. The western zones are highly forested, and the livelihood of their people predominantly depends on forest resources. Whereas the eastern zones such as Sidama and Gedeo are mainly dependent on a mixed agroforestry system and private tree plantations, most of the north-central zones such as Hadiya and Alaba are largely agrarian and have exhausted their natural forest stocks. The southern zones are endowed with vast woodlands and inhabited by pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities. Such differences in resource endowment clearly surfaced as one of the main challenges during the negotiation to formulate the new regional forest law. This draft law was initiated in 2009 with the objective of improving the conservation and development of forest resources and enhancing the contribution of the forestry sector to the regional economy. The draft law also demanded the establishment of a strong regional forestry organization to implement the law and manage the regional forest resources. This draft law faced difficult challenges to reconcile the interests of the various political groups constituting the regional decision-making body. According to our informants' accounts, the main reason why the different regional actors were reluctant to agree on a single set of laws was that it is too general to address the diverse local problems and priorities. To overcome this resistance, the law's promoters divided the region into clusters based on resource endowment and major economic activities for the negotiation on the draft bill. The bill was finally issued after more than three years of intense negotiations between the various regional actors.⁴ However, it remains to be seen whether the implementation instruments will follow the law in a timely fashion or remain dormant as in the case of its predecessor, the 2004 forest law.

The subnational units below regional state level (the *zone* and the *woreda*) are divided in SNNPR to reflect the multi-ethnic groups that constitute the region. As a result, unlike most other regions, the zones and the special *woredas* in SNNPR have a semi-autonomous status with constitutional recognition, elected councils, and an executive administration of their own (Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010). However, the trade-off between the political emphasis on creating semi-autonomous units and administrative expediency is challenging the functioning of MLFG in this region. Concerning the weak administrative expediency, experts at regional level complained of the disobedience of some zone and *woreda* offices even to routine administrative procedures such as periodic reporting. A regional forestry expert stated: *'you know this region is a kind of loose union of semi-autonomous entities. The zone experts are answerable to their respective zone administration. There is no direct and practical means for us to hold them accountable.'* The zone experts also criticize the regional bureau for neglecting the specific plan and priority of the zone by focusing on the central government directives rather than understanding the practical problems at local level. A forestry expert in Kaffa zone stated: *'the ears of the regional experts always erect*

⁴ The involvement of the non-state actors, particularly the NTFP-PFM-RD (Non-Timber Forest Product - Participatory Forest Management -Research and Development) and EWL-NRA (Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association), in facilitating the clustered negation and forging common interests between the various regional groups contributed to the adoption of the law after it was blocked for more than three years.

upward [central government]...then they transfer the central plan even without understanding the specific problems we have here.' This reflects weak coordination between the regional bureau and offices at the lower administrative tiers. Besides the problem of vertical integration, SNNPR is severely constrained by a shortage of competent and trained professionals, particularly on the tiers below regional level. The problem is more serious in the remote and undeveloped zones and *woredas*, where it is difficult to recruit qualified personnel. Meheret (2007), for example, suggested introducing a flexible incentive package including higher pay and allowances to attract and retain qualified employees in such environments. However, the weak political discretion and lack of confidence, as discussed above, prevented the regional decision makers from modifying the federal directive that sets standard salary scales and job structures. The lack of adequate and capable personnel in turn has sustained the dependence of regional government on the central government instead of innovating new strategies to mobilize resources and solve local problems.⁵

3.5.3 Comparative perspective between Oromiya and SNNPR

The empirical results show that, although the federated regions of Ethiopia have gone through similar decentralization reform processes, the institutionalization of MLFG policy varies between the two regional states under investigation – Oromiya and SNNPR. In Oromiya, the decentralization discourses are better translated into implementation instruments and have altered the organizational setup. This is mainly because the rationales of decentralization unified the policy perspective of politicians and implementing officials, and this facilitated the formation of strong subnational actor coalitions. The existence of a strong regional actor coalition in turn enabled a wider decision-making space to reinterpret federal policy and tailor it to local realities. Such policy space also allowed subnational actors to innovate mechanisms to generate revenue from regional sources and overcome fiscal constraints.

In SNNPR, by contrast, although decentralization is a political buzzword, there is no common understanding about its underlying principles and the procedure to achieve it. There is disarray in the various regional forces' way of thinking and acting. The divergent views and weak coalition between regional actors resulted in a half-hearted attempt to institutionalize MLFG policy. The implementation instruments, when they exist, are better described as weak (dormant), inconsistent, and a replica of the federal directives that sustain the dominant role of central actors. The narrow discretionary space again discourages regional actors from innovating local strategies to mobilize resources; this in turn perpetuates dependence on the central government. Table 3.2 summarizes the comparative degree of institutional change between the two regional states.

⁵ In contrast to our finding, Garcia and Rajkumar (2008) reported improvement in the delivery of education and health services in SNNPR, even more than in Oromiya. These authors compared survey data at district level before and after decentralization in both regions and concluded that beneficiary satisfaction has increased in SNNPR but to a lesser degree in Oromiya. Therefore, our analysis in this chapter only concerns the institutionalization process in a specific policy domain, i.e. MLFG, and does not encompass the decentralization reform designed for service delivery.

Table 3.2 Comparative degree of institutional change in Oromiya and SNNPR

Policy arrangement dimensions	Regional states	
	Oromiya	SNNPR
Discourses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralization is the dominant policy paradigm The decentralization discourse unifies the policy perspectives of politicians and implementing officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralization is the dominant political rhetoric However, it was not reflected in the way of thinking and acting of different policy actors (politicians and implementing officials have different frames of reference and priorities)
Rules and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new policy discourses were translated into binding laws (e.g., the 2003 forest law, the 2007 and the 2009 regional forest regulations) The new policy plans are implemented through the autonomous regional organization, OFWE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new policy plan was initially translated into the 2004 forest law However, no implementation instruments such as regulation and guidelines followed. The 2004 forest law was dormant for almost eight years Predominantly guided by central directives The 2009 draft regional forest law was enacted after having been blocked for more than three years The struggle to establish a strong regional organization to implement the new policy plans is underway
Actors coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively strong coalition between key regional actors (politicians and influential bureaucrats) Better confidence to reinterpret and transform policies coming from the centre to regional priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distrust and lack of mutual understanding between political actors and bureaucrats Less flexibility and fewer attempts to adapt the centrally designed policies at regional level
Resource and power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovating regional strategies to mobilize and allocate resources (financial and human) Promising attempt to exercise the regional mandates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak attempt to mobilize regional resources (dependent on central sources) Unsatisfactory attempt to exercise regional autonomy

Note: Our analysis is limited to the institutionalization of the MLFG arrangement. Therefore, this comparative assessment does not extend to the broad decentralization outcomes in the two regions.

The results suggest deep and shallow institutional change in Oromiya and SNNPR, respectively. This qualitative comparative assessment indicates relative differences in the spectrum of institutional changes observed in the two regions. It does not imply a success versus stagnation of the new governance arrangement. Even in Oromiya where we claim that there has been deep institutional change, resources and authority – from an ideal-type devolution perspective – were not sufficiently transferred to the institutions below regional state level. Moreover, how far the new institutional arrangement is resilient against the continuous pressure from the centripetal forces remains to be seen. For example, the central authority's recent move to govern some national parks previously managed by the regional governments strengthens the recentralization scenario.

3.6 Discussion and conclusion

Our analysis through a PAA lens of institutional change in Ethiopia's MLFG policy reveals a different result than the typical accounts, which emphasize that the decentralization reform in Ethiopia is superficial and a continuation of the centralizing projects of the previous regimes (Keeley and Scoones, 2000, 2003; Teferi, 2004; Keller and Smith, 2005; Paulos, 2007; Chinigo, 2011; Abrar and Inoue, 2012). As elaborated above, significant institutional shifts were observed in: (i) the dominant policy discourse that frames and guides problem definition and stipulates solutions, (ii) the translation of the dominant policy discourse into binding laws that imply new responsibilities and interaction rules between multiple governmental layers, (iii) the increase in the number and strength of actors supporting the multilevel governance arrangement, and (iv) the emergence of a new capacity to mobilize resources that stimulated the rise of new power relations between national and subnational actors.

However, the degree of institutional change differs between the two regional states under investigation – the institutional arrangement in Oromiya has changed more than that in SNNPR. In Oromiya, the decentralization discourse was better translated into implementation instruments, and this region has also a strong coalition of subnational actors that created wider room to interpret federal policy to fit local realities. This policy space also enabled the actors from the Oromiya region to innovate a mechanism to generate revenue from regional sources, for example through the regional forest consolidated fund, and thereby overcome fiscal constraints. In SNNPR, by contrast, the regional forest law and other supportive implementation instruments are weak, inconsistent, and mainly sustain the hierarchical governing system. Because the actors' coalition in this region is weak, it has little space to develop local strategies and remains highly dependent on directives and backup from the centre. In summary, shallow institutional change was observed in the latter region, particularly when the region's ability to mobilize resources and influence policymaking is taken into account.

Our findings suggest a strong link between the historical and socio-political settings within which the MLFG policy evolved and the different degrees of institutional change observed in the two regional states. In the case of Oromiya, the decentralization discourse was built on the shared historical claim about national identity and the longstanding quest for (sub) national autonomy. The shared historical claim also served as an underlying frame to bind together diverse regional actors (including politicians and technocrats), and enabled them to articulate and enhance regional demands. This result corroborates Pierson and Skocpol's (2002) and Falleti's (2010) assertion that such historical claims once established will often generate self-reinforcing dynamics and serve as a powerful resource for political mobilization, defining interaction rules, and even shaping citizens' thinking about the political world. In SNNPR, such a unified historical claim for regional autonomy and decentralization was not observed.⁶ Because of the lack of a unified historical claim, the regional elites were unable to develop a distinctive rationale that could organize different forces and boldly push the agenda of regional autonomy. As a result, the central government followed a top-down approach to define the ethnic and regional boundaries and created a complex governance arrangement ostensibly for better coordination and unification. However, the top-down approach of amalgamating heterogeneous ethnic units with different historical values and claims

⁶ In SNNPR, although some ethnic units, such as the Wolaita, the Sidama, and the Kaffa people, trace their history back before the mid-nineteenth century as independent kingdoms, they never became united under one umbrella regional political organization to demand regional autonomy as it appears today (Vaughan, 2006; Aalen, 2011).

undermined the formation of a coalition between regional actors (Vaughan, 2006; Aalen, 2011). At the same time, the lack of a coalition of actors with shared experiences and mutual understanding constrained the regional actors in mobilizing resources and developing regional capacities. Such an underdeveloped regional capacity generally sustains a strong dependence on central government. This strong dependence again leads to the shrinking of the decision-making space for the regional actors to independently execute the regional mandate.

Our findings resonate with those of Falleti (2005, 2010) with respect to the effect of the historical and institutional context on the degree of institutional change. However, we did not have enough evidence in our two comparative cases to support her *sequential* proposition. Previous studies on the decentralization process in Ethiopia (Keller, 2002; Meheret, 2007; Garcia and Rajkumar, 2008; Mulugeta, 2012) demonstrate that the reform has been uniformly implemented across the country (except in the emerging regions) in the order of political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization. We also found similar sequences of decentralization in the two regional states under investigation. Thus, variation in the sequence of decentralization has little or no effect on the degree of institutional change in our case studies.

Our findings revealed how MLFG policy develops under two contrasting historical and socio-political settings. Comparatively deep institutional change was observed in the regional state where the MLFG reform matched with the broader socio-political structure and the historical aspirations of regional policy actors. In contrast, shallow institutional change was detected in the regional state where the MLFG reform mismatched with the broader socio-political structure and the demands of regional actors. Therefore, designers of decentralization reforms should pay attention to the shared historical visions and political preferences in a society and carefully capitalize on these ideas, norms, and interests to foster reform processes in desired directions. This chapter has focused on the decentralization process within a governmental structure. However, information on, and examination of, the role and leverage of non-state actors outside the state structure are also urgently needed to have a comprehensive picture of the new governance dynamics. The latter topic is outside the domain of this chapter; it is, however, dealt with in chapter 4. After all, only governance analyses *both* at multiple levels *and* from multi-actor perspectives can provide sufficient and comprehensive science- and policy-relevant information on how and why new policy initiatives are progressing or stagnating. This information might in turn enhance the likelihood of designing more compatible strategies for (forest) resource management or of suggesting better ways of making (forest) policy.

Chapter 4

The role and impact of non-governmental actors in forest policymaking: institutionalization of participatory forest management in Ethiopia

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Participatory Forest Management (PFM) program evaluation at JICA office in Jimma.

Photo by the author.

(This chapter is in process of submission to a peer-reviewed journal)

Abstract

Much has been written about the increasing role of non-governmental actors in forest and related environmental governance. However, little empirical evidence exists as to how and to what extent these new actors influence policymaking in the context of a semi-authoritarian state where policy activities are traditionally the exclusive mandate of governmental actors. By presenting the institutionalization process of the participatory forest management (PFM) approach in Ethiopia, this chapter illustrates how and to what extent non-governmental actors have impacted forest policymaking in what appears to be an unfavourable context. This analysis is based on a policy arrangement approach (PAA) to elucidate and explain the dynamics and nuances of policy processes. It shows how non-governmental actors were able to transform the notion of local participation from its earlier conception as 'mass mobilization' to a new discourse about 'partnership' and a co-governance arrangement. This transformation was initiated at the level of specific forestry development projects sponsored by NGOs and gradually up-scaled to the national policy level. It did not trickle down in a linear process of transfer from international forest policy regimes to national forest policy, but rather involved a more complex routing from international processes to experimental field projects to national policies. Although NGO were able to influence forest policymaking, their decisional power is still rather limited.

4.1 Introduction

Throughout modern Ethiopian history, (forest) policies have commonly been formulated and implemented by governmental actors and professional experts employed by the state administration. This is reflected in the 1965 and the 1980 forest laws, issued during the Imperial and the socialist regimes, respectively (Melaku, 2003; chapter 2). For instance, the 1980 forest law vested enormous power in state actors to formulate and oversee the implementation of forest policy, but it did not recognize the role of non-governmental actors (PMAC, 1980). Nonetheless, under growing international concerns about the importance of forests in the context of the global environment and development cooperation since the late 1980s (Umans, 1993; Singer, 2008), the then socialist government hesitantly opened limited space for external development organizations to participate in forestry and environmental issues (Tadesse, 2003). Subsequently, several bilateral and multilateral organizations such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Food Programme (WFP) initiated forest development and environmental conservation programmes (Hoben, 1995; Yareswork, 2000). However, these initial forestry development and drought relief assistance programmes were limited to technical aspects and relatively insignificant in terms of impacting on forest policy (see chapter 2).

Since the early 1990s, the involvement of non-governmental actors in forest and related environmental governance has been significantly expanded. Prominent among these are both international and Ethiopian-based NGOs. The term NGO broadly denotes a non-profit organization in civil society (Humphreys, 2004). In the context of this study, NGOs are those organizations specifically engaged in environmental protection and natural resource management and registered according to Ethiopia's Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009.⁷ Over the last two decades, the activities of these NGOs have gradually diversified from the conventional relief and rehabilitation activities to advocacy, policy evaluation, and monitoring (Negasa, 2002; Cerritelli *et al.*, 2008). Thus, these NGOs challenge the conventional state-led forest governance approach, where state actors predominately shaped (forest) policy. In the mid-1990s, they introduced a new participatory forest management (PFM) approach in order to achieve better environmental, social, and economic outcomes compared to the conventional state-led forest management approach. In Ethiopia, the PFM approach can be characterized as a co-governance institutional arrangement where forest management responsibilities and use rights are legally shared between a government agency and a community-based organization (CBO) (Bradstock *et al.*, 2007). The inception and establishment of this new forest governance approach is actively assisted by several nationally and internationally based NGOs (Stellmacher, 2007; Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009; Winberg, 2010). Some of the pioneer NGOs include Food and Agricultural Research Management–Africa (FARM-Africa), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ, formally known as GTZ), SOS Sahel, Japan International Cooperation Agency-Participatory Forest Management Project (JICA-PFMP), and Non-Timber Forest Product-Participatory Forest Management-Research and Development (NTFP-PFM-RD).

Several studies recognize the central role of these NGOs in introducing and experimenting with the PFM approach in Ethiopia (Asafw *et al.*, 2001; Girma, 2005; Bradstock *et al.*, 2007; Stellmacher, 2007; Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009; Winberg, 2010; Yemiru, 2011). However, they mainly emphasize the relevance of

⁷ This proclamation excludes cooperatives, formal and informal community-based organizations, and religious organizations from the list of NGOs.

this approach in respect to forest management practice, paying less attention to the role of these NGOs in the institutionalization of the PFM approach or mainstreaming into forest policy. In addition, policy studies scholars focus on the formal policymaking process and the role of state actors (Melaku, 2003, 2008; Mulugeta, 2005), but they give insufficient attention to the informal policymaking process and the role of non-state actors. To fill this knowledge gap, this chapter examines the institutionalization of the PFM approach in Ethiopian forest policy, and the role and impact of NGOs therein. The study attempts to answer two research questions: 1) what strategies did NGOs use to institutionalize the PFM approach in Ethiopian forest policy, and 2) to what extent were NGOs themselves responsible for the adoption of the PFM approach in the formal forest policy? The first research question explores the various strategies (procedures and approaches) that the NGOs deployed to attain their goal (institutionalization of the PFM approach). The second research question assesses whether or not the NGOs have indeed achieved their goal of institutionalizing the PFM approach; hence, impacted forest policymaking or not. Understanding the strategies and the extent of NGO impact in the institutionalization of the PFM approach in Ethiopia complements the growing body of knowledge on the role and influence of NGOs in forest and environmental governance (Arts, 2005; Humphreys, 2004; Rayner *et al.*, 2010; Newell *et al.*, 2012; Bernstein and Cashore, 2012). This study is particularly relevant to understand how a co-governance arrangement may emerge in the context of semi-authoritarian countries such as Ethiopia (Ottaway, 2003; Kasleder, 2011) whose policymaking processes have been largely closed to non-governmental actors (Mulugeta, 2005).

4.2 Theoretical approach

We assessed the institutionalization of the PFM approach in Ethiopia from the theoretical perspective of the *policy arrangement approach* (PAA). PAA was selected over other institutional or policy analysis tools for its analytical rigour. First, PAA is built upon other policy theories in the field of discourse, network, and institutional analysis; therefore, it addresses ideas, actors, power, and rules in a dynamic perspective (Van Tatenhove *et al.*, 2000; Arts and Leroy, 2006; Arts and Buizer, 2009). In line with this, Liefferink (2006) argues that, unlike most other meso-level policy theories that tend to focus on only one or two policy dimensions, PAA provides an excellent basis for an *encompassing* and *dynamic* analysis of policy processes. Second, PAA takes a midway position along the agency–structure continuum (Arts and Leroy, 2006); thus, it analytically connects actors’ day-to-day practices with broader structural changes (Van der Zouwen, 2006). The PAA framework, thus, enables us to analyse how new concepts such as the PFM approach have emerged or were (re)framed, which actors or actors’ coalitions were involved, and which resources and power were mobilized to translate this concept into a concrete policy. Such a dynamic policy process in which a new concept or discourse emerges and translates into a concrete policy arrangement is called *institutionalization* (Van Tatenhove *et al.*, 2000; Van der Zouwen, 2006).

The PAA framework constitutes four interrelated analytical dimensions: *discourses, actors and coalitions, power and resources, and rules* (Arts and Leroy, 2006). Although there are many interpretations of a discourse in the literature (Hajer, 1995; Arts and Buizer, 2009), in this context it refers to a set of ideas, concepts, or desirable policy options advanced by a specific group of actors or an actors’ coalition. It also includes ideas about how to put those concepts or desirable options into effect (Arnouts, 2010). In this study, discourse focuses on the concepts and ideas regarding the relevance of the PFM approach as a preferred forest policy option, and the rationales that guided the formulation of these ideas and concepts

into concrete laws and regulations. Actors can be organizations or individuals involved in a specific policy issue, for example, the PFM approach. An actors' coalition is comparable to a *discourse coalition*, as distinguished by Hajer (1995), and can be defined as a group of players who share a policy discourse as well as policy-relevant resources, in the context of the given rules of the game. Resources relate to assets that policy actors have or can mobilize to achieve certain policy goals or sometimes also to stall the goal of others (Wiering and Arts, 2006). These resources include, for example, money, knowledge and information, expertise to articulate problems and solutions, and resource ownership (e.g., forest or land). Power concerns the ability of actors or an actors' coalition to mobilize resources and achieve desired policy outcomes (Arts and Buizer, 2009). Rules in this context refer to formal instruments and procedures that define responsibilities, access, and interaction among the actors involved in the policy process (Van der Zouwen, 2006). These can be legal texts such as policy and strategy documents, regulations, and directives that outline detailed implementation plans and competences of the various actors involved in the policy.

4.3 Research methodology

In order to understand and explain the emerging role and impact of non-governmental actors in forest policymaking, this chapter assesses the institutionalization process of the PFM approach in Ethiopia, with a focus on the strategies and impacts of NGOs. This is a useful case to elucidate how and to what extent non-governmental actors have shaped the development of forest policy in Ethiopia because: (i) PFM has been promoted by non-governmental actors, mainly NGOs, since the early 1990s as a new system of forest governance to overcome the weakness of the conventional state-led forest management approach, (ii) the inception and the subsequent institutionalization process of the PFM approach prompted strong discursive struggles between the defenders of conventional state-led forestry and proponents of the PFM approach (mainly NGOs), (iii) besides implementing the approach at field level, NGOs have mobilized financial resources and expertise to insert PFM objectives into mainstream forest policy, (iv) thus, the extent to which PFM objectives and principles are transformed into dominant discourse and included in mainstream forest policy reflects the level of NGOs' impact in the development of forest policy in Ethiopia.

Following the tradition of George and Bennett (2005), we conducted a *process tracing* on the institutionalization of PFM policy from the mid-1990s to the present. Process tracing involves systematic and theoretically informed examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analysed in light of the research questions (Collier, 2011). Thus, we examined trajectories of change in Ethiopia's PFM policy process, starting from mid-1990s, the time when non-governmental actors introduced the new co-governance approach. We first selected twenty-four key informants for preliminary interview. These informants were selected on the basis of their roles and experience, for example the number of years they had been involved in the PFM policy process and their closeness to the decision-making positions (cf., Arts and Verschuren, 1999). We collected background information about the key informants from the analysis of selected documents (published and unpublished) relating to the PFM policy process in Ethiopia. After the first round of discussion with these key informants, a snowball sampling technique was used to identify additional interviewees in the subsequent stage of the research (Kumar, 2005). Finally, eighty-five informants (forty-two from NGOs, seven private consultants, four from professional associations, fifteen from different federal government agencies, eight from different regional bureaus, five from a university, and four from a research institute) were interviewed during the first (January 2011 to May 2012) and second (August to September 2013) rounds of data collection.

The interviews were guided by a semi-structured questionnaire addressing five themes: 1) the driving factors for introducing the PFM approach, 2) the main players supporting or resisting the approach, 3) coalition formation among actors in designing and implementing the PFM projects, 4) the resources and power mobilized by actors to institutionalize the new approach, and 5) the rules and institutions relating to the PFM approach. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Then, following the process tracing technique (George and Bennett, 2005; Collier, 2011), we reconstructed the empirical data along the PAA dimensions: discourse, actors/coalitions, resources and power, and rules. The interview data were triangulated with information from document analysis. Documents analysed included: policy and legal codes, published and unpublished PFM project-related reports, statistical records, newsletters, and newspaper articles. Using information derived from documents and interviews, we checked the consistency of change observed in the four policy dimensions. The consistency of change between the dimensions verifies the existence of institutionalization; and this also confirms the impact of the key players in the arrangement (Liefferink, 2006). Thus, the impact of NGOs on the forest policy process is interpreted by examining their contribution to transforming the PFM concept into a dominant policy discourse, forming a coalition around the dominant discourse, mobilizing resources and power to promote this discourse, and formalizing it into binding rules (e.g., policy and strategy, regulation, and directive). We also conducted a counterfactual analysis to examine what actors or events other than NGOs might have impacted the institutionalization of PFM policy (see Corell and Betsill, 2008). In sum, our analysis builds a logical chain of evidence and detailed narratives that link activities of specific actors or actors' coalitions with observed PFM policy outcomes.

Besides the data collected through interviews and document analysis during the field study periods, the authors have engaged in several participatory forestry projects (Alemayehu and Wiersum, 2006; Bognetteau *et al.*, 2007; Wiersum, 2010) and followed the development of forest policy in Ethiopia since 2002. Moreover, the first author participated in several meetings, workshops, and policy dialogues including four annual assemblies of the PFM working group and the 2007 international PFM conference held in Addis Ababa. In some of these meetings, he participated as a rapporteur and member of a review team to prepare a policy brief for decision makers; this gave him privileged access to the inner working of the PFM policy process (see Alemayehu, 2007).

4.4 Results: institutionalization of the PFM approach and the impacts of NGOs

In this section, we interpret and present the institutionalization of the PFM approach, and hence the impact of NGOs in forest policymaking in Ethiopia, following the PAA analytical dimensions introduced above.

4.4.1 Evolution of the discourses on participatory forestry

Discourses on participatory forestry have gradually but distinctively evolved in Ethiopia since its inception around the mid-1970s. This evolutionary trend can be distinguished as a gradual change from *mass mobilization* towards forest development and conservation, to *community empowerment* as a tool for effective planning in natural resource management, and finally to *partnership* between government and local communities in the form of co-governance.

Mass mobilization

Participation as mass mobilization was first introduced into Ethiopia through the 1975 socialist land reform policy. The 1975 land reform, which was induced following the revolution that deposed the Imperial regime, extinguished all the pre-existing property rights to land and nationalized landholdings. This populist policy was extended to forestry through the 1980 forest law. This law criticized the disregard of the Imperial regime for the forestry sector and the alienation of the broad rural masses that resulted in depletion and degradation of forest resources. The preamble to this law reads:

Immediate and decisive action must be taken in order to avert this disastrous situation [deforestation] by **agitating** and **coordinating** the **broad masses** to plant, conserve, develop and administer the country's forest and wildlife resources.

This law aimed to halt the alarming rate of deforestation in the country by mobilizing *the masses* into national forestry development programmes. The socialist government nationalized all forest holdings and established grand state-owned plantations and nature conservation areas, also called national forest priority areas, covering about 4.8 million hectares (Kidane, 2002). The socialist government also formulated a ten-year national perspective plan to rehabilitate large tracts of degraded lands and to conduct massive soil and water conservation activities, mainly through community mobilization. This national perspective plan targeted increasing the country's forest cover to twenty-four percent within ten years (1984–1993). Therefore, mass mobilization was primarily demanded to achieve these ambitious plans.

The mass mobilization approach, locally called *hizebawi nikinake* (in Amharic), was widely practiced in the Ethiopian forestry programme in two forms. One form was the annual quota of free labour contribution, also known as a national work campaign or *sira zemecha*. The second form was material incentives, where locals sold their labour for food or cash, also called food for work or *migib lesira* programmes (Yeraswork, 2000; Alemayehu and Wiersum, 2006). By the end of 1986, 181,000 hectares of land had been reforested, and about 500,000 hectares of farmland and 175,000 hectares of hillsides had been covered with various soil and water conservation structures, mainly through community mobilization (Tadesse, 2001). On average, about 35 million man days per annum were mobilized to achieve this impressive national target (Wøien, 1995). In summary, although the forest conservation and development programme through mass mobilization generally achieved significant results in terms of physical outcomes, the approach essentially suffered from being a non-participatory top-down decision-making process with ill-defined forest property rights, and this undermined a genuine engagement of local communities.

Community empowerment

Perceptions about community participation have entered a new phase since the early 1990s. The first major turn in the framing of participation was introduced by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) during the preparation of the national conservation strategy (NCS) document in the early 1990s (NCS, 1994).⁸ The preparation of this document was supported by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Departing from the earlier understanding of participation as a top-down approach of mass mobilization, the NCS document redefined participation as a liberal bottom-up process of community empowerment (Yeraswork, 2000). The NCS document also prescribed participation as an essential tool for planning in natural resource management. The NCS document clarifies the new framing of participation as against the mass mobilization concept as:

When we plan and then try to hijack the community along, it is not participation. It is mobilization, which is the exact opposite of participation [...] If a conservation project is to be really participatory, the community has to feel, at least as much as the planning expert [...] it should decide on how it can allocate the land, the funds and the human resources and organize itself to carry out the measure.

However, apart from emphasizing the need for community participation in planning natural resource management, the NCS document lacked details of how to implement the new concept of participation, for example in forest management. Particularly, the document did not delineate who the communities or 'participants' were and what types of rights and responsibilities would be shared or transferred.

Partnership or co-governance

Participation was re-framed as a partnership or co-governance arrangement between a defined group of local communities and government when the PFM approach was introduced into Ethiopia around the mid-1990s. Within the shifting discourses about community participation in both the national and international arena, the concept of the PFM approach was for the first time introduced at an international workshop held in Addis Ababa in March 1994. The theme of the workshop was participatory forest management in Ethiopia. The participants of this workshop, predominantly from NGOs and donor organizations, actively promoted PFM as a new forest governance approach to alleviate the problem of deforestation and to deliver better social and economic outcomes. Invited (expatriate) experts also presented experiences from other countries such as Nepal and India where participatory forestry had already been established (see Sing, 1994).

Following the introduction of the PFM concept in the workshop, the NGOs organized and sponsored field visits to India and Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE programme for key forestry officials and influential decision makers working in the federal ministry and regional bureaus. The field visits were intended to influence the perceptions of key government officials and thus ensure that the NGOs would be given

⁸ NCS, an extension of the world conservation strategy (WCS), was prepared in 1980 by IUCN in cooperation with UNEP and WWF. WCS aimed to stimulate a more focused approach to manage 'living resources' and provide policy guidance on how this can be carried out by governmental and non-governmental players (IUCN, 1980). IUCN signed an agreement with the government of Ethiopia in March 1990 to assist the development of the national conservation strategy. The NCS document is the basis for Ethiopia's environmental and forest policy (Melaku, 2008).

permission to start the new scheme. The efforts indeed created enthusiasm, and some of the previously resistant forestry officials shifted their position to allow the implementation of the PFM approach. A respondent from Oromiya forestry department stated: *'I was impressed with what I saw in India and since then I revisited my stand about PFM.'* Soon after the exchange visits, FARM-Africa and GTZ-IFMP were permitted to experiment with PFM in three national forest priority areas. On basis of the outcomes of the experimental or pilot projects, these NGOs claimed that the PFM approach had the potential to ensure sustainable forest management and improve the wellbeing of forest-dependent communities. Particularly, they emphasized that local people had the skills, knowledge, and interest to manage forest resources.

The NGOs also used this field evidence to counter the discourse of their adversaries. These adversaries, mainly forestry professionals working in the government offices, were cynical about the success of the PFM approach. Specifically, they doubted local communities' capacity to fulfil their responsibilities and tackle complex issues regarding coordination, law enforcement, and the application of technologies (Yonas, 2001). This perspective reflects the highly centralized forestry institution and its technocratic foresters that used to think of local communities as agents of forest degradation and opponents of conservation. For example, the then head of Oromiya forestry department expressed his pessimism about the PFM approach in the Ethiopian Foresters Association's periodical: 'forests and forestlands of local, national and international importance should not be unfairly considered as testing ground for different imported conservation ideologies [referring to the PFM approach]' (Daba, 2000). This statement reflects the view of most Ethiopian foresters at the time who see PFM as an approach imposed from the outside or something associated with NGO projects. This perception has had a far-reaching influence on the institutionalization process of the PFM approach. The next section presents coalition formation and other strategies used by PFM advocates, particularly NGOs, to translate PFM into policy tools.

4.4.2 Actors' coalitions and their strategy of policy influence

Although the PFM approach was initially championed by a few international NGOs, the number of actors involved in PFM and related forest governance has increased dramatically over time. These actors also include Ethiopian-based local NGOs, policy think tank organizations, and other civil society groups (table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Key actors, their affiliation, and roles in multi-actor forest governance

Actors	Affiliation	Major donors	Roles in MAFG^a
FARM-Africa	UK-based international NGO	European Union and the UK department for international development (DFID)	Project implementation and policy advocacy
GIZ-IFMP	GIZ, bilateral programme	German federal ministry for economic cooperation and development	Donor, project implementation, and policy advocacy
SOS Sahel	UK-based international NGO	DFID	Project implementation and policy advocacy
JICA-PFMP	JICA, bilateral programme	Government of Japan	Donor, project implementation, and policy advocacy
NTFP-PFM-RD	Ethiopian-based NGO	European Union, the Netherlands and Norwegian embassies in Ethiopia	Research, project implementation, and policy advocacy
BERSMP	A joint programme of FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel	Irish, Netherlands, and Norwegian embassies in Ethiopia	Project implementation and policy advocacy
EWNRA	Ethiopian-based NGO	European Union	Project implementation and policy advocacy
MELCA-Ethiopia	Ethiopian-based NGO	Various national and international partners	Policy research and advocacy, and project implementation
FfE	Ethiopian environmental policy think tank organization	Various national and international partners	Environmental policy advocacy
NABU	German-based NGO	Environment associations in Germany	Project implementation
KFCFCU	Kaffa Forest Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union, CBO	Membership contribution and partners	Project implementation
GEO Rainforest Conservation	German-based NGO	Charity fund organized by staff members of GEO magazine in Germany	Project implementation
ECFF	Ethiopian-based NGO	German federal ministry of education and research, and German federal agency for nature conservation	Research, project implementation, and policy advocacy
AMBERO-GTTEC	Consultancy company based in Germany	The World Bank, government of Norway and the global environment facility, part of the SLM project	Advisory to regional bureaus in project implementation and policy advocacy
CIFOR	Intergovernmental organization	Various international donors	Research and policy communication
FSS	Ethiopian policy think tank organization	Project grants from various organizations	Research, policy communication, and advocacy
EEPFE	Environmental economics policy forum for Ethiopia	Ethiopian development research institute (EDRI) and SIDA	Research and policy communication
SUPFM project	PFM scaling-up project	European Union and government of Ethiopia	Scaling-up PFM best practices (policy and development outcomes)

^a Pertinent to Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009, most NGOs rephrased their policy advocacy objective as a policy support (see FDRE, 2009).

After five years of experimenting with the PFM approach, actors involved in the PFM projects critically reviewed the progress and the challenge associated with the new approach. For this, teams of independent consultants (both national and international) evaluated the PFM pilot projects and presented the findings at a review meeting held in November 1999. The review underlined positive progress in terms of realizing project objectives such as reducing the deforestation rate, stimulating community participation, and building trust between government and local communities. At the same time, the reviewers identified a number of factors constraining the implementation of the PFM approach in Ethiopia. The key limiting factors identified were: lack of pertinent policy to explicitly support the PFM approach and recognize local people's forest use rights, slow adoption of experiences drawn from PFM into the mainstream government policy and programmes, and the difficulty of sustaining PFM experiences when the NGO projects terminate (as PFM initiatives were driven solely by NGOs and donor funding) (cf., chapter 5).

After this review process, the PFM advocates realized that successful and innovative projects by themselves cannot bring the desired result to improve resource management and empower local people. They emphasized that, in order to achieve such general objectives, the initial PFM field trials had to be further developed into a dominant forest management regime embedded in a clear policy to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the approach (mid-term review report). This also led NGOs to revise the priority of their programme. Concerning this revision of NGOs' priorities, the former PFM programme manager, now a private policy consultant, explained:

PFM was initiated in Ethiopia in a policy vacuum. This has significantly constrained the progress of the PFM approach. The absence of a clear policy also confused field-level experts who often resort to the irrelevant old rules. Therefore, after the second phase of the project, we made a concerted effort to have a policy that accommodated PFM and recognized community forest ownership (Interview, May, 2012).

Accordingly, two objectives emerged as a priority for PFM advocates following the review meeting: (i) to catalyse the adoption of a PFM approach in Ethiopian forest policy and practice, and (ii) to endorse community forest ownership as a legally recognized property ownership type in Ethiopia. To realize these two objectives, PFM advocates decided to initiate a revision of Ethiopia's forest policy. However, these actors were also aware that policy revision is not a mandate of non-governmental actors. After all, they are not formally admitted to the policymaking process (agenda setting, issue analysis, and policy decision making) in Ethiopia (Mulugeta, 2005; Dessalegn *et al.*, 2010). This required the PFM advocates to pursue indirect and evidence-based policy influences. The Farm-Africa programme coordinator explained the evidence-based policy influence as:

Influencing policy is a sensitive issue in Ethiopia. The government doesn't want to be told how to accomplish its duty. So we made policymakers and practitioners understand the new approach by showing on the ground how the new approach works. The government allowed Farm-Africa to experiment on the degraded and economically less valuable forests like Chilimo. The assumption at the time was that, if the PFM approach halts deforestation in Chilimo forest, it can work anywhere. Although it was risky for us at the beginning, we successfully reduced the rate of deforestation in Chilimo forest. This marked a milestone in our subsequent advocacy and communication with decision makers.

As an initial strategy towards indirect policy influence, the PFM advocates launched the PFM working group (PFM-WG) in April 2000. The PFM-WG is a coalition of NGOs engaged in the implementation of PFM projects, and it also serves as a forum of all other PFM advocates including donors, professional associations, and intergovernmental research organizations like CIFOR (Centre for International Forestry Research). Following its establishment, the PFM-WG prepared an action plan and established three taskforces under its umbrella. One of the taskforces was assigned to carry out a review of forest-related legal documents in order to include PFM objectives in forest policy and legislation. In order to get access to policy revision, the working group forged strategic alliances with government actors. For this strategic alliance, the PFM-WG chair position was earmarked for a government representative. Concerning this strategy, an informant from GIZ stated that *'although PFM-WG is a coalition of NGOs, we deliberately reserved the chair position for the head of the forestry, land use, and soil conservation department in the ministry of agriculture. And this has been instrumental in bridging communication and building trust between us [NGOs and governmental actors].'* Besides the chair position in the PFM-WG, coordination of the taskforce mandated to review the draft policy was assigned to a policy scientist from the forestry research centre (a government organization). Through this strategic alliance between state and non-state actors, the taskforce was permitted to review the forest policy and to provide a proposal about how to include PFM and community forest ownership in it. In 2004, the PFM-WG taskforce produced the first draft of such a policy in which NGOs were actively involved (field note). Such practice was a new trend in Ethiopia where non-state actors including NGOs were traditionally kept away from all policy affairs (Mulugeta, 2005; Dessalegn *et al.*, 2010)⁹. In the past, even actors from academic and research institutes had no privileged access to policy formulation (Melaku, 2008). Thus, the establishment of the PFM-WG brought new dynamics to the forest governance field where new actors were now able to actively participate in the development of the draft forest policy.

In addition, the PFM-WG forum enabled the members to share experiences among themselves and to develop PFM *best practices*. These PFM best practices, developed from the results of the pilot projects, were shared through regular field visits, workshops, and training sessions in order to recruit new coalition members and also to influence policy. The NGOs organized a series of field visits for members of parliament, key individuals in the line ministries and regional bureaus. These visits were often combined with sensitization workshops and other activities such as the celebration of forest and environmental days and annual tree planting events at the project sites. Besides the local learning opportunities, further exposure visits were organized to other countries. All these efforts galvanized enthusiasm and support for the PFM approach.

The other strategies used by NGOs to influence policy include documentation and publication of PFM experiences through different media outlets (website, PFM newsletter, and regular press releases in local newspapers); active engagement in discussion forums; paper presentation at academic conferences; and financial support for policy review meetings and forums. For example, environmental NGOs jointly sponsored the annual meeting of the Ethiopian foresters' association (EFA, now called Ethiopian forestry

⁹ 'Policy is commonly drafted by small group of trusted individuals who are often close to the power-holder. Although on a few occasions government invite the public for discussion, important feedbacks from them are rarely taken on board [...] The underlying assumption is that policy formulation is a technical matter about which the public is ignorant and consultation serves no useful purpose. Likewise policy implementation is handed over to the line ministries and concerned agencies and they for their part jealously guard their activities against any intrusion by outsiders or the public' (Dessalegn *et al.*, 2010:153).

society) between 2002 and 2008. The purpose of this support was to use the professional association forum to promote the PFM approach. Since 2002, NGO officials have been continuously elected to key positions in the forestry association including the chair position, and PFM has become one of the themes of annual meetings (field note). NGOs also organized the international PFM conference in Ethiopia in March 2007. This conference was opened by the president of Ethiopia, probably the first forestry-related conferences visited by a president. It was also attended by the state minister of agriculture, the director general of the environmental protection authority, heads of regional bureaus, head of delegation of the European Commission in Ethiopia, and community representatives where PFM projects have been implemented. This conference not only brought the PFM issue to the forefront, but also raised the profile of the often neglected forestry sector. Through all these efforts, PFM has become a dominant forest discourse, and actors promoting it have emerged as key players in forest governance in Ethiopia.

4.4.3 Resources and power of NGOs

The past two decades have seen new divisions of resources and power relations between governmental and non-governmental actors. During this period, NGOs have accessed and mobilized many resources to influence forest policy. These resources include finance, knowledge, information, expertise, and access to decision makers. In terms of financial resources, NGOs' budgets have dramatically increased. For example, investment by the NGO sector in general (including environmental NGOs) grew by a half billion USD between 1994 and 2008 (Dessalegn, 2002; Dessalegn *et al.*, 2010). The dramatic increment in financial resources is attributed to the commitment of bilateral and multilateral donors to channel part of their assistance to the country through NGOs. Several multilateral and bilateral agreements signed since the turn of the new Millennium placed strong emphasis on NGOs not only participating in development activities but also playing roles in governance processes. A typical example is the Cotonou Agreement signed between the European Union and ACP (Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific) countries including Ethiopia in June 2000. This agreement, which is effective until 2040, gives due emphasis to what the document calls 'non-state actors,' including NGOs and the role they have to play alongside government in poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability, and good governance (Cerritelli *et al.*, 2008). Under the Cotonou Agreement, thus, the role of NGOs has been extended from the conventional involvement in project implementation to active participation in the policy (and political) dialogue and decision making. Similarly, the periodic evaluation reports on the activities of NGOs, produced by the major donor group (also called development assistance group or DAG) in Ethiopia, provided positive feedback and encouraged more support for the NGO sector (Dessalegn *et al.*, 2010). In summary, influential donors, including those affiliated to the UN, committed themselves not only to work directly with NGOs but also to include them as an important component of the assistance programmes provided to the country. The donor group in Ethiopia also initiated a reform that demands the active involvement of non-governmental actors as a condition to be met by the government in order to gain access to the financial support (Cerritelli *et al.*, 2008). These opportunities have significantly boosted the financial resources and leverage of NGOs. Within this framework, the number of NGOs involved in environmental protection and natural resource management has grown from thirty-two in 1997 to more than 350 in 2012 (field note).

Besides access to financial resources, NGOs possess knowledge and information about forest-related problems and alternative policies, for example the PFM approach. With NGO interventions, the traditional understanding of deforestation as a technical resource issue (e.g., ecological problems) has been expanded

to encompass social issues such as livelihood and social equity. This broader approach in turn has increased the acceptance of NGOs by politicians whose priority is poverty alleviation as compared to technical forestry professionals whose primary interest is resource conservation. Accordingly, the PFM approach was designed by NGOs to address social *and* ecological problems, thus encompassing the national priority of poverty alleviation and the international agenda on sustainable resource management. Because of their access to new information and knowledge, the NGOs' legitimacy in policy negotiations has been enhanced over the past decade. On the other hand, public trust in traditional forestry institutions, such as the national research and academic institutes, has obviously declined. The president's speech at the PFM international conference in Addis Ababa in 2007 revealed the changing importance attributed by policymakers to different kinds of professional and community knowledge:

Conventional forestry attitudes and systems needed to be changed [...] the forestry sector is sometimes known for being conservative in its outlook. Community-based PFM has flown in the face of much of the old, so-called conventional wisdom. It is that wisdom that informed most of us that it is communities that destroy natural resources.

In this speech, the president invited the NGOs involved in the PFM pilot projects to contribute to the development of forest policy. He said that '*it is you, practitioners, who have the responsibility of developing the modalities in which the policy objectives would be fully achieved.*' Such an open call for development practitioners to contribute to policy formulation marked a shift in NGOs' power in the country, where government commonly perceived NGOs as service deliverers rather than policy players (Kassahun, 2002). This illustrates how NGOs have increased their influence in the forest policy process by framing a dominant discourse about PFM, operationalizing it in pilot projects, forming strong coalitions around the dominant discourse, gradually developing policy objectives to be achieved, and mobilizing sufficient resources to achieve their objectives.

4.4.4 New rules and instruments

The NGOs' increasing power in the policy formulation process was reflected in growing attention on the formulation of new policy rules and instruments. The need for policy specification was emphasized during the international PFM conference jointly organized by the government and NGOs in 2007 in Addis Ababa (see section 4.4.2). Many discussions emphasized the need to devise a new forest policy that could encompass the PFM approach and ensure community forest ownership rights. The necessity to promulgate a new forest policy compatible with the changing forest governance practice came under the spotlight in the presence of key decision makers, including representatives of different ministries and members of parliament. Shortly after the conference, the council of ministers approved the new forest policy, which had been in the making for more than ten years. In the same year, the federal parliament also endorsed the new forest policy by issuing forest proclamation No. 542/2007 (FDRE, 2007). The evidence presented here suggests that the advocacies and concerted efforts by PFM advocates, which persisted for more than a decade, contributed to these two documents being approved. The discussion at the 2007 international conference was particularly important in creating momentum that led to the final decision after years of gridlock.

Both the 2007 forest policy and its companion proclamation recognized community participation in the planning, implementation, and benefit sharing of forest management. This is a shift compared to the two old forest proclamations (the 1980 and 1994 forest laws), which called for people's participation in its preambles but not in the content of the articles. The new policy reframed the concept of community participation from the earlier understanding as mass mobilization to partnership where a government agency and a CBO share rights and responsibilities for forest management. For example, article 9 (3) of the 2007 forest law stipulates that 'forest development, conservation and utilization plans shall be formulated to allow the participation of local communities in the development and conservation and also in the sharing of benefits from the development of state forest.' Furthermore, this law specifies the local community entitled to share rights and responsibilities as a 'community residing inside and adjacent to a state forest' (FDRE, 2007: article 2, sub-article 17).

Besides being stipulated in the new forest law, community participation in forest management has been further emphasized in government strategic plans, such as the plan for accelerated and sustained development to end poverty (PASDEP), which covered the period between 2005/06 and 2009/10; and the current growth and transformation plan (GTP), which covers the period between 2010/11 and 2014/15. The GTP focuses on scaling-up best practices from earlier generic plans; thus, PFM best practices have been taken as a promising forest management strategy at federal and regional level. As an indication of the new emphasis, the federal government of Ethiopia initiated the PFM scaling-up programme with a total budget of 7.5 million Euros, which is co-financed by the European Union. These processes imply a step forward in terms of mainstreaming PFM into Ethiopia's forest policy. Moreover, the process of institutionalizing PFM in regional states is also progressing. Particularly, Oromiya and SNNPR states have included PFM as a forest management strategy in their regional forest laws (see chapter 3).

The formalization of PFM as an official forest management approach confirms the increasing role and impact of NGOs in forest policymaking in Ethiopia. This can be witnessed from the content of the new forest law that clearly reflects NGOs' central objectives, which they have been promoting since the early 2000s (see sections 4.4.1, 4.4.2, and 4.4.3). The new forest law reflects the objectives of NGOs in two ways. On the one hand, these objectives have been inserted directly into the text of the new forest law, for example, article 9, sub-article 3 and 8, which makes stipulations about participation, benefit sharing, and protection of community rights in the event of evacuation from forested areas (FDRE, 2007). At the same time, ideas promoted by NGOs concerning the PFM approach are also reflected in the general principles of the law, for example, in the preamble, which reads: 'the sustainable utilization of the country's forest resources is possible through ensuring the participation of, and benefit sharing by, the concerned communities...' Furthermore, the natural resource directorate in the ministry of agriculture officially invited the leading NGOs (see table 4.1) to draft the implementation instruments (regulation and directive) following the 2007 forest law. These NGOs have adequately used these opportunities to shape the content of the draft forest regulation and directive in a way that give more emphasis to the PFM objectives.¹⁰

¹⁰ This can be seen from the contents of the two implementation documents that were in process of formulation at the end of our data collection (September 2013).

In addition to their efforts to insert the PFM approach in forest policy, a coalition of NGOs organized a series of dialogue forums and workshops aimed at influencing decision makers about the importance of establishing a strong and autonomous forestry institution (see also section 2.4.4). The underlying argument was that a strong and autonomous forestry institution is a necessary condition to translate policy objectives into practice and, most importantly, to enhance the contribution of the forestry sector to the national economy and local livelihoods. Some of the notable forums and workshops with policy recommendations include: ‘Ethiopian forestry at the crossroads: the need for a strong institution’ in 2008, ‘Ensuring integrated forest development in Ethiopia in the era of climate change’ in 2009, ‘Multiple roles of forest in Ethiopia vs. associated challenges’ in 2011, ‘Community forests, climate change and REDD+ in Ethiopia’ in 2012, and several public discussion meetings were also organized by think tank organizations such as Forum for Social Studies, Forum for Environment, and the Environmental Economics Policy Forum for Ethiopia. In the continuous attempt to reorganize a strong and autonomous forestry sector, a new ministry of environment and forest was established in June 2013. Although the establishment of the new ministry is a cumulative effect of many factors, particularly climate change negotiations and the desire to utilize the associated economic opportunities relating to carbon finance such as the REDD+ initiative, NGOs together with major donor countries have played a decisive role in the institutional transformation of the forestry sector in Ethiopia. This transformation was not a quick process; rather, it took more than a decade where NGOs have built their evidence and gradually influenced the worldview of key individuals, including policymakers, officials, and members of parliament, and eventually realized their objectives. Therefore, although non-governmental actors were not formally admitted into the policymaking process, they largely exercised indirect and evidence-based policy influence.

4.5 Discussion

Forest governance in Ethiopia has witnessed new dynamics over the past two decades. One of the manifestations of these dynamics was the institutionalization of a new forest co-governance approach, PFM. The analysis in this chapter has demonstrated that the institutionalization of this new approach happened as a result of NGO intervention. The NGOs contributed significantly to the evolution of the participatory discourse, the mobilization of resources, and eventually the adoption of the PFM objectives in Ethiopia’s formal forest policy.

The PFM institutionalization process involved a major discursive transformation from the original interpretation of community participation as mass mobilization to a new meaning of partnership or a co-governance arrangement. Whereas in the mass mobilization approach participants either contribute free labour in the nationally set quota or sell their labour for material incentives, under the partnership arrangement, the participants negotiate and agree on defined rights and responsibilities. In other words, whereas mass mobilization involved agitation and coercion, partnership involves negotiation and consent (Yeraswork, 2000; Bradstock *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, the understanding about participants also shifted from the broad mass (*hibireteseb* in Amharic) to defined groups of communities who share rights and responsibilities.

Our analysis shows that the NGOs had a significant impact on the transformation of the participatory discourse and subsequent institutionalization of the PFM approach into concrete policy rules and

instruments. The PFM approach was first developed at the level of specific forestry development programmes sponsored by the NGOs. The experiences gained with new forms of operationalizing the concept of participation at project level were gradually communicated to the national forest policy framework and further institutionalized. This dynamic process involved a gradual change in the NGOs' leverage in policymaking. However, one might also question whether the PFM approach could have been institutionalized in Ethiopia without the NGOs' impact. In other words, what other factors might have impacted the institutionalization of the participatory approach? Theoretically, such institutionalization could also have resulted from a trickling down from international forest regimes. Public participation in forest and biodiversity conservation and benefit sharing with local people became an international agenda item during and after the 1992 UNCED conference (Wiersum, 2009; Rayner *et al.*, 2010). Bernstein and Cashore (2012) identified four pathways through which such global forest-related discourses and processes can influence domestic policy. These pathways are international rules, international norms and discourse, markets, and direct access to domestic policy. International rules concern influencing domestic policy through binding international treaties and agreements. International norms and discourse are about how domestic policy is influenced by the entrenched norms and discourse of influential international institutions. The markets pathway encompasses a process of influencing domestic policy through a market mechanism such as certification systems and boycotting. Finally, the direct access pathway is about a mechanism in which international organizations affect domestic policy by providing resources to NGOs, altering the relative influence of different actors in the domestic policy networks, capacity building, and partnerships between domestic and international organizations (Bernstein and Cashore, 2012). Of these potential pathways of policy influence, international rules and the market mechanism seem not relevant for Ethiopia. No binding international treaty or agreement was signed by Ethiopia to institutionalize the PFM approach. Nor did market mechanisms such as certification or boycotts affect the adoption of the PFM policy. The international norms and discourse and direct access to domestic policy are the two plausible paths through which the institutionalization of the PFM policy in Ethiopia could have been influenced. In both pathways, NGOs are the key agents. For example, Arts (2005) and Reimann (2006) showed how NGOs may play an active role in the co-production of international knowledge and discourse, on the one hand, and in the dissemination and institutionalization of those discourse in domestic policy on the other. Reimann added that Western donor states and international organizations have become increasingly reliant on NGOs to achieve their goals or solve global problems. Moreover, it was demonstrated in this chapter that PFM did not trickle down in a linear process of transfer from the international forest policy norms to national forest policy. It rather involved a more complex routing initially involving a transfer of principles from international regimes to experimental field projects facilitated by NGOs, followed by an up-scaling of these experiences to national policies.

The other evidence that suggests the impact of NGOs in the institutionalization of the PFM approach is how community participation is perceived in adjacent policy domains such as agriculture and soil and water conservation. Community participation is still understood differently in the agriculture and soil and water conservation sectors. The dominant rural development policy and strategy (RDPS) document for Ethiopia emphasizes the importance of public participation in order to achieve development goals. However, the form of public participation presented in this document is different from the one pursued in the PFM approach. The RDPS document underlines the crucial role of state agents to lead the participatory process, for example, by presenting farmers with a development alternative, motivating them to discuss the various development options among themselves, monitoring the results of participatory processes,

and enhancing capacity of CBOs (FDRE, 2001). According to Keeley and Scones (2000) and Mulugeta (2005), the RDPS document has emerged from the ideological commitment of the ruling party, which has a ‘greater resonance with the early Maoist “mass line” approach’ where the government sets the agenda, presents it for public consultation, and takes decisions based on mass consensus (Keeley and Scones, 2000:115). A typical example of the mass line approach is the community-based participatory watershed development programme implemented jointly by the federal ministry of agriculture, regional agricultural bureaus, and the sustainable land management (SLM) project financed by the government of Norway and the global environment facility through the World Bank. In Oromiya region alone, this gigantic participatory watershed management programme has mobilized about 7.8 million people in the 2011/2012 fiscal year. This mass line approach builds upon the earlier mass mobilization approach, but emphasizes participation in local decision making rather than in implementation only.

This approach to government-led community participation is also applied to the forest areas designated under the multilevel forest governance (MLFG) arrangement (chapter 3). This programme involves forests outside the PFM intervention areas, which are managed by *parastatal* government enterprises or regional agricultural bureaus. Concerning the governance of such forests, Abrar and Inoue (2013) noted that government bodies located at different administrative tiers are responsible for all decisions ranging from developing policy instruments to detailed operational decisions such as what to plant, when and where, how much to harvest, when and who should harvest, and how it should be harvested. If labour is needed for forest management activities, communities are stimulated to participate or mobilize, and they are allowed to collect minor forest products such as litter (e.g., twigs, dry leaves) and subsistence fuel wood in exchange for their contribution. Consequently, in MLFG intervention areas, local participation signifies creating awareness among local people about the importance of the forest, and then stimulating them to participate in forest conservation and development activities by sharing some of the benefits from forests (Abrar and Inoue, 2013). This form of operationalization differs from the type of participation as pursued by NGOs in the PFM approach, which is based on the principle that two or more equal partners share rights and responsibilities. The difference between the two approaches suggests that, whereas government actors are the main players in MLFG, NGOs are the key agents in PFM policy processes.

In this chapter, we have demonstrated that NGOs have played an important role in forest policymaking over the last two decades. However, this claim is at variance with mainstream policy studies in Ethiopia that give little credibility to NGOs’ contribution to the policymaking process in general (Kassahun, 2002, 2008; Melaku, 2003; Mulugeta, 2005; Dessalegn *et al.*, 2010). Those studies emphasize the conventional role of the state in policymaking and the formal policymaking process, but they pay less attention to the informal ways of policymaking. Our analysis indicates how NGOs have been increasingly gaining momentum and exerting significant influence in forest policy not by becoming directly involved in the formal policy process, but rather by initiating innovations at field level, stimulating institutional learning, and gradually communicating experiences to the national policymakers. Our findings illustrate that policymaking is not just about formal processes of decision making, including drafting policy bills or voting to approve bills in the parliament or in any other legislative forum, as often still implied in Ethiopian policy studies. It is also about introducing new policy discourses, mobilizing resources to influence public opinion, and presenting decision makers with options to adopt new policy and law. In this regard, NGOs have achieved tangible results over the last two decades. However, we are not saying that NGOs have a huge impact on forest policymaking. We share the observation (Mulugeta, 2005; Kassahun, 2008; Dessalegn *et al.*, 2010)

that there is still a limited formal avenue for NGOs to influence decisional power. Decisional power is the extent to which NGOs are able to influence the state's political decision making (cf., Arts and Buzzier, 2009). In the case of Ethiopia, NGOs have limited influence on decisional power, as the political power to accept or reject policy proposals still remains firmly concentrated in the realm of the government, and little attention is given to devolving elements of the decision-making process to civil society organizations. For example, NGOs' demand for the recognition of community forest ownership (PFM advocates' second objective) was not approved, and the new law recognizes only private and state forest property types. The rejection of community forest ownership illustrates how the state enforces its decisional power if the issue – in this case resource ownership – is considered politically sensitive. Keeley and Scoones (2003) documented the Ethiopian government's reluctance to change the public ownership of land regardless of the continuous pressure from non-state actors, including influential donors such as USAID, the World Bank, and the IMF. These authors explained that controlling land ownership is politically more important for the Ethiopian government than adhering to consensual international policy paradigms. However, after several years of lobbying and pressuring by NGOs and development organizations, the government adopted a land certification programme that granted long-term land use rights to local communities. This indicates that NGOs with support from donors can impact even a politically important issue such as resource ownership, albeit within a narrow scope.

4.6 Conclusion

The key conclusion that emerges from this chapter is that NGOs can influence policymaking, even without being directly invited to do so, and under 'semi-authoritarian' conditions that appear unfavourable to them. Influencing policy under such circumstances requires a circumspect approach of demonstrating innovative policy approaches by implementing pilot projects, documenting and effectively communicating field evidence, forming strong networks with likeminded actors, forging alliances with key decision makers, and investing sufficient human and financial resources to push the adoption of new rules. This case study shows that such a combination of strategies can be very effective. Indeed, without the NGOs, the adoption of the PFM approach in the formal Ethiopian forest policy would have been very unlikely. The second conclusion is that the growing role and impact of NGOs in forest and environmental governance are enabled by the changes in socio-political trends at both international and national level. These changes include trends of globalization, decentralization, democratization, and the growing attention on environmental issues not only by the nation-state and its agencies, as it used to be, but also by international and local actors.

The policy arrangement approach has proved to be a suitable analytical framework to elucidate and explain the roles and impacts of NGOs in complex policy processes. It is a comprehensive approach that addresses ideas, institutions, and collective action in an integrated perspective. However, further research is necessary to understand how the PFM approach that has been institutionalized at policy level is acted upon at local level. Such a study is important because at local level the PFM approach confronts, on the one hand, the dominant rural development policy and strategies that emphasize the role of the state and technical experts, and, on the other hand, the realities of local communities embedded in their social, historical, and political context. In order to fully understand the overall dynamics in forest governance, studies such as this one that focuses on policy processes need to be complemented with studies that examine how the PFM approach is carried out in practice. This issue is addressed in chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Performance of participatory forest management in Ethiopia: institutional arrangement versus local practices

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The boundary of the Bonga National Forest Priority Area (BNFPA), South-west Ethiopia.

Photo by the author.

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Abstract

The field of community-based natural resource management has been receiving growing scientific attention over the past two decades. Most studies, however, focus on investigating institutional designs and outcomes and pay scant attention to how community-based natural resource management arrangements are carried out in practice. Through an in-depth ethnographic case study in one of the pioneer participatory forest management (PFM) arrangements in south-west Ethiopia, this chapter demonstrates a significant disparity between the PFM institutional principles and actual local forest management practices. Our study confirms the usefulness of a practice-based approach to understand and explain how a newly introduced institutional arrangement is acted upon by local actors situated in their social, political, and historical context. Our findings also contribute to empirical knowledge useful to instigate dialogue and to critically reflect on whether and what kind of intervention is actually needed to influence forest-related social practices.

Keywords: community forest management, PFM arrangement, design principle, institutions, local practice, practice-based approach

5.1 Introduction

Participatory forest management (PFM) was introduced in Ethiopia around the mid-1990s as a new system of forest governance. PFM was meant to avert the persistent problems of deforestation and to deliver better social and economic outcomes compared to the former centralized command-and-control resource management approach. In the Ethiopian context, PFM is recognized as a co-governance institutional arrangement where forest management responsibilities and use rights are legally shared between a government agency and a community-based organization, such as forest user groups or forest cooperatives (Bradstock *et al.*, 2007; Winberg, 2010). The inception of PFM in Ethiopia was considered a radical departure from the centralized and technocratic forest management style to a more inclusive arrangement. Central to the new development was the role of local communities that were once perceived as threats to the forest resources, whereas now they were being offered shared responsibilities and use rights with government agencies (Stellmacher, 2007; Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009).

The PFM institutionalization process and its subsequent performance have been controversial among scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and international development partners. Some claim that a major transformation has taken place consequent to PFM on the management of physical resources, institutional arrangements, and livelihoods of resource-dependent communities. Proponents of PFM present performance indicators such as a decline in the deforestation rate and an increase in forest regeneration (Jagger *et al.*, 2005; Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009; Takahashi and Todo, 2012) and the establishment of community-based forest management organizations (Bradstock *et al.*, 2007; Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009). Similar studies also report positive livelihood indicators, for example, rising income level of PFM members compared with non-participant households residing in the same village (Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009; Yemiru, 2011; Dambala and Koch, 2012). Critics, by contrast, argue that PFM has brought no fundamental change to the management of physical resources, institutional setup, and livelihoods of resource-dependent communities after nearly two decades of experimentation. These critics contend that the PFM arrangement, which is being introduced and advanced by NGOs, has not yet been internalized by local communities, nor has it been embraced by governments as a regular forest management programme (Abrar and Inoue, 2012; 2013). PFM critics also point out that most of the ‘success stories’ proclaimed by the PFM proponents have a temporary character and last only as long as the NGO project lifetime (Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009; Winberg, 2010; Abrar and Inoue, 2012).

Although studies drawing positive and negative conclusions about the PFM performances in Ethiopia provide useful insights, those studies exclusively emphasize the PFM institutional structure and the intervention outcomes, and pay minimal attention to how the new forest management approach is carried out in practice. Particularly, the relationship between the PFM institutional arrangement on the one hand and resultant forest management practices on the other remains unclear. To investigate this relationship, we conducted an in-depth case study in the Agama PFM project.¹¹ Agama is one of the pioneer intervention sites in south-west Ethiopia where the PFM scheme has been practiced for nearly two decades (Winberg, 2010; Aklilu, 2011). The Agama PFM project is also typical of the controversial debates about the performance of the newly introduced forest management arrangement in Ethiopia. Whereas the project-affiliated studies on this project emphasize the positive outcomes,

¹¹ Agama is a rural village administratively located in Gimbo woreda (district) of the Kaffa zone in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR) in Ethiopia (see figure 5.1).

particularly as compared to the former centralized resource management system (Melaku and Tsegaye, 2005; Amare *et al.*, 2007), the academic-oriented studies tend to underrate the potential change in resource management by focusing on the institutional structure only (Yihenew, 2002; Stellmacher, 2007). However, both types of studies emphasize the *what* aspects of the PFM scheme and pay scant attention to *how* the project works; how it might reconstitute or challenge the existing social structure and management arrangements. This chapter, therefore, focuses on how this PFM intervention operates at micro level in order to draw a (more) realistic picture of the relationship between the institutional arrangement and social practices. It pays attention to how people situate themselves in those practices and how they act in relation to the newly introduced formal institutional arrangement. The chapter critically reflects on such questions as: What really happens when an NGO arrives in a village – situated in its historical and political context – with the fixed objective of establishing a community-based organization in order to sustainably manage forest resources? To what extent are the so-called local communities just passively waiting to be helped to improve their living and forest conditions, or are they rather pro-active entrepreneurs and *bricoleurs* (cf. Cleaver 2002)? And are institutions really ‘the missing link’ (Stellmacher, 2007) to regulate forest management, as assumed in the PFM institutional design? What follows in this chapter is an attempt to answer these questions, formulated in the research as follows: (i) how has the PFM arrangement developed in Ethiopia in general and in Agama in particular?; (ii) how has the PFM arrangement been acted upon in Agama?; and (iii) to what extent has the PFM arrangement affected the Agama community’s forest practices, and the other way around?

This chapter first introduces the theoretical approach used to answer the research questions, followed by a section concerning the research methodology. Then the performance of participatory forest management is narrated in detail. In this section, we first illustrate the PFM institutional arrangement and subsequently confront the institutional arrangement with the forest-related practices in the village. To do so, we apply a practice-based approach as our analytical framework to understand and explain what is carried out in the field. The institutional design of the PFM project is illustrated from the viewpoints of the policy arrangement approach.

5.2 Theoretical framework: the practice-based approach

Since Hardin’s seminal work *The Tragedy of the Commons* (Hardin 1968), debate has continued on how to properly manage common pool resources (CPRs), which are rival but non-exclusory, such as open fishing grounds or village forest resources. Whereas Hardin argued that only state or private ownership of natural resources could prevent a tragedy of the commons, i.e., a depletion of resources due to the implied open access regime of a CPR, Ostrom in her book *Governing the Commons* (Ostrom, 1990) showed that community institutions to manage these CPRs can be very effective too. However, whether such local, communal institutions are robust or not depends on a number of design principles, which Ostrom derives from a comparison of a number of successful case studies (from grazing institutions in the Swiss Alps to the institutions of Zanjera irrigation systems in the Philippines). Initially, eight design principles were identified, relating to demarcating the resource, rules that fit local conditions, participatory decision making, monitoring compliance, sanctioning of non-compliance, conflict resolution, and external recognition and nesting of the local institution.

Over the years, these design principles for crafting robust institutions have received several criticisms. Firstly, they are not always observed in the successful management of specific CPRs, so they do not seem to be *necessary* conditions (Cleaver, 2002; Li, 2007; Quinn *et al.*, 2007). Secondly, design principles that were applied did not always work effectively in the management of natural resources, so they are not *sufficient* conditions either (Li, 2007; Quinn *et al.*, 2007). This second criticism is very much in line with the central argument of this chapter, building on the work of others (Bourdieu, 1990; Cleaver, 2002; Mosse, 2004; Nuijten, 2005; Van der Arend and Behagel, 2011; Arts *et al.*, 2013), namely, that institutional and practical logics are often mutually exclusive; this accounts for the (partial) failure of so many natural resource management projects that have externally been introduced by either governments or donors in village communities around the world (Charnley and Poe, 2007; Li, 2007). Institutional logic is based on the premise that people will follow incentives, norms, and rules when these appear effective and legitimate to them (March and Olson 1989). This premise assumes that people act upon *expected* positive consequences of incentives, norms, and rules (the rational claim) as well as upon their cultural appropriateness (the social claim). Bourdieu (1977, 1990), however, rejects both logics of behaviour, because his own anthropological research points to another logic that is at work on the ground, the logic of practice. This logic is based on the daily flow of activities that have historically and culturally been patterned and routinized in the social fields in which people are involved. The key point here is that people just *act*, generally without conscious consideration of whether an individual act is rationally preferable and/or socially acceptable. This is not to say that human behaviour is therefore necessarily non-rational or non-social, not at all; rather, it follows internal logics that have been shaped and become (rather) stable over generations and in specific localities. From that perspective, it is no surprise that externally introduced institutional logics that demand ‘rational’ and ‘social’ behaviour of their clients, as defined by the project design, often do not match realities on the ground, where another logic is at work.

Inspired by Bourdieu (1977, 1990) and building upon more recent strands of practice theory (Giddens, 1984; Schatzki *et al.*, 2001; Reckwitz, 2002; Mosse, 2004), we apply a practice-based approach (PBA) in this chapter (see Arts *et al.*, 2013). This PBA has a number of characteristics:

- The basic unit of analysis is neither the social system nor the individual agency, but the in-between ‘social practice’ where agency and structure are intertwined (Giddens, 1984). Such practices are strongly rooted in local histories, cultures, and settings (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2002);
- To understand human behaviours, we have to look at social practice rather than incentives, norms, and rules (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990);
- Social practice is not so much interested in what people think and say out of context, for example in an interview situation, but in what they actually do and say in the embedded situation of their daily practices (Schatzki, 2002; Li, 2007);
- Social practices include not only how people relate to other people, but also to things, artefacts, and other forms of life in their environment (Latour, 2005; Schatzki, 2013).

- Although social practices are considered to be relatively stable, through internal logics and routines, they could – from a historical perspective – have been *otherwise*; hence, *contingency* is an important aspect in any PBA (Behagel, 2012). This also implies that practices have neither fixed long-term objectives nor pre-defined pathways, and that they can be changed through collective action;
- Given these characteristics, a social practice can be defined as ‘An ensemble of doings, sayings and things in a specific field of activity’ (Arts *et al.*, 2013:9).

A PBA, however, does not make an institutional analysis obsolete, as both Nuijten (2005) and Van der Arend and Behagel (2011) rightly assert. After all, we also need to understand the institutional arrangement of PFM first before we can confront it with the practical logics at work in a specific case. Therefore, in this chapter, we first reconstruct the institutional arrangement of the PFM programme concerned. To do so, we use the policy arrangement approach (PAA) based on Arts and Leroy (2006) and Arts and Buizer (2009) that distinguishes four dimensions in any institutional arrangement: (1) ideas and discourses, (2) rules of the game, (3) actors and networks, and (4) resources and power. We adopt this theoretical perspective because it analytically fits our research questions better than Ostrom’s design principles. Nonetheless, in this chapter the design principles are used not so much as an analytical theory, but as a dominant *discourse* of PFM advocates and practitioners that has strongly shaped the PFM institutional arrangement in terms of actors, rules, and resources and power relations. After this analysis of the institutional arrangement, we confront the project model with the daily forest-related practices in the study village.

5.3 Research methodology

The application of a PBA requires a method that can facilitate the production of a thick description of the setting in which the investigated project is being undertaken, and in which people (inter)act (Arts *et al.*, 2013). For this reason, a qualitative ethnographic case study was employed to address the research questions. As Yin (1994) says, a case study is applicable to answer the *how* and *why* questions, and is particularly useful when we aim for a holistic approach that acknowledges different realities and local actors’ perspectives on strategies designed to change their very lives (De Koning, 2011). A case study also enables the researcher to use multiple sources of evidence; this is important not only for the production of detailed information, but also to facilitate a reflexive exercise, in which researchers reflect upon their own role in the production of knowledge. A case study approach thus provides a flexible environment to study complexity, details, and context, and offers space to reflect upon the research strategies in order to contextualize these to the case setting.

The main dataset for this chapter was, therefore, generated through an in-depth case study of Agama Forest Cooperative (AFC) where one of the authors lived and participated in the local community’s daily practices for three months (from March to May 2012, see also Vandenabeele, 2012). AFC is one of the nine forest cooperatives in Gimbo district currently managing Bonga forest¹² (see figure 5.1 for the map of the study area).

¹² Bonga forest is not a continuous forest block or cohesive woodland; rather, it is a non-figurative umbrella term encompassing the mosaic of primary forests covering the hills around Bonga Town in a radius of about forty kilometres including Agama forest (Stellmacher, 2007).

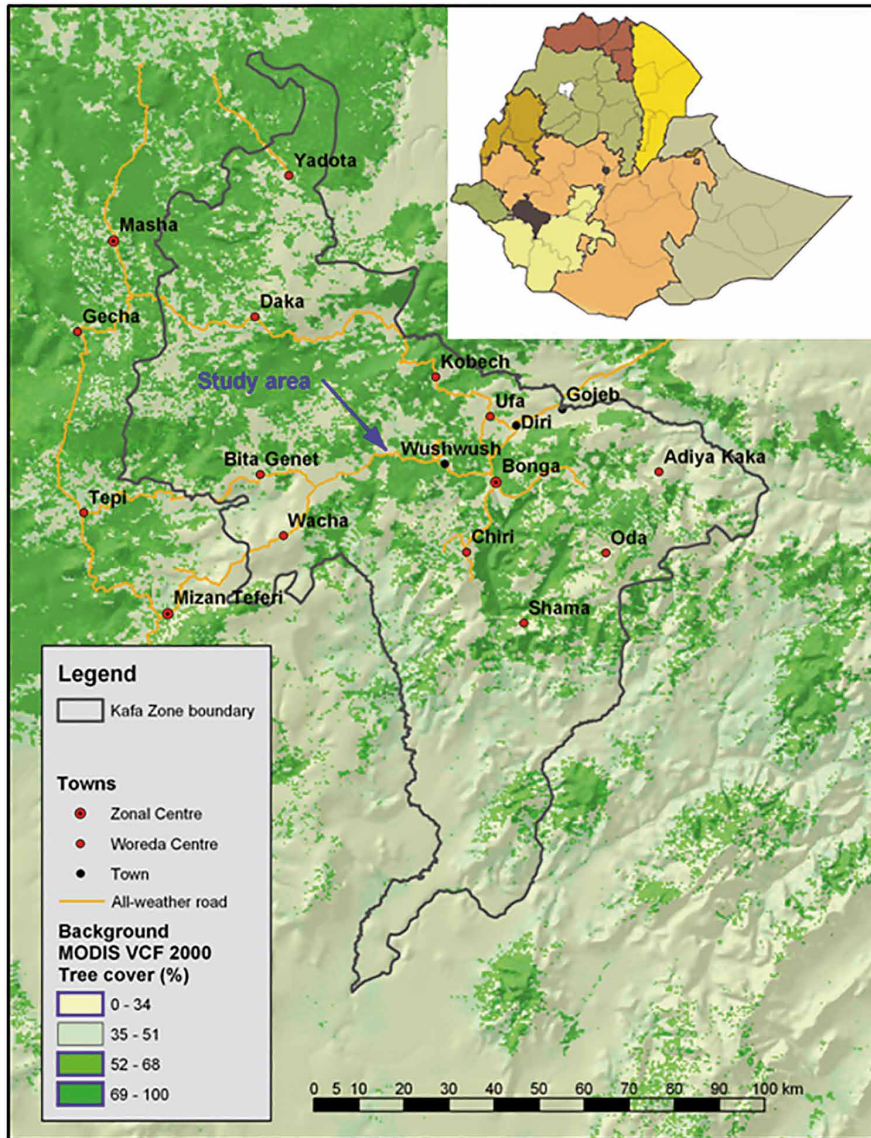


Figure 5.1 Map of the study area (village: Agama; district: Gimbo; Zone: Kaffa; country: Ethiopia)

Source: Stellmacher, 2013

AFC, which was first established as a forest user group in 2003 and later became a cooperative, has 216 (114 male and 102 female) members and is responsible for 1,200 hectares of forests (Aklilu, 2011). Agama was purposively selected because: (i) it is one of the pioneer intervention sites in Ethiopia where the PFM scheme has been practiced for nearly two decades (Winberg, 2010; Aklilu, 2011); (ii) partly due to its remote location, it has received less research attention than the other PFM intervention sites (Aklilu, 2011; Dambala and Koch, 2012); (iii) the existing literature suggests that Agama forest is intrinsically related to the life of people living in this area: this suits our research objective to generate comprehensive

information on the day-to-day practices of community members in relation to the newly introduced formal forest management scheme (Yihenew, 2002; Stellmacher, 2007; Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009); and (iv) studies so far have focused on the project's impacts on broader areas of Bonga forest and have understated the details of how the project performs at village level.

The data collection methods were inspired by Nuijten's (2005) approach to studying natural resource management practices and encompassed sensory participant observation, interviewing, free diary, transect walks, and participation in forestry research activities. The semi-structured and in-depth interviewing started after the researcher had spent one month in the village selecting relevant people for interviews and reflecting upon the researcher–respondent relation. In contrast to random encounters or surveys, the interviews – as place of both data collection and data production – became therefore only one moment, albeit 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).

Besides the field data, literature research and key informant interviews were conducted before and after the stay in the village. These key informants comprised actors from both government and non-governmental organizations involved in designing and implementing the PFM arrangement at macro and local level. Moreover, the data transcription process and discussion with the other research colleagues raised additional questions that instigated further document searching and interviewing more key actors. Finally, a narrative method was used to present the data. The construction of the narrative was iterative and based upon van Bommel's and van der Zouwen's (2013) reflections on the creation of a scientific narrative.

5.4 Performance of participatory forest management

5.4.1 The PFM institutional arrangement

This section presents the PFM institutional arrangement, describing the discourse that motivated the implementation of PFM, procedures followed, actors and networks involved, and resources and power mobilized to establish the arrangement.

Discourse

Debates on the persistent problem of deforestation and forest degradation have been taking place in Ethiopia for more than five decades (see Alemayehu *et al.*, 2013). Those debates often used to call for more elaborate government intervention in the forestry sector, for example by formulating coercive forest laws and establishing strong bureaucratic authority to stop deforestation and its associated loss of biodiversity, land degradation, and other environmental problems (Yemiru, 2011). This notion, which prescribes external intervention by the state and technocratic solutions to the problem of deforestation, was firmly institutionalized in Ethiopia's forest policy following the Ethiopian revolution in the mid-1970s (Alemayehu *et al.*, 2013). At that time, the socialist government formulated a strong forest law and established an autonomous forestry organization to effectively govern the country's forest resources. Those interventions were motivated and guided by the then dominant discourse, such as *the tragedy of the*

commons, which justified coercive external measures (usually by the state) as the only feasible option to prevent the immanent tragedy of common pool resources.

Since the early 1990s, the dominant discourse justifying strong state intervention has come under scrutiny internationally. In Ethiopia also, a number of scientific studies and performance evaluation reports have emerged to challenge top-down and state-led forest management initiatives. Some notable ones among these include *Twenty years to nowhere* and *Paradigms and politics: the cultural construction of environmental policy in Ethiopia*, and a series of research reports on natural resource degradation trends presented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) between 1990 and 1996 (NCS, 1994; Yeraswork, 2000; Tadesse, 2001). All these studies emphasized the failure of the state-led interventionist approach and the increasing trend of deforestation and forest degradation, particularly after the fall of the socialist government when the forestry bureaucracy was almost paralysed to enforce its policy (Melaku, 2003; Stellmacher, 2007).

The intensified academic debates, coupled with the growing challenge at forest fringes, stimulated the introduction of the PFM arrangement around the mid-1990s to halt the problem of deforestation and to deliver better social and economic outcomes than the previous state-led forest management approach. The PFM arrangement in Ethiopia has been influenced by the growing global discourse over the past twenty years that emphasizes the durability and effectiveness of community-based institutions in natural resource management (Ostrom, 1990; Stellmacher, 2007). As touched upon in section 5.2, this emerging discourse is essentially anchored on the works of CPR scholars such as Elinor Ostrom and Arun Agrawal who emphasized the robustness of community-based institutions to manage natural resources held in common, such as a village forest (Ostrom, 1990; Agrawal, 1995). The central proposition of these scholars is that local communities who live in close proximity to a forest possess an inherent capacity, knowledge, and interest to govern their resources properly (Ostrom, 1990; Ostrom *et al.*, 2002). They presented extensive evidence from long-term studies of forests in different parts of the world suggesting that local institutions may even perform better than state initiatives (Nelson, 2010). However, they added that the success of a community institution is contingent upon the fulfilment of lists of conditions or, as discussed in section 5.2, what they called design principles (Ostrom, 1999; Anderies *et al.*, 2004) i.e., a list of conditions under which resources held in common could be expected to be governed sustainably (Li, 2007).

This discourse, to which we refer in this chapter as the design principle (DP) discourse, has had a far-reaching impact on the process and structure of PFM in Ethiopia, including the selection of implementation sites. Concerning site selection, for example, NGOs who introduced PFM wanted to demonstrate that local communities have an inherent knowledge and interest in managing the forest resources if responsibilities are transferred to them (Alemayehu and Wiersum, 2006). In order to achieve this objective, these NGOs carefully selected three exemplary forest sites, of which Bonga forest was one. Farm-Africa, one of the pioneer NGOs, introduced PFM into Bonga forest in 1996, selecting Agama as one of its target sites on the basis of two main criteria that also conform to the DP discourse. First, communities living in and around Bonga forest are renowned for their strong attachment to the local forest resources. This is important, on the one hand, to build on customary practices and demonstrate their potentials. On the other hand, the communities' attachment to the forest fits the new agenda of improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent local communities. Particularly the presence of the Manja people, the minority ethnic group whose livelihoods are entirely dependent on forest resources, was a good reason for selecting this forest

for PFM intervention (Yihenew, 2002). Second, there was a heated debate at the time about deforestation threatening the existence of Bonga forest, and this justified the necessity of an alternative approach, i.e., PFM, to halt deforestation (Yihenew, 2002; Stellmacher, 2007). Although the threat of deforestation was equally reported in relation to other forest areas, the Bonga forest case particularly attracted attention because of its rich biodiversity, including wild *Coffea arabica* and several other species of flora and fauna (Stellmacher, 2007; Tsegaye *et al.*, 2009). The presence of this rich biodiversity and economically important species like *Coffea arabica* galvanized a broad national and international support for the PFM intervention in Bonga forest. For example, these justifications were instrumental in Farm-Africa procuring funds for its PFM project from the European Union and the UK department for international development (DFID). In the following sections, we demonstrate how the DP discourse influenced the PFM arrangement in terms of rules and procedures, actors and networks, and resources and power.

Rules and procedures

One of the basic elements of the design principles is a robust institution that can effectively restrict access to the resource and create incentives for common resource users to invest in the resource instead of over-exploiting it (Ostrom *et al.*, 1999). According to PFM advocates, this kind of institution has been a ‘missing factor’ in Agama and as well as in other forest areas in Ethiopia (Stellmacher, 2007). Consequently, strong emphasis was placed on introducing or establishing such institutions at community level. The implementers strictly followed the PFM guidelines, which were developed from the design principles and some ‘best practices’ from around the world, to establish the new institution in Agama village (Bradstock *et al.*, 2007).

The key steps followed to establish the village-level institution were a) screening forest users to be included in the new arrangement, b) delineating the forest boundary to be managed, and c) preparing a forest management agreement (FMA) detailing roles and responsibilities of parties involved in forest management. Roles and responsibilities were grouped into: forest development, forest protection, forest harvesting, and forest monitoring. The FMA also includes forest management plans and internal rules (bylaws) that define the day-to-day decision-making process of community organization. The FMA is considered a legally binding contract when it is signed between a community organization and a government agency. According to its proponents, all these processes are required to avoid the core problems associated with the use and management of CPRs, such as overuse and free-riding (Farm-Africa, 2004; Bradstock *et al.*, 2007). However, for the binding contract to be legitimate and effective, it has to be designed by multiple actors, another requirement of the DP discourse.

Actors and networks

Another basic tenet of the PFM arrangement is the demand for a plurality of actors¹³ to be involved in forest management and decision making. The drawbacks of the conventional forest management approach were often referred to in terms of its weakness in accommodating the views of multiple actors, particularly local communities who live in close proximity to the forest (Ostrom *et al.*, 2002; Nelson, 2010). In principle, networking is very important in the area where the actual forest management practice is taking place. That

¹³ Actors in this study refer to individuals, social groups, or organizations that have a stake in the use and management of forest resources.

is why the design principles pay due attention to cooperation and collective action in CPR management. Collective action by resource users in both designing and running the local institution is the prerequisite for the successful management of common resources. The underlying assumption is that local institutions in which resource users themselves participate are better understood and perceived as legitimate and fair; and this increases the likelihood of their implementation (Ostrom, 1990; Anderies *et al.*, 2004). Consequently, the PFM arrangement is intended to bring together a multitude of actors from international to local levels and with diverse stakes and backgrounds. For example, the main actors in the Agama PFM arrangement are Farm-Africa (UK-based international NGO), different branches of district government (the forestry department in the office of agriculture, cooperative promotion office, law enforcement offices, and local administration office), and local communities. Of course, local communities themselves have also diverse sub-groups based on pre-existing social structures and claims of customary rights to the forest resources. Whereas some of the groups are indigenous to the Agama area and possess traditional use rights, others are immigrant or new settlers and have limited access rights to selected forest products. Various informal institutions also operate in Agama and have stakes in forest management too, such as groups of elders, *iddir*, *daddo*, and *dabbo* (see Stellmacher, 2007; Stellmacher and Mollinga 2009).

The PFM arrangement tried to bring together these diverse groups of actors into a network to implement the project in Agama, despite the reality that the position and stake of these actors are far from uniform. At least at face value, however, the two external actors (the forestry department and Farm-Africa) shared the dominant discourse about the alarming rate of deforestation and the need for an alternative arrangement to halt the tragedy. These actors also agreed on rules of implementation, crafted on the basis of the design principles. Despite this, extending the PFM network into the village proved difficult. The PFM implementers offered equal participation opportunities to the different social groups in the community including the new settlers, the minority Manja group, and women. However, because the notion of equal participation of all social groups contradicts certain aspects of customary practices, issues relating to membership and boundaries are still challenging the performances of PFM after more than one decade of implementation.

Resources and power

The final important aspect of the PFM arrangement is resources and power. The critique of the conventional approach is that resources and power are centralized or exclusively held by the state. The PFM arrangement, thus, requires sharing resources and power with community organizations. The resource- and power-sharing arrangement itself has a range of variants dependent on the underlying rationales and purposes of the intervention (Nelson, 2010). In the Agama case, for example, a long-term use right was given to the AFC, whereas government maintained forest ownership and discretionary power to monitor and enforce the implementation of the new arrangement. As proof of the new resource- and power-sharing arrangement, a contractual agreement was signed between AFC and the district office of agriculture in 2003 at an official ceremony attended by the different stakeholders. At this ceremony, a map of a forest block and an official seal were handed to the AFC. The map authorized secure access rights, and the seal symbolized organizational autonomy or legal identity. In addition to the access rights to a resource, recognition as a legal entity is equally important for any new organization not only to sue and to be sued in court but also to run a business enterprise, including having access to bank loans. The other resources in the PFM arrangement include knowledge, expertise, and financial resources mobilized by Farm-Africa

to establish the new arrangement. These resources were mainly invested in capacity building, including training and exchange visits, livelihood supports, and other operational costs of establishing a community organization.

Besides a re-division of resources, the PFM arrangement also requires a reform of decision-making power among actors involved in forest management. Such power concerns the authority to create or modify, implement, and enforce compliance with rules (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999). The premise is that such power should be sufficiently devolved to local communities in order to achieve positive outcomes from the PFM arrangement (Nelson, 2010). Following this principle, the AFC was given a new mandate to craft its internal bylaws, prepare and implement forest management plans, including forest development and protection plans, and enforce internal bylaws. For example, cooperative leaders are empowered to decide on who should guard the forest and when, resolve conflicts arising from resource use, and adjudicate rule infractions according to the internal bylaws.

5.4.2 Institutional arrangement versus local practice

This section presents the actual performance of the PFM arrangement at micro level. It focuses on how people acted in relation to the newly introduced institutional arrangement and how they situated themselves in the unfolding practices. To illustrate these phenomena, we narrate the story of five key implementation processes and outcomes that were manifested in the field: forest re-demarcation, establishing a community-based organization, alternative livelihoods intervention, practicing the new mandate, and power asymmetry.

Forest re-demarcation

Agama forest was first demarcated in 1987 as a part of the Bonga National Forest Priority Area (BNFPA). The BNFPA designation was driven by the then socialist government's ambitious plan to establish large tracts of cohesive forest reserves in different parts of the country. The BNFPA area incorporated private agricultural lands and communal grazing areas, and its establishment thus led to forceful evictions of hundreds of farming households. The arbitrary demarcation created hostility between local communities and the state that resulted in the destruction of the forest boundary following the downfall of the socialist government in 1991 (Yihenew, 2002). When Farm-Africa initiated its project in 1996, most of the boundary markers had been dismantled, and parts of the state forest reserve had been converted to agricultural land. Thus, forest re-demarcation became the top priority of Farm-Africa not only to delineate the project mandate area but also to stop the on-going forest 'destruction,' according to the PFM implementation document (BFCDP, 1998). Prior to launching the re-demarcation exercise, Farm-Africa conducted a problem diagnosis in order to understand the cause of the former boundary destruction. In this diagnosis, the non-consultative demarcation that disregarded the villagers' views and socio-economic situations was identified as the main driver. Thus, in order to avoid the past failure, a participatory re-demarcation was designed. To implement this re-demarcation, Farm-Africa entered negotiations with zonal forestry departments that resulted in the assignment by the departments of a team of technical experts to perform the re-demarcation. Farm-Africa also promised to provide resources and to facilitate the election of community representatives to guarantee a participatory undertaking. A senior forest expert who participated in the process stated that '*the re-demarcation proposal by Farm-Africa was well accepted by the zone forestry department as monitoring the forest boundary at the time was one of*

our main challenges.' The technical team formed a re-demarcation committee at village level to negotiate about forest boundaries on behalf of the local community. In order to ensure broader representation, the village committee was designed to comprise different social groups in the community, including elders, women, the minority Manja ethnic group, and leaders of traditional and religious institutions (Yihenew, 2002). The re-demarcation exercise was completed in 1998 with the drawing of the outer boundaries of the forest, thus fulfilling one of the requirements to implement the PFM arrangement – clearly defined forest boundaries.

Despite the participatory claim, however, field evidence and documentary sources showed that the re-demarcation exercise was again characterized by the same fundamental flaw of redrawing boundary lines without the full consent of the people living in and around the forest. The re-demarcation even constricted the locals' access to forest resources. In line with this, Yihenew (2002) reported that the re-demarcation exercise was not thoroughly discussed among local forest users, and the new forest boundaries were drawn and endorsed by external actors, with limited consent from the local communities. He observed that the re-demarcation committee selected by experts to negotiate about the forest boundary did not represent the actual resource users. He added that some of the committee members had no direct interest in the forest areas about which they were meant to negotiate with the technical team and were reluctant to challenge the experts' decisions. Yihenew mentioned, for example, that the representatives of the women's group and the Manja people resided far outside the forest boundary and so had no direct stake in the re-demarcated process.

Besides the shortfall in the so-called participatory process, local communities immediately linked the re-demarcation exercise with their historical experiences under the socialist regime, which had evicted farmers living inside the forest boundary as part of the villagization programme. The villagization programme was part of the nation-wide rural transformation plan in the 1970s and 1980s designed to offer efficient rural infrastructures and social services. This historical incident was manifested again in Agama briefly after the re-demarcation, which led to the expulsion of thirty-two households out of the forest, ostensibly for security reasons.¹⁴ Although different reasons have been put forward for the farmers' eviction – villagization under the socialist government and security reasons in the latter case –, many villagers tend to consider forest-related interventions as visible evidence of state power that focuses on controlling resources rather than attempting to improve the living condition of people who depend on the forests. Thus, forest re-demarcation proved to be a sensitive socio-political issue rather than a neutral technical undertaking as envisioned by the project implementers.

In summary, participation in the re-demarcation exercise was target driven and more concerned with its form (the representation of different social groups) than with its content (creating a genuine platform for discussion about the matters at stake). The approach to forest re-demarcation thus became guided by the logic of past practices. Under such circumstances, one can query the extent to which villagers could recognize a mutual interest in forest management and would be willing to become the 'new managers of the forest' as envisioned in the PFM design.

¹⁴ Thirty-two households were 'forced' by the government to move out of the forest because of a violent murder case that happened in the village. Whereas those families consider the eviction as a forceful intervention for a conservation reason, governmental and non-governmental staff depict the movement as voluntary for security reasons.

Establishing a community-based organization

Establishing a community-based organization (CBO) is another key step in the PFM implementation process. The main task in the CBO establishment process was to assess the forest utilization pattern to identify primary and secondary users who would be allowed to become members of the new organization. Like during the re-demarcation exercise, community members were represented in the study team to gather information about the community's forest use systems, its organization, and social groups (ethnicity, religion, wealth, and gender). The study team also used participatory tools such as a historical timeline analysis and participatory mapping to investigate traditional institutions and their role with regard to resource management. Through this process, the study team identified traditional forest management institutions that recognize the customary use rights of the Kaffa and the Manja ethnic groups, who are believed to be indigenous to the Agama area. These traditional institutions also allow the Kambata¹⁵ people, who came to Agama in 1987 as a consequence of the resettlement policy, to use some forest products, such as firewood and farming materials, but only for subsistence. However, they are not allowed to harvest economically important forest products, such as honey, coffee, and spices, as they are not generally perceived as legitimate 'owners' of forest plots.

Within this complex local setting, the establishment of the new CBO has faced a daunting challenge, because the new CBO promotes an officially recognized communal arrangement in which *all* members have equal rights and responsibilities.¹⁶ However, the traditional arrangement was organized on the basis of individual holdings in which a few indigenous family members own adjacent forest plots that constitute the Agama forest block. Moreover, the traditional holdings are not formally recognized other than in locals' common knowledge (Stellmacher, 2007). Consequently, the establishment of the new CBO spurred the already on-going (but latent) struggle for resources, space, and status between the settlers (Kambata people, the majority in terms of number), the Kaffa people (privileged by traditional institutions), and the socially disadvantaged Manja ethnic group.¹⁷ These discrepancies between the old and the new arrangement and the longstanding social struggle entailed serious consequences in the implementation of PFM in general and enrolling people into the new CBO in particular.

So, when Farm-Africa staff entered Agama, they encountered longstanding social confrontations rather than (the expected) forest destruction. For the villagers, problems concerning the forest were not perceived as pertaining to the forest resource itself; rather, they reflected social problems. The project then needed not only to come to a new understanding of the social environment, but also to mediate in the conflicts, something for which the PFM arrangement was not designed. No structural adjustments were made to the project design – although with difficulties, villagers were still formally organized in the new CBO (AFC) – and the struggle to accept the associated frame of meaning and point of view continues to the present day. A first issue is, for example, the contradiction in perceptions of sense of ownership among villagers when they compare the situation before and after the PFM project intervention. From their responses,

¹⁵ The Kambata people migrated to Agama from the most eastern tip of SNNPR state and they speak Kambatigna (Cushitic language family). When Kaffa and Kambata people communicate, they practically always use Amharic, the lingua franca of Ethiopia.

¹⁶ Members as identified by Farm-Africa were households living around and in the forest (Farm-Africa, 2004).

¹⁷ There is a distinct social distance between Kaffa and Manja; for example, the two groups do not eat together, and intermarriage is traditionally unthinkable (Yihnew, 2002).

two types of ownership can be distinguished: one sense of ownership, 'traditional ownership,' relates to traditional forest user rights, which were rooted in society even before Farm-Africa came, whereas the other type, 'legal use rights,' is associated with Farm-Africa's intervention. Both types are nonetheless used and referred to intermittently, depending on the interaction or situation that people face. Villagers often use the legal use rights induced through the new organization to defend their forest land from external competitors, particularly agricultural investors, rather than to change their forest management practices. Traditional ownership, however, is still influential in guiding who should be excluded or allowed to harvest which forest products and when. For example, the new settlers who became AFC members have to get permission from the traditional forest 'owner' to collect some forest products such as coffee and spices or to hang beehives, although the PFM rule entitles the cooperative committee to deal with such issues.

Alternative livelihoods

One of the rationales for introducing the PFM arrangement was to ensure sustainable management of forest resources while improving the socio-economic condition of forest-dependent local communities, as described in several project documents (BFCDP, 1998; Farm-Africa, 2004; Amare *et al.*, 2007). Proponents of the PFM arrangement argue that sustainable forest management cannot be attained unless complemented by alternative livelihoods that divert or reduce dependence on forest resources. This argument was later translated into a project rationale that reads: 'rapid population growth, compounded by increasing poverty levels, has led to continuous deforestation and degradation as people living in the surrounding areas are forced by their economic situation to exploit the forest's resources' (DSW, 2012). Such justifications can be traced back to the neo-Malthusian explanations that ascribe forest-related problems to the economic and reproductive behaviours of forest-dependent communities (Alemayehu and Wiersum, 2006). The relationship between the Malthusian explanation and the project rationale is also recognizable in the name of the PFM project itself: Bonga Integrated Participatory Forest Management and Reproductive Health Project. Thus, to tackle forest-related problems diagnosed on the basis of the neo-Malthusian assumption, Farm-Africa, together with other stakeholders, have implemented a PFM project that integrates resource conservation, birth control, and livelihood development. As a livelihood development component, Farm-Africa established a tree nursery, initiated poultry and sheep husbandry, and provided micro-credit to AFC members. The livelihood support also included capacity building for harvesting and marketing non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as spices and forest honey.

Although all these interventions were envisioned to transform socio-economic situations of forest-dependent communities so as to ultimately achieve sustainable forest management, Agama villagers acted upon these objectives differently than expected. The livelihood interventions not only diverted their attention away from the basic intentions of the project, but also led villagers to reshape development supports to their aims. One woman in Agama spoke about the impact of Farm-Africa livelihood support on her life:

We got different types of support from Farm-Africa. But still now, our society is rather careless, we don't save or manage carefully those supportive items. Some [animals] died or by other reasons, it failed. For example, for personal reasons, we immediately sell and eat [the support we get] because of seasonal problems, not for other reason.

The objectives of livelihood interventions were altered not only by the villagers but also by the project implementers. They ‘misused’ livelihood supports as an incentive to bypass the resistance and conflict encountered in the community during PFM implementation. Through the livelihood support provided or promised, the project implementers also strengthened their position as an ‘enlightener’ of the PFM approach, with local communities regarded as a beneficiary rather than as an equal partner. A former natural resource management expert in the district agricultural office and a part-time fieldworker for Farm-Africa explains:

Forest destruction was not the only problem in Agama [...]. At 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 created awareness, more and more, and helped in farming activities to move people away from dependence on the forest. Advantages were given to the farmers, and gradually they started to participate. So the aim was to make everybody a participant, even people who did not have land in the forest.

In summary, all the actors involved in the livelihood intervention (both the villagers and project implementers) followed their own logics and presumptions about the problem and solution, so that the outcomes of their actions were actually different from the basic intentions of the PFM arrangement. Thus, the Agama PFM project, which was designed primarily to alter forest management practices, became dominated by routine development operations, such as income generation and assisting farming activities.

Practicing the new mandate

Since the signing of the FMA at the end of 2003, AFC has started to practice its new mandate. This new mandate, among other things, includes implementing forest development and protection plans and enforcing the cooperative bylaws. Soon after the AFC commenced its new mandate, the contentious issue about membership, which had already surfaced during the formation phase, erupted. Consequently, the AFC’s attention shifted from achieving the management plan to settling the internal conflict among the members. The Agama PFM performance evaluation after three years of implementation confirmed the intensification of internal feuding among members and unsatisfactory compliance with the new PFM rules (Abiy, 2006). The evaluation report also indicated the continuation of the customary forest management practices and use patterns. Abiy reported that the PFM bylaw was not ‘properly’ followed by either committee or ordinary members, the utilization of forest products did not happen according to the plan, nor did the community forest patrolling teams perform their tasks as prescribed. Almost all the executive committee members were removed from their positions shortly after the new organization started its mandate. The then chairman recounted the confrontation at the time:

I am related to the forest from my background, I have a plot in Bushasha zone. But members doubt. I am sorry for that. In the beginning, I was a chairman, but there was a conflict about who could be a member, Kambata or only the fifty-two [indigenous] households? I said that the forest is for everyone, that not only indigenous people have the right to use it. The forest benefits everyone. But then the others were against, especially the members from Bushasha zone,¹⁸ and so yes, I was not a chairman anymore.

¹⁸ Bushasha zone is one of the four sub-villages of Agama. The three other sub-villages are Goksha, Kidah, and Kama.

This story reflects the fragile nature of an externally imposed institutional arrangement when it encounters practical realities. The performance of the new institutional arrangement was undermined not only because it lacked roots in the community, but also because there were no ‘wings’ from the outside to sustain it. When the FMA was signed, it was clearly stated that the CBO was not a replacement for the forestry department, which was to continue its regulatory and service delivery roles. According to the agreement, the forestry department is expected to provide technical support (including legal support) and conduct a regular performance evaluation of the PFM implementation. However, in practice, these commitments were hardly fulfilled in accordance with the plan. For example, we observed that there has been no coordination and sharing of responsibilities between different governmental departments and AFC for more than one decade of PFM implementation. The district agricultural office, which is directly responsible for overseeing the implementation of the forest management plan, has neither personnel responsible for PFM activities nor job descriptions for such positions. As a result, there have been no regular monitoring and evaluation activities, particularly regarding the status of the forest resources. For the officials in the agriculture department, the top priority is to achieve food security and ensure accelerated economic growth through agricultural intensification, as stipulated in the overarching agricultural development policy (Alemayehu *et al.*, 2013, see chapter 2). Although developing forest resources has great potential to realize food security and to spur local economic development, particularly in the context of the Agama area – which is endowed with natural forests and valuable non-timber forest products – this is not emphasized in the overarching rural and agricultural policy document.

What we observed in Agama was therefore outside the frequently stated reasons for implementation failures relating to lack of capacity or resources in community forest management regime (Melese, 2011; Abrar and Inoue, 2012; 2013). The rupture between the institutional intention and actual practice was, rather, attributable to deep-seated structural arrangements and symbolic representation by government officials, who can sign an agreement without having any actual intention of changing their practices. This implies that crafting and signing a forest management agreement alone is not a sufficient condition to (re-)orient practices. Agreeing may be one step, but (re-)orientation of actual practice is also required; otherwise, signing is no more than an act of representation. Another challenge in practicing the new mandate relates to the power asymmetry between the local community and the government, the topic of the next section.

Power asymmetries

The power asymmetry in the PFM arrangement particularly started to manifest itself from the time of the FMA negotiations. The three main parties (government, NGO, and community) participating in the negotiations had uneven resources and power leverage at their disposal. The NGO was privileged with lucrative access to donor funds and information about the PFM arrangement. Thus, although its official role was stated to be that of facilitator, Farm-Africa played a central role in the formulation and endorsement of the FMA. The government, being the *de jure* owner of the forests and forest lands, had the veto power to decide to whom the new role should be delegated. Local community *representatives* were actually involved in the negotiations in the sense of ‘take it or leave it.’ This means that local communities were given little or no option other than to accept the offer proposed by external actors (government and Farm-Africa). Moreover, local communities’ participation was conditional on their performance – they had to be willing and able to stop forest destruction. This uneven playing field and asymmetric relations produced a situation where government and the NGO played a dominant role in designing and implementing the

PFM arrangement without actually empowering the local community to negotiate as an equal partner. The dominance of external actors is also evidenced by the communality of FMAs and bylaws across the PFM intervention sites in the country, with only minor modification of, for example, fine amounts and membership fees (Melese, 2011; Mulugeta and Zelalem, 2011). Reflecting the asymmetric relation, the FMA vested in the district agricultural office a discretionary power to take back the forest if the community failed to comply with the agreement and if the government needed the resource for other development priorities (Farm-Africa, 2004). However, these conditional phrases (...if the community fails to comply ...if the government needs ...) have created wide room for interpretation by implementing officials and have become a source of distrust from the community side (Alemayehu and Wiersum, 2006). In summary, although government representatives signed the FMA to share power and resources with communities, the longstanding power constellation and interaction patterns between the government and local people were hardly changed.

Power asymmetry was also observed in the livelihood intervention, which created a donor–receiver mentality between the external actors and villagers. The livelihood intervention, derived from the neo-Malthusian assumption, did not nurture participation based on equal terms. It started from the interpretation that local communities were poor and therefore, because of their material needs, they could not protect or use the forest sustainably. Then, it prescribed external intervention in the form of alternative livelihoods as the way out of ‘the poverty–forest-destruction trap.’ In this simplified formula, local communities were equated to recipients of the material support that is often provided with instructions about what to do, including prescriptions about birth control. Consequently, before the actual formation of the forest user groups, the livelihood intervention reproduced the asymmetric relationship between project implementers and local communities that the PFM arrangement was meant to break. Moreover, it significantly undermined locals’ sense of ownership of the resources for which they are responsible. An AFC committee member explained what he called the ‘bad shadow’ of Farm-Africa and the attitude created among people:

The members always wait for income or benefit from Farm-Africa, in a supportive form. All benefits were received in that time [during the project period]. Still now, the members don’t say ‘the forest’ or ‘cooperative activity’, still now. [They call it] the Farm-Africa activity [...] the people don’t believe in cooperative activity or [in] participation in cooperative activity. When that Farm-Africa left, no good sign was given [to people in Agama].

This conversation suggests that the community members were not yet convinced that participation in forest management activities served their own needs. In sum, the general notions of (degraded) forest, (poor) people, and their relations – a situation perceived by project implementers as requiring action – led to practices that were different from the project’s intentions. Thus, when the coherence of a project falls apart in the unfolding practices, actors in the PFM arrangement resort to operational logics embedded in their routinized experiences rather than the proclaimed institutional principles. This shows that the PFM intervention in Agama not only followed routinized practices to establish a CBO, but also left a situation in which the new organization could do no more than reproduce habitual actions.

5.5 Discussion and conclusion

This chapter examined the performance of a PFM arrangement through a case study in Agama, south-west Ethiopia. Our analysis demonstrated that, although the PFM arrangement has been implemented in Agama for more than one decade with the intention of mediating and guiding local forest management, the practice in the field was hardly shaped by institutional objectives. The mismatch between institutional objectives and actual practices was evidenced in a number of circumstances in Agama. Local communities have indeed changed some of their expressions about forest management, for example, how they frame forest management issues before and after the PFM intervention. However, it is ambiguous whether the new expressions emerged from a deep change in local communities' world views or should be considered as a (temporary) adaptation strategy. This ambiguity is reflected in locals' conflicting expressions when they talk about the same issue within and outside the context of the PFM intervention. For example, when they are talking within the PFM context, they often portray themselves as 'ignorant' and 'destroyers' of forest resources before Farm-Africa came and enlightened them. Ironically, the same people refer to themselves as 'keepers' of the forest when they are talking within the context of the traditional forest management system. Moreover, a majority of Agama villagers still believe that the traditional forest management system is more effective than the PFM arrangement, whereas the former is perceived as unsustainable by project implementers.

Thus, our findings suggest that these conflicting expressions are a strategy of adaptation to the 'enlightenment' campaign and the livelihood support provided or promised by project implementers, rather than a deep change in locals' perceptions and actions. When Farm-Africa came with its PFM model to Agama, they encountered longstanding social confrontations in respect of use and access to forest resources rather than local concerns on the degradation of the forest. The institutional arrangement, rules, and procedures proved not to be a good guide for action. Rather than responding on the localized needs however, the project implementers insisted on reaching the participatory targets. Thus, a new community institution was established to influence the villagers' forest practices through participatory methods such as meetings, setting up committees, resource assessment, and so forth. To understand real participation, we need to look not only at what has been done, but also at how it has been done. This reveals two main issues. First, an institution was created within routinized practices that reproduced the well-established power relations rather than enhanced the capacity to self-act. Second, the institution could do no more than reproduce the same routinized practices, as there was no established link with actual forest practices.

Furthermore, FMA implementation requires government agencies, particularly responsible forest experts, to change their roles from conventional authoritative forest supervisors to supportive forest extension workers. However, little was changed in the actual practice of implementing agencies and experts, despite numerous training and capacity-building efforts. The continuation of conventional practices is not merely an overt resistance to change, but rather can be attributed to the deep-seated structural position of the state apparatus and expert attitudes. Government agencies have in principle accepted the FMA and have become part of the new PFM arrangement. However, at the interface of interpreting the agreement into a concrete result, socially and historically embedded practices come to override the institutional provisions. In the Agama case, for example, although the district agricultural office committed itself to the agreement, its implementation has often been guided or dictated by the deep-rooted agricultural development policy rather than by the shallow-rooted PFM arrangement.

In line with our findings, several studies on community-based natural resource management have reported unexpected outcomes, or what they have called ‘undesirable results,’ of local forest governance (Gibson, 1999; Smoke, 2003; Alden Wily, 2011). In summary, those studies attribute the undesirable results of community governance to one or a combination of the following factors: the government’s inability to support the new initiative or unwillingness to cede power, manipulation of power by local elites, and failure to adhere to the design principles of the new arrangement. For example, scholars informed by political ecology assert that, if there has been a ‘broad failure’ of community-based approaches, it has been not because of the designs of these approaches but because of the prevalent resistance from powerful groups, mainly government, in an effort to maintain and extend control over natural resources (Gibson, 1999; Nelson and Agrawal, 2008; Nelson 2010; Alden Wily, 2011). According to these scholars, the institutional principles of community-based approaches have rarely been implemented because of the reluctance of political power holders to take such measures (Nelson, 2010). Although our study also recognized resistance and reluctance on the part of the state to cater for its new mandate, we do not share the claim that the power of the state is the single most important factor shaping the performance of the PFM arrangement. Such an argument understates the agency of local communities. In the Agama case, villagers were not subjects just passively following the institutional principles of PFM; they actively acted upon the external intervention, both constructively and contrary to the goal of the intervention. For instance, we demonstrated how Agama villagers initially resisted the introduction of the new CBO and finally adopted the new organization, not to fulfil the goal of the intervention as such, but for their own purposes (e.g., to secure access rights and defend forest land from agricultural investors), yet without compromising their traditional forest management practices. This implies that local actors, who are situated in a socio-historical context, also develop their own roles in the performance of a PFM arrangement, alongside the external power dynamics.

Studies focusing on CPRs, on the other hand, attribute the misfit between institutional intentions and actual practice to failure to adhere to the design principles (Ostrom, 1999; Ostrom *et al.*, 2002). These studies emphasize formalized rules and lists of conditions as defining factors in the performance of the community-based approach. However, those studies inadequately grasp the complex process in social-ecological interaction and the unexpected outcomes of everyday practices (Li, 2007). In the Agama PFM case for example, although the design principles were carefully applied, participants’ forest management practices hardly related to the objectives of the intervention. This reaffirms our theoretical claim, which draws on the PBA and argues that institutional and practical logics are often mutually exclusive (Bourdieu, 1990; Mosse, 2004; Arts *et al.*, 2013). This does not mean that forest management practices in Agama are chaotic. Common forest management practices in Agama, such as forest monitoring, harvesting, and benefit sharing, are subtly guided or informed by customary practices. The introduced PFM arrangement has little role, if any, to play in guiding those practices.

Our study indeed confirmed the usefulness of the PBA, which enabled us to assess PFM performance from the *logic of practice*. Assessing PFM performance from the logic of practice brought new dimensions to the institutional analysis. Whereas institutional analysis assesses whether a robust institution (that mediates human behaviour) has been established and whether this institution is guiding people’s actions towards policy goals, the logic of practice approach illuminates what happens in the local arena when a newly introduced arrangement based on incentives, norms, and rules ‘hits the ground.’ And as Li (2007) suggests, such analysis has value to instigate dialogue and to critically reflect on whether and what kind of

intervention is actually needed to influence forest-related practices. Such analysis also conveys a cautious message to the optimistic premises of community-based interventions, particularly to those focusing on positive outcomes without due attention to field complexities.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and reflections



River inside Belete-Gera regional forest priority area, South-west Ethiopia. Photo by the author.

After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.

~ Nelson Mandela

6.1 Introduction

As elaborated in the introductory chapter, forest governance in Ethiopia has experienced complex and dynamic changes and continuities over the past five decades. The objective of this thesis has been to investigate how these governance dynamics have developed over the years (temporal analysis), at multiple political-administrative levels (vertical analysis), involving multiple actors (horizontal analysis), and practiced at local level. Accordingly, four research questions were addressed: (1) how has forest governance historically evolved and changed over time in Ethiopia; (2) how has the emerging multilevel forest governance reform institutionalized at federal and regional state level in Ethiopia; (3) to what extent has the emerging multi-actor mode of governance enabled non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to impact the development of forest policy in Ethiopia; and (4) how has multi-actor forest governance – in the form of participatory forest management (PFM) – performed in practice at local level?

This final chapter contains the conclusions of, and reflections on, this research. First, it presents the main empirical conclusions of the research as presented in the various chapters. These conclusions focus on the key manifestations of forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia and the underlying mechanisms of change and continuity. It draws conclusions based on the specific research objective of the study, i.e., understanding the institutionalization and performance of the multiple forest governance reforms in Ethiopia, and on the research questions (see above). Then, the theoretical framework and research methodology used in this study are reflected upon. The chapter ends with a general conclusion to the thesis and recommendations for a future research agenda. This final section specifically summarizes the key messages of the thesis and suggests questions for further research.

6.2 Key manifestations of forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia

6.2.1 Trends of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization

The historical development of forest governance in Ethiopia exhibited dynamic trends of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization. As elaborated in chapter 2, these trends were shaped by a complex interplay of competing ideas, interests, and structural factors that have evolved in the country over time. These included macro-political and economic changes such as privatization, nationalization, regionalization, and decentralization; the competition between different discourse coalitions within the national forest policy domain; developments in the adjacent agricultural policy field; environmental calamities such as drought and famine; and the dynamics in global forest-related discourses. Policy actors' dissatisfaction with the existing institutional arrangement to address the persistent environmental challenges and the inadequate harnessing of the expected economic and societal benefits from the forestry sub-sector were the major factors stimulating forest policy change in Ethiopia. However, throughout history, there were also actors and coalitions that actively defended the *status quo*. In order to gain a dominant position, the competing discourse coalitions had to continuously reframe their discourse and policy agendas in line with the prevailing macro-political and economic contexts. As agricultural development has always been one of the inviolable government policy priorities in Ethiopia, the developments in the agricultural sector have significantly affected the developments in forest policy. For instance, the forest policy was subordinated to the agricultural modernization paradigm during the Imperial era, but gained in importance within the

nationalization and collectivization programme of the socialist government. However, the forestry issue has again been overshadowed by the dominant agricultural intensification policy since 1990s, although there are recent signs of resurgence demonstrated by the establishment of a new ministry of environment and forestry in June 2013. Ethiopia's climate-resilient green economy (CRGE) strategy also stipulated forestry as one of its four development pillars. However, the effect of these new developments on forest governance dynamics is too early to assess at this stage. Overall, throughout the history of modern Ethiopia, agricultural development policy has been firmly entrenched, whereas forestry was mostly either marginalized or integrated into the dominant agricultural development paradigm. Such integration was intended to maximize the synergy between the two sectors, but, as argued in chapter 2, the unbalanced objectives and conflicting interests between agriculture and forestry hampered the potential to capitalize on the synergy between the two sectors.

The forest policy landscape was also affected by the drought and famine incidents of the mid-1970s and mid-1980s. The 1973–74 great Ethiopian famine not only signalled the failure of the agricultural modernization paradigm, but also opened a policy space for the competing discourse coalition that advocated forestry development. This coalition actively framed its forestry development agenda within the political and economic priority of the socialist regime that came to power in the wake of the great famine. Several commentators claim this period as a prime time in the history of Ethiopian forest policy, during which a strong and autonomous institution focusing on production forestry was established (Tadesse, 2001; Melaku, 2003; Berhanu, 2009). The catastrophic drought and famine of the mid-1980s again shifted policy discourses towards broader environmental conservation issues; this gradually weakened forestry as an autonomous policy field. This shift in policy emphasis resulted in the downsizing of the previously strong forestry organization, which eventually merged with the soil and water conservation sectors.

Besides the competing discourse coalitions and the enabling or constraining structural factors in the country, the dynamics in global forest-related discourses have significantly influenced the institutionalization and deinstitutionalization process of forest policy in Ethiopia. Their influence was considerable during the period of growing international forest-related discourses and development cooperation between the 1970s and the 1990s (Umans, 1993; Singer, 2008). For example, the rise in the global fossil fuel price in the early 1970s and the emergence of the influential discourse on the 'other energy crisis' (Eckholm, 1975) significantly contributed to the increasing focus on the various types of production forestry in several developing countries, including Ethiopia (Demel, 2001; Arnold *et al.*, 2003). Consequent to such global discourses, sizable resources were mobilized from multilateral and bilateral donors to support forestry development in the recipient countries. Moreover, Ethiopian forest policy has adopted a number of approaches promoted by the international community since 1980s. These include the community forestry programme, forest decentralization, the PFM approach, and the REDD⁺ initiatives (see figure 6.1).

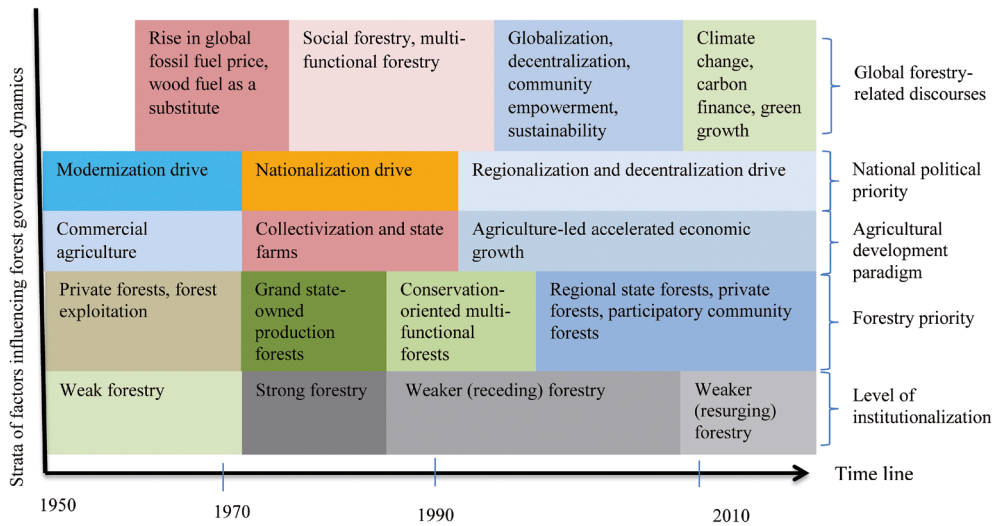


Figure 6.1 Dynamics of factors influencing forest governance in Ethiopia

In summary, this study revealed that the institutionalization and deinstitutionalization process of forest governance in Ethiopia resulted from a complex interplay of discourses and related activities of policy actors and structural factors. Policy actors continuously re-interpret and modify their discourse in order to adapt to or withstand structural factors and competition from rival coalitions. The structural factors delineate the broader context and enable or constrain one discourse coalition over the other. Such complex interactions of ideas and structural factors stimulate the institutionalization of recurrent new dominant discourses with a subsequent emergence of new coalitions, new rules, and new organizational arrangements. On the other hand, these interactions can pave the way for the deinstitutionalization of the once established policy practices that were aligned with a regressive or weaker discourse.

6.2.2 Two main trends in forest governance reforms

Among the major structural changes in Ethiopia that significantly impacted on the forest policy field were the landmark reforms in the macro-economy and political spheres of the country since the early 1990s. These reforms, on the one hand, have enabled the decentralization of forest governance authority to subnational units of government – referred in this study as multilevel forest governance (MLFG) reform. At the same time, these structural reforms have stimulated the involvement of non-state actors such as NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) in forest governance – referred to as multi-actor forest governance (MAFG) reform in this study. Chapter 3 presents the political decentralization process and discusses the degree of institutional change in the MLFG reform. The MAFG reform, which concerns the role and impact of non-state actors in forest policymaking, is analysed in chapter 4.

Decentralization of forest governance authority to subnational units of government

As demonstrated in chapter 3, the MLFG reform process resulted in significant institutional shifts from the old centralized system to the new MLFG arrangement. These institutional shifts involved: (i)

the emergence of decentralization as a dominant policy discourse, (ii) translation of the decentralization discourse into binding rules that fostered new responsibilities and interaction among multiple administrative layers, (iii) the increase in the number and strength of actors supporting the MLFG arrangement, and (iv) the emergence of a new capacity among subnational actors to mobilize resources and influence the decision-making process. These changes in the institutional arrangement of the MLFG reform can be related to several factors that are both internal and external to the forest policy domain. Internally, some professionals were discontent with the outcomes of the centralized forest management system and the marginalization of the forestry sector at national level since the early 1990s (after the fall of the socialist regime). These professionals aimed to establish a strong and autonomous forestry institution with a federal mandate and also considered decentralization as an opportunity to bring forestry back to the forefront. Another major driver of the MLFG reform came from outside the forest policy domain, i.e., the radical reforms in the social, economic, and political spheres of the country initiated by the new political regime in 1991. This macro-political and economic reform was institutionalized by adopting a new Constitution in 1995 that heralded a decentralized federal polity and a democratic political process. The constitution not only annulled the instruments and structures of the previous centralized regime, but also granted a considerable degree of formal authority to the subnational units of government, including the mandate to formulate and implement social and economic development policies and to administer land and forest resources. Therefore, the structure and the process of the MLFG reform have been strongly impacted by these broader socio-political and economic changes in the country.

Besides the domestic forces, the MLFG reform also reflected the global discourse that has been promoted since the 1990s on the need for decentralization of power in environmental governance to lower institutional levels. As argued in chapter 3, whereas in most countries decentralization was a response to an external push from the international community (Ribot, 2002b), the MLFG reform in Ethiopia was the result of a broader regionalization programme impacted mainly by internal political and administrative expediency. In other words, international actors played mainly a supporting rather than an initiatory role in the MLFG reform and the underlying regionalization programme in Ethiopia.

The degree of institutional change in the MLFG reform was also affected by the historical and socio-political contexts in which the reform was implemented. The study compared two regional states in Ethiopia and found a strong link between the degree of institutional change and the historical and socio-political settings within which the MLFG policy evolved. Relatively deep institutional change was observed in the regional state where the MLFG reform matched with the broader socio-political process and the historical ambitions of the regional policy actors. This was the case in Oromiya region where the regionalization and decentralization drive matched well with the MLFG reform and the historically-rooted aspirations of regional actors for self-rule and resource self-governance. In this region, the decentralization discourses have been translated into regional forest law and other implementation instruments such as regulation and directives. These changes also resulted in the establishment of a new autonomous regional forestry organization. In contrast, shallow institutional change was observed in SNNPR where the MLFG reform mismatched with the broader socio-political process and the demands of regional actors. In this regional state, the MLFG reform was hardly supported by regional political discourses and priorities, and there was also a lack of consensus among regional actors on the overall reform processes. As a result, although regional forest law was also enacted in this region, it was not accompanied by implementation instruments, and the establishment of an autonomous regional forestry organization has not yet been achieved.

The findings in the two comparative case studies supported the claims of the thesis about institutional *path dependence* (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002), highlighting how dynamics triggered by an event or process at one point in time tend to reproduce the given institutional structures of a social system and thus shape the institutional outcomes in the later stages of the process too. However, the proposition of the sequential theory of decentralization (STD) (Falleti, 2005, 2010), which asserts that a particular sequence of implementing the three decentralization dimensions (political, administrative, and fiscal) determines the progress and hence the deepening of such reform, was not supported in this study. It was observed that the two regional states indeed followed similar sequences of decentralization – in the order of political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization – yet showed significant variation in the degree of institutional change. Therefore, the findings of this study rather suggested socio-political and historical settings as an important factor impacting on the MLFG reform process in Ethiopia.

Increasing role and impact of non-state actors in forest governance

Since the early 1990s, the role and impact of NGOs in forest policymaking have greatly increased (chapter 4). Whereas in the second half of the twentieth century bilateral and multilateral organizations were the main development partners in the forestry sector, since the turn of the new Millennium, both international and national NGOs have been playing an increasing role. This reflects the world-wide growing importance of civil society organizations in forest governance (Humphreys, 2004; Arts, 2005; Rayner *et al.*, 2010). The initial involvement of NGOs in Ethiopia was mainly confined to implementing drought relief and environmental rehabilitation activities, but gradually they became more active in initiating and catalysing policy processes. Within this framework, several NGOs successfully introduced a new system of forest co-governance – the PFM approach – into forest policy and practice in Ethiopia. The new system of forest co-governance was pursued in order to achieve better environmental, social, and economic outcomes than those achieved under the conventional state-centric approach. A number of factors contributed to the growing role of NGOs and the adoption of the new forest governance approach. The key factor was the change in socio-political trends both at international and national level that placed considerable responsibilities on non-state actors such as NGOs and CBOs to foster democratic and sustainable environmental governance, particularly in the developing world. Consequently, influential multilateral and bilateral agencies such as the World Bank, IMF, UN agencies, and the EU have facilitated horizontal power-sharing arrangement between state and non-state actors in Ethiopia, mainly through direct support to international and local NGOs. These international donors also initiated a reform that demands the active involvement of non-governmental actors not only in development activities on the ground, but also in governance process as a condition to be met by the government in order to gain access to financial support. At national level, the demise of the centralized socialist regime and the adoption of a decentralized federal polity and a democratic political process stimulated the emergence and growing role of non-state actors in forest and environmental governance.

In the context of Ethiopia, NGOs have played a major role in shaping the content and the process of the MAFG reform without having a formal mandate or being elected by local communities to do so. These actors have significantly contributed to the adoption of a new forest co-governance approach, PFM, in Ethiopia's forest policy. It was demonstrated in this thesis that PFM did not trickle directly down in a linear process of transfer from international forest policy norms to national forest policy. It rather involved a more complex routing initially developed at the level of specific forestry development projects sponsored

by the NGOs, followed by a gradual communication of the field experiences to the national forest policy framework and further institutionalization into concrete policy tools. Thus, NGOs impacted these processes not by becoming directly involved in the formal policymaking process, but rather through long and indirect mechanisms of policy influence. These mechanisms included demonstrating an innovative policy approach at field level, documenting and communicating field evidence, forming strong networks with likeminded actors, forging alliances with key decision makers, and allocating sufficient resources to push the adoption of the new approach into concrete rules and instruments.

Comparison of the two trends

Similar to the MLFG reform, the growing discontent with the failure of the state-centric approach to address the persistent problem of deforestation and associated environmental problems was one of the push factors for the MAFG reform. However, the two forest governance reforms vary in a number of ways. Whereas the MLFG reform basically involved a vertical transfer of forest management authorities within a multi-layered government structure, the MAFG reform involved a horizontal sharing of forest governance responsibilities between governmental and non-governmental actors, particularly NGOs. The main goal in the MAFG reform was to institutionalize a co-governance forest management arrangement that overcomes the weakness of the state-centric approach. And whereas the MLFG reform occurred as a result of the broader political-economic change that came from outside the forestry sector in the form of the overall regionalization programme initiated since the early 1990s, the MAFG reform essentially involved an initiative to address specific problems in the forestry sector itself. Consequently, the main actors in the MLFG reform are governmental actors, particularly politicians in favour of regional autonomy, whereas the main actors in the MAFG process are non-governmental organizations, who often support local communities or community-based initiatives.

Table 6.1 summarizes the comparative characteristics of MLFG and MAFG reforms. It illustrates that, although some overlap exists between them, the two reforms are essentially different in terms of the nature and the process through which they are institutionalized. The similarity as well as the distinctiveness of the two reforms reveals the complexity of forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia. This complexity cannot be grasped by the mainstream definition of decentralization or devolution. In the context of natural resource management, decentralization is often related to bureaucratic or administrative decentralization; and devolution means that decision-making power and resources are transferred to, or shared with, local communities or elected lower-level institutions (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999). This definition does not include actors that have no formal mandate in the bureaucratic decentralization or resource-sharing process, but nonetheless play essential roles in decision making and stimulation of the governance process. Thus, the conventional concepts about decentralization and devolution focus only on the legal institutional structure and power-sharing arrangement, and understate not only the de-facto process of interaction between different ideal-typical types of governance reform, but also the diversity of actors playing active roles in the policy reform arena.

Table 6.1 Comparison of MLFG and MAFG reforms

Attributes	MLFG	MAFG
Impetus	Regionalization programme, political and administrative expediency	Change in global discourse that recognizes the scope of forest co-governance and growing incorporation of NGOs in forest policy
Strategy	Decentralization of decision-making authority to the lower administrative units	Co-governance arrangement between government agencies and CBOs
Key actors	Governmental actors, mainly politicians and authorities	Non-governmental actors, mainly NGOs and CBOs
Legal provision	Entrenched in the constitution and other sectorial policies	Stipulated in the new forest law
Conceptions on community participation	Government-led public consultation, akin to mass mobilization	Partnership arrangement between government agencies and CBOs, with defined rights and responsibilities
Responsible institution	The formal lower-level administrative units	Newly created CBOs, facilitated by NGOs and local governments
Scale of mandate	Comprehensive, including all social, political, and economic affairs in its jurisdiction	Specific to issues stipulated in the forest co-governance agreement
Features of change	Rapid and profound	Gradual but significant

Several authors have described forest governance reform in terms of a multifaceted process involving governments, market organizations, and local communities (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006; Agrawal *et al.*, 2008; Ostrom, 2010). In Ethiopia, the role and impact of market organizations is, however, not very strong. Rather, as discussed in chapter 2, most commercial organizations focus on the development of agricultural estates, which may be in competition with forests. Our data instead indicate the important role played by NGOs in forest governance reform in addition to government actors.

6.2.3 Little change in local forest management practices

As demonstrated in the reflection above, forest governance in Ethiopia has experienced several institutional reforms over the past half century. Particularly, significant institutional reforms have been witnessed from the early 1990s onwards. These latest reforms were manifested mainly in terms of discursive innovations (e.g., emergence of a co-governance discourse), the increasing role of new actors in decision making, the formulation and implementation of new rules and instruments, and new divisions of resources and power relations between governmental and non-governmental actors. The objective of this study was not only to identify the nature of the reform processes, but also to examine the extent to which these institutional reforms affected local forest management practices. Thus, chapter 5 illustrates the relationship between the institutional reforms and the resultant forest management practices on the basis of a case study in a local village where a new institutional arrangement, the PFM approach, has been implemented for nearly two decades. The PFM approach was introduced in the village on the premise that institutions are ‘the missing link’ to sustainably govern forest resources in Ethiopia (Stellmacher, 2007). PFM practitioners believe that a robust institutional arrangement, like the PFM approach, is a prerequisite in order to mediate and

guide local forest management practices towards the new policy goal of sustainable forest management. Accordingly, they have established a village-level forest management institution – forest cooperative – by strictly following the so-called common-pool resource design principles (Ostrom, 1990, 1999; Anderies *et al.*, 2004) and by benchmarking some best practices from around the world.

Despite the implementation of this new institutional approach, the findings in chapter 5 revealed that the local forest management practices were hardly shaped by the objectives of the PFM approach. For example, although the PFM arrangement ‘officially’ annulled the traditional resource management system by establishing a village-level forest cooperative (a new CBO), in practice the traditional institutions are still far more influential in shaping the local forest management and utilization patterns. Stellmacher and Mollinga (2009) made similar observations. A couple of factors contributed to the stability of the traditional forest management practices and the insignificant impact of the externally introduced institutional reform. First, the new PFM institution was crafted on the basis of ideal design principles and experiences from elsewhere in the world, without paying due attention to the local reality. However, when PFM implementers arrived in the village, they encountered complex and longstanding social, political, and economic challenges that they had not anticipated during the institutional design stage. Second, instead of addressing those practical challenges, the PFM implementers adhered to institutional logics, even when confronted with difficulties and resistance from villagers, in order to reach the reform targets. In order to bypass or contain the resistance, the project implementers employed their own operational logics rather than trying to understand the local logics of behaviour. As a result, they focused increasingly on livelihood support activities identified on the basis of their own professional logics. These livelihood supports were often accompanied by ‘enlightenment’ campaigns and prescriptions about what to do and what not to do. These operational logics were guided by the internal convictions of project implementers and were used with the intention of convincing villagers to accept the new institutional objectives. Thus, in practice, the livelihood supports and enlightenment campaign reproduced an asymmetric relationship between the project implementers and local communities that the new reform was intended to break. Third, although villagers did not follow the proposed institutional incentives, norms, and rules, they nonetheless acted upon the reforms, but in their own ways. Thus, although they changed their discursive expressions along with the new lexicon of the reform, these discursive changes were an adaptation strategy that did not alter their customary forest management practices, but rather served to secure access rights and defend forest land from agricultural investors. The findings indicate that local actors, who are situated in a given socio-political and economic context, have their own agency (alongside the external structure) that enables them to actively work upon institutional reform, either constructively or contrary to the reform’s goal. The fourth reason for the insignificant impact of the new institutional reform is the inability of local government officials to adopt their new cooperative roles with the community. Several studies in other countries reported such findings and interpreted them as indicating the resistance or reluctance of state agents to cede power or share decision-making authority with local communities (Gibson, 1999; Nelson, 2010; Alden Wily, 2011). Our case study sketches a somewhat different picture. The continuation of the conventional forest management practices was not interpreted as signifying an overt resistance to change on the part of the state agents; rather, it was attributed to their deep-seated structural position and attitudes that also shaped their habitual actions (cf., Wiersum and Lekan, 1995; Kubo, 2010). In the study village, local government agencies have accepted the PFM arrangement and have signed a legally binding agreement with a local community; this suggests their official commitment to fulfil the new mandate. However, the challenge arises at the interface of the formulation and the actual implementation of the institutional

provisions into concrete activities. At this interface, the dominant agricultural development paradigm that trickles down from the national government political priority overrides the shallow-rooted PFM agreement and rules.

The fact that the PFM arrangement has little impact, if any, in shaping forest management practices in the study village indicates that institutional arrangements, rules, and procedures are not sufficient conditions to guide actions (cf., Li, 2007; Quinn *et al.*, 2007), particularly when they are dominated by a contradictory policy approach. The case study illustrates the importance of a practice-based rather than a normative-based approach towards reforming forest governance at local level. In such a practice-based approach, attention needs to be given to the practical logics in communities and to the realities of what people actually do and say in the context of their daily lives (see also De Koning, 2011).

6.2.4 Synthesis of the institutionalization and performance of forest governance dynamics

For quite a long time, Ethiopia has experienced multiple challenges in governing its forest and related environmental resources. A number of forestry-related policy reforms have been implemented over the last half a century to address these challenges, of which the two forest governance reforms (MLFG and MAFG) are the most significant. The institutionalization and performance of these two reforms have been controversial among scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and international development partners. Some analysts claim that a major transformation has taken place, consequent to the implementation of the MLFG and MAFG reforms, on the management of forest resources and institutional arrangements (Asafw *et al.*, 2001; Jagger *et al.*, 2005; Aklilu, 2011; Takahashi and Todo, 2012). Other commentators, by contrast, argue that these reforms have brought no fundamental change either to the management of the resources or to the institutional setup after nearly two decades of implementation (Stellmacher, 2007; Stellmacher and Mollinga, 2009; Abrar and Inoue, 2012, 2013; Vandenabeele, 2012). In other words, whereas the first view claims the advancement of the MLFG and MAFG reforms towards pluralistic and more inclusive governance arrangements, the second view emphasizes a continuity of the conventional state-centric and hierarchical forest governing system. This thesis departs from these competing views and aims to provide a systematic explanation of the institutionalization and performances of the two forest governance reforms in Ethiopia. It analysed the dynamics in forest governance over five decades, at multiple political-administrative levels, and from multi-actor perspectives. In doing so, this thesis analysed not only the process and practice within the forestry sector, but also paid attention to the broader political and economic framework impacting forest governance dynamics. The various chapters provide comprehensive empirical insights on how and why the new forest governance reforms are progressing or stagnating.

Compared to most previous studies that emphasize stagnation in the reform process due to constraints imposed by the formal political institution (Yonas, 2001; Yihnew, 2002; Melaku, 2003; 2008; Berhanu, 2009; Abrar and Inoue, 2012, 2013), this thesis sketches a more nuanced picture of forest governance dynamics involving both changes and continuities. Besides the constraining or enabling institutional structure, this study identified a number of other key factors contributing to the forest governance reforms. These include the emergence of new policy discourses, the various activities of actors to promote or stall such new policy discourses, the dynamics in the macro-political economy, the agricultural development policy directions, and global trends and opportunities. For instance, with regard to the latter factor, the results in chapter 2 showed that the evolution of the national forest policy responded considerably to global

trends and processes, notably the energy crises of the 1970s, the Rio Earth Summit, and the international climate change negotiations, notably REDD+ and green growth initiatives. The decentralization of forest governance authority across multiple administrative levels, presented in chapter 3, also depicted the claims of vertical change in governance. The results in this study confirmed that significant institutional change has occurred along the vertical administrative levels in Ethiopia. This thesis also illuminated the often neglected role of non-state actors in forest policymaking in Ethiopia. The results in chapter 4 revealed the significant roles played by non-state actors, particularly NGOs, in the adoption of the new forest governance approach, PFM, both in implementing it at field level and up-scaling it to national policy. In light of these findings, I can refute the claim that the new forest governance reforms are only symbolic, although the assertion of substantial institutional transformation would also be too hasty. One of the main reasons why a deep institutional transformation can be disputed is that non-state actors have still limited access to the political decision-making process and the legal framework fails to define the role of non-state actors in the policymaking process, i.e., the absence of rules of the game. The current participation of non-state actors in the policymaking process has an *ad hoc* character and is not well entrenched in formal rules. Thus, the political power to determine the rules of interaction and to accept or reject policy proposals still remains firmly concentrated in the realm of the government. In line with this, some analysts have commented that the space for NGOs and civil society in general has become increasingly restricted in Ethiopia in recent years (Dessalegn *et al.*, 2010; Sisay, 2012; Hayman *et al.*, 2013). They specifically criticized Ethiopia's 2009 charities and societies' proclamation, which regulates the involvement of foreign donor NGOs in activities relating to the advancement of human and democratic rights. In other words, these critics state that government mobilized the new legislative rules in order to regulate the operation of non-state actors rather than create enabling conditions for their engagement in the governance process. On the other hand, Hayman *et al.* (2013) have further noted that, although the implementation of the new proclamation seems to limit and control the activities of the civil society sector at large, most NGOs have adapted to the new environment and have incorporated the new law into their programmes and action strategies. The findings in this study suggest similar trends where, for example, some NGOs rephrased their policy advocacy objective as a policy support to harmonize their strategies with the requirements of the 2009 proclamation.

The other disputed subject concerning the performance of the new governance reforms is the continuation of the state ownership of land and forest resources. This research interprets this phenomenon differently than most previous studies (Keeley and Scoones, 2003; Melaku, 2003; Davies, 2008; Chinigo, 2011; Abrar and Inoue, 2012), which emphasize the continuation of the state ownership of land and forest resources under the new forest governance reforms. The findings in this thesis show that, although the new reform preserved some elements of the previous centralized policy, it decentralized significant authority to govern forest and land resources to subnational units of government. For example, both the 1994 and 2007 forest laws granted significant power to the regional states to administer most forests in their respective regions, including the authority to set the royalty rate, and collect and utilize licence revenue from the exploitation of forest products. This is a substantial shift compared to the previous arrangement where forests and forested land were put under central state authority and governed by hierarchies of command radiating from one epicentre. However, the situation is still rather far from full devolution, particularly in terms of transferring sufficient resources and authority to local communities, which several authors (Nelson, 2010; Alden Wily, 2011) consider as a critical ingredient for the success of natural resource governance in such contexts. Moreover, as shown in chapter 5, the impacts of the new forest governance reforms on local forest management practices were insignificant, as those reforms have been interfered by various factors ranging from institutional structure to the agency of local communities.

The results of this thesis will hopefully contribute to the forest policymaking process in Ethiopia and instigate further dialogue that might be useful to critically reflect on whether, how, and what kind of additional institutional reform is needed to improve forest governance. However, unlike most previous policy studies in Ethiopia that focus on evaluating the goals and measures of a specific reform and draw lists of normative conclusions and recommendations, this thesis purposely focused on the analytical aspect of understanding and explaining the reform process. In other words, it adopted an *empirical-analytical* approach that addresses the questions about, and possible answers for, what is already happening, and why, rather than a *normative-evaluative* approach which is interested in the questions of what should and should not be done (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004). It is expected that the results emanating from such an empirical-analytical approach will contribute towards a better understanding of the forest policy and governance process in Ethiopia, which in turn will increase the likelihood of the adoption of various adjustments and improvements by the key governance players, including policy and development actors. This is particularly important, as disagreements on the relevance of specific forest governance arrangements are not merely academic, but involve differences in political convictions and in access to decision making about forest and land resources. Within this context, normative conclusions and prescriptions are often sensitive and may be counterproductive. The empirical-analytical approach provides a better understanding of the multifaceted dimensions influencing the reform process in relation to forest policy and practice. Such understanding can contribute towards improved communication between the different actors and towards identifying a common ground to design more promising systems of resource governance, rather than only normatively embedded principles.

6.3 Theoretical and methodological reflection

6.3.1 Theoretical reflection

The selection of *governance* and *change in governance* as analytical concepts and combining them with the PAA framework have proved to be suitable to understand and explain the dynamics in forest governance in Ethiopia. Governance as an organizing concept is useful because it encompasses the content (the what), the context (the framework), and the process (the how) of policymaking. The concept of change in governance enabled to sketch a general picture of forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia – illustrated in terms of temporal, vertical, and horizontal changes. However, governance is a broad concept (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004), and in order to elucidate and explain a process of change and continuity in a specific field of study, such as forest governance, this concept needs to be combined with a more analytically focused approach. The PAA has proved capable of analysing governance in such a specific field of study (cf., Van der Zouwen, 2006; Arnouts, 2010). By taking into account the role of agency, structure, interests, and ideas in a dynamic perspective, the PAA framework offers a detailed and nuanced analysis of institutional change and continuity. The combination of governance concepts with the PAA framework proved to be useful in illuminating the mechanism behind forest governance dynamics (change and continuity) in Ethiopia. It enabled the operationalization of the broad concepts of governance and change in governance, thus making those broader concepts applicable in a specific empirical field. This conforms to the earlier experiences of Van der Zouwen (2006) and Arnouts (2010).

The PAA framework distinguishes four analytical dimensions (discourses, actors, power, and rules)

that enable the researcher to undertake a balanced analysis of both the substance and the organization of a certain policy field. However, the distinction between the PAA dimensions is also a source of difficulty in employing this framework. The analytical distinction between policy dimensions was difficult to maintain in the actual analysis of the empirical material, mainly because of the overlap between the PAA dimensions. For example, a formal policy document can be analysed and interpreted simultaneously as a discourse and a rule dimension. Or it can be interpreted as a resource or asset of policy actors to achieve a certain goal. To overcome this drawback, this thesis adopted operational definitions of the PAA dimensions that suited each individual empirical case. Consequently, there may be some degree of difference in the operational definition of PAA dimensions in the empirical chapters. Nevertheless, those operational definitions were framed within the broader theoretical framework of PAA.

The PAA framework is built upon other policy and political theories in the fields of neo-institutionalism (March and Olsen, 1989; Hall and Taylor, 1996), networks (Marsh and Rhodes 1992), advocacy coalition (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1999), and discourse analysis (Hajer, 1995). Consequently, it is a comprehensive tool to analyse the process of institutional change and continuity from the perspective of agency, structure, interests, and ideas. However, the PAA offers limited explanation of questions such as why institutional changes vary in different contexts and how institutional changes are acted upon by agents embedded in their social, historical, and political contexts – the other important questions in this thesis. Therefore, the PAA framework was complemented by the sequential theory of decentralization (STD) (Falleti, 2005) to elucidate and explain the link between the different degrees of institutional change and its contexts. By focusing on the sequences of implementing the political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization and the context in which these take place, STD offers a useful explanation of why institutional changes are deep in some contexts and shallow in others.

Moreover, the PAA approach was also combined with the practice-based approach (PBA) (Arts *et al.*, 2013) to examine the question about how embedded agencies acted upon externally induced institutional changes. The PBA brought a new dimension to the PAA analysis – the *logic of practice*. Whereas the PAA analysis is useful to elucidate the process whereby a specific institutional arrangement is established, the logic of practice illuminates what happens in the local arena when the new institution ‘hits the ground’, i.e., when institutional rationales meet with practical logics at work in a specific case. The exercise of combining institutional analysis, using the PAA framework, with elements of other theoretical approaches yielded promising results that elucidate and explain governance processes and practices, as substantiated in the empirical cases in this thesis (chapters 3 and 5 for STD and PBA, respectively). This preliminary exercise deserves further extrapolation in other case studies to assess its added value vis-à-vis the PAA.

The multiple interpretations of governance in the literature were another challenge to operationalize this concept to address our research questions. In most studies, the term governance is used as a way of distinguishing one mode of governing from another (e.g., to contrast traditional hierarchical governing with new forms of multilevel and multi-actor governance) (Colebatch, 2009). However, it is argued in this thesis that the reality of governance is much more complex and multifaceted than implied by such literature. For example, multiple governance arrangements could simultaneously occur and operate with overlapping objectives, actor coalitions, and institutional frameworks. Other authors define governance in terms of three dimensions – polity, politics, and policy (Treib *et al.*, 2007). These authors have developed a schematic model based on these three dimensions to contrast the modes of governance dominated by state

intervention and those dominated by social autonomy, respectively. Howlett *et al.* (2009) adopted a similar model to distinguish modes of forest governance based on institutional structures, political practices, and regulatory techniques. These authors argue that institutional structures, political practices, and regulatory techniques are related in a nested fashion where ‘institutional structures affect configurations of political power which, in turn, constrain the choices of types of regulatory tools used in specific circumstances’ (Howlett *et al.*, 2009:386). Inspired by these models and on the basis of my research findings, I elaborated the governance matrix depicted in figure 6.2.

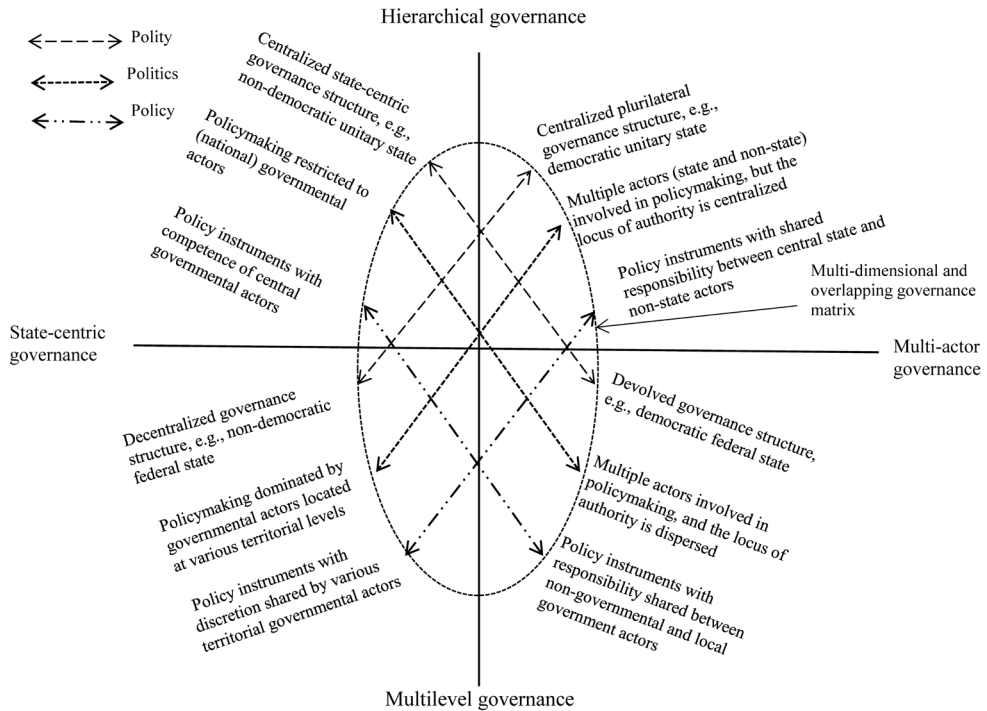


Figure 6.2 The multi-dimensional and overlapping governance matrix (adapted from Treib *et al.*, 2007 and Howlett *et al.*, 2009)

This matrix is organized by drawing on the elements of polity, politics, and policy; and the four spectrums of governance arrangements – hierarchical vis-à-vis multilevel governance and state-centric vis-à-vis multi-actor governance. Whereas the hierarchical vis-à-vis multilevel governance spectrum (vertical axis) concerns the locus of governance, the state-centric vis-à-vis multi-actor governance spectrum (horizontal axis) is about the level of the relationship, or the cooperation between state and non-state actors. Three important points can be highlighted in this matrix. First, many combinations of possible governance arrangements can exist depending on the nature of the institutional structure or framework in which policy actors operate (polity), the forms of interaction between the various actors in the process of policymaking (politics), and the types of steering instruments employed to implement governance (policy). Second, the multiplicity of governance arrangements implies the concurrent existence of various hybrid or overlapping governance forms that combine certain elements of polity, politics, and policy on the one hand and the four spectrums of governance on the other. This also implies that, in practice, there is no governance arrangement that is

entirely hierarchical or state-centric or multilevel or multi-actor (cf., Howlett *et al.*, 2009). Third, sectorial policies, such as forest policy, are embedded in this complex and multifaceted matrix of governance. This suggests that researchers need to pay attention to these complex dynamics within and beyond the traditional boundaries of the forestry sector and its formal institutions in order to advance the scientific analysis of governance and to carefully address the challenge facing a specific sector.

6.3.2 Methodological reflection

The initial focus of this research was to analyse the process and performance of forest policy in Ethiopia. However, from the very start of the research process, demarcating the boundary of the forest policy domain created a methodological challenge. During most recent Ethiopian history, forestry was integrated or subsumed under the dominant agricultural development sector. Moreover, over the last couple of decades, the organization undertaking forestry research and development has been subjected to frequent restructuring in the form of contraction, expansion, or merger with sectors such as soil and water conservation. Consequently, many practices in the forest policy domain are closely intertwined with the macro-political and economic development in the country. For example, the decentralization of natural resource management authority, including forest resources, to subnational units of government was entrenched in the constitution that heralded the establishment of an overall decentralized state structure. At an early phase of the research it became apparent that, because of these factors, it was difficult to draw the boundary of the forest policy domain. Moreover, the information from within the traditional forestry sector alone was not sufficient to understand the process and performance of forest policy. These challenges were resolved by adopting a *nested* case study approach (see figure 1.1) and by broadening the research entry point to forest governance dynamics instead of focusing on forest policy alone. A nested case study approach in which a range of different case studies are embedded within a broader case (see Lotz-Sisitka and Raven, 2004) is useful not only to select different methods and techniques to be used in different situations but also to address cross-cutting thematic issues such forest governance dynamics that traverse the traditional sectorial, policy, or political boundaries. Moreover, as elaborated in chapter 1, focusing on governance dynamics rather than focusing narrowly on policy has been helpful to address not only the content and process of a specific policy but also the general framework (context) that delimits the setting in which policy activities are practiced. The focus on forest governance dynamics enhanced the likelihood of including all relevant actors and organizations directly and indirectly involved in forest governance in Ethiopia. This research therefore concentrated on the practices and activities of actors involved in forest governance rather than the formal structure of the traditional forest policy and its institutions. Consequently, this research included not only those actors (organizations and individuals) officially mandated to formulate and implement forest policy but also those who have an indirect stake in forest governance as well as community groups who are directly affected by the implementation of forest policy. For example, the role of actors who are not directly involved in forest policymaking, such as NGOs and donors, would appear insignificant at first sight, but it was shown that these groups have been playing a crucial role in forest governance processes. In order to understand the local performance of the new forest governance reforms, the research paid due attention to the practices of local actors, particularly the activities of community members organized into forest management cooperatives, and the context in which they are embedded. This involved living in the village for an extended period of time and participating in villagers' daily practices in order to build rapport and gather detailed information from multiple sources (see also Vandenabeele, 2012).

The primary object of analysis in this thesis is forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia. This research object is not only complex but also fast moving. Both the contexts that affect forest governance and the process and events within the forest policy domain are changing rapidly. Thus, achieving high precision is a challenge in researching such a fast moving object. To overcome this challenge, this thesis employed a qualitative research approach that focused on a deep understanding of change and continuity in governance dynamics rather than trying to establish cause and effect relationship or relating variables to one another (see George and Bennett, 2005). Qualitative researchers argue that ‘assertions of causality should be borne out not just by a correlation between two variables, but by a theoretical account showing why this linkage should exist and by evidence suggesting support for that theorized linkage’ (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002:6). Thus, this thesis emphasized systematic and detailed examination of social processes (forest governance) to gain a deeper understanding of *whether*, *how*, and *why* change has occurred. Forest governance is embedded in a setting of interdependent and dynamic socio-political forces and events. The field study was conducted over a four-year period (2010–2013) to increase the precision of data gathered from such a complex and dynamic research object. An additional field trip unforeseen in the planning of the study was even made to Ethiopia during the period of thesis writing because of the establishment of a new ministry of the environment and forestry in June 2013. For the field research, several qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, participant observation (ethnographic data collection method), and document analysis were triangulated. This assisted both to validate the data and to better understand complex phenomena, like the policy frameworks, processes, and practices of multi-level and multi-actor forest governance dynamics.

6.4 General conclusions and recommendations on a future research agenda

This chapter presented the main findings of this study, answering the central research questions and linking them to the theoretical concepts and approaches used in the various chapters in this thesis. In relation to the general objective of the thesis, five key conclusions have emerged:

1. Although the historical trajectories of forest governance in Ethiopia broadly mirrored international trends and traditions, the national political-economic priority dominated by the agricultural development paradigm has been a key factor in shaping the dynamics in the forestry sector (chapter 2).
2. Unlike in many other developing countries where decentralized forest governance reform has occurred as a result of an external push from the international community, the key driver in the Ethiopian multilevel forest governance (MLFG) reform process was internal political and administrative expediency aimed to fit with the country’s broader federalization and regionalization programmes (chapter 3). Such decentralization processes can have very different effects in the various regional states in the federal structure, as shown in two regional states in Ethiopia (SNNPR and Oromiya), depending on how the reform in the forestry sector matches with the broader socio-political process and the historical ambitions of the regional policy actors.
3. NGOs do have an influence on policymaking in a country like Ethiopia where a plural political process has not been well developed. This is shown by their substantial impact on the adoption of

the participatory forest management (PFM) approach in Ethiopia's forest policy and law. When the formal avenue for their participation in the policymaking process is limited, NGOs utilize informal means of catalysing policy processes, such as (re)framing political discourses, forming strong coalitions around the dominant discourse, developing showcases and best practices around issues they advocate, mobilizing resources to influence public opinion, and pressuring decision makers to adopt new policy and law (chapter 4).

4. As illustrated by our case study, the implementation of PFM approach does not follow logically from the basic ideas as expressed in policy discourses and institutional rules, but largely depends on practical logics, which are strongly rooted in local histories, cultures, and settings. Thus, even when the PFM institutions are carefully crafted and implemented, they are often unable to modify these practical logics, situational events, and political-historical experiences of local actors that predominantly shape such actors' forest use and management practices (chapter 5).
5. The analytical combination of the policy arrangement approach (PAA), the sequential theory of decentralization (STD), and the practice-based approach (PBA) is more appropriate to capture the nuanced realities of forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia than the conventional rational choice models and institutional theories. Whereas most previous forest policy studies in Ethiopia (Tadesse, 2001; Yihenew, 2002; Melaku, 2003; Stellmacher, 2007; Abrar and Inoue, 2012) focus mainly on the role of the formal institutions and state agents, this thesis shed light on the role of non-state actors, the effect of broader socio-political structures at multiple governance levels, and the *logics* of local actors or how embedded agencies acted upon institutional reforms. Thus, it provides comprehensive empirical insights into how and why the forest governance reforms in Ethiopia are progressing or stagnating.

This study has also generated questions for further research on several issues beyond the scope of the present study. This thesis focused mainly on identifying key factors and conditions that impact the structures and the processes of forest governance in Ethiopia. It revealed a number of factors and forces outside the forest policy domain, such as the dynamics in the political economy and agricultural policy that strongly impact developments in forest governance. These results suggest that the conventional boundary of the forest policy sector and its formal institutions are not the only relevant ones to understand governance dynamics and to address the challenge facing this sector. Therefore, further research is necessary to sketch the newly emerging features of Ethiopian forest governance and carefully examine the processes involved. The following research questions deserve further attention: (1) Which particular factors relating to polity, politics, and policy dimensions – i.e., which specific decision-making levels, which specific activities of actors or actors' groups, which specific policy instruments – predominantly influence the structures and processes of the various forest governance arrangements?; (2) How do the two forest governance reforms – MLFG and MAFG – perform in terms of enhancing resource conservation and the governance capacity of local communities?; (3) Which NGOs have more influence in the policymaking process? Or do some NGOs act more effectively in terms of influencing policy than others? If so, what accounts for those differences?; and (4) To what extent is forest governance also influenced by market organizations or market-based institutions such as certification? Such questions should be studied not only in an empirical-analytical way, but also in respect of the normative question of the conditions under which the various forest governance arrangements yield desired outcomes from a 'good governance' perspective. Further

research on these issues can add to the new insights offered by this study. Such further understanding is important both to intensify the scientific and theoretical discussions on forest governance reform and to recognize and solve the on-going political, socio-economic, and policy challenges facing forest and natural resource governance in Ethiopia and in other countries with similar contexts.

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¹⁹ Ethiopian names are not based on family or surnames; hence, Ethiopian authors appear under their first name following the practice and logic of names in Ethiopia.

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Summary – Forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia

Forest governance is an important subject to study both as an emerging field of scientific analysis and as a means to understand and tackle the practical challenges facing forest resource management and conservation. Throughout much of the second half of the twentieth century, forest policy in most parts of the world, including Ethiopia, was dominated by the discourse that optimal governance of natural resources is achieved by state authority. This discourse resulted in the establishment of elaborate centralized government regulations and bureaucratic organizations to effectively govern forest resources. Since the late twentieth century, these traditional top-down state-led governing approaches have been criticized, and significant changes in forest governance have taken place. These changes include innovations in forest policy discourses, increasing involvement of diverse actors operating at multiple governance levels, and adoption of various policy tools and instruments aimed at improving the condition of the resources and the people who use them. Thus, forest governance has emerged as a complex field involving active interaction and cooperation between state and non-state actors to deal with a broad range of issues, including policy reform, implementation, and monitoring activities. These issues traverse multiple spatial and temporal scales. In order to understand the complex and dynamic nature of forest governance, it is important to assess reform processes and their results under country-specific conditions. Ethiopia has experienced multiple challenges in governing its forest resources over the last five decades. However, the country is underrepresented in the existing pool of literature on forest governance, and therefore presents a rich field from which to obtain comprehensive empirical insights about its forest governance reforms processes.

This study aims to provide a better understanding of how forest governance has developed and been practiced in Ethiopia over the past five decades. It analyses forest governance dynamics over several years, at multiple political-administrative levels, from multi-actor perspectives, and the effect of the new governance system on local forest management practices. The thesis thereby contributes to the scientific analysis of governance from the perspective of a country for which there is a dearth of relevant research. It also comprehensively explains the institutionalization and performance of forest governance reforms in Ethiopia. It is hoped that the results will assist people who design and implement forest and related natural resource policies.

Chapter 1 introduces the central research theme of this thesis – forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia – and the motivation for conducting this research. This chapter presents an overview of the research setting and elaborates on how forest governance dynamics developed in Ethiopia. It discusses how forest governance is embedded in the general processes of political economy and elaborates the link between the broader political-economic framework and the dynamics in forest governance. It explains how the concepts of governance and change in governance are applied as organizing theoretical concepts to draw the broader picture of Ethiopian forest governance dynamics. The policy arrangement approach (PAA) is introduced as a main analytical framework to understand and explain the mechanism behind forest governance dynamics and the nuanced institutional changes and continuities. The specific objective of the thesis is to investigate how forest governance has developed in Ethiopia over the years (temporal analysis), at multiple political-administrative levels (vertical analysis), involving multiple actors (horizontal analysis), and practiced at local level (its effect on local forest management practices). Four key questions guide the research: How has forest policy historically evolved and changed over time (chapter 2)? How has the emerging multilevel forest governance reform been institutionalized at federal and regional state level (chapter 3)? To what

extent has the emerging multi-actor mode of governance enabled NGOs to impact the development of forest policy (chapter 4)? How has multi-actor forest governance reform – in the form of participatory forest management (PFM) – performed in practice at local level (chapter 5)? Finally, the chapter sets out the research methodology. The overall research design consisted of a nested case-study approach involving studies at national level, two regional states, and a local community. The study employed mostly qualitative data collection methods: in-depth interviews with various key actors; participant observation during several forest policy meetings at national, regional, and local level; and document analysis.

Chapter 2 studies the longitudinal evolution of forest governance in Ethiopia over the last fifty years. Qualitative historical analysis and the PAA analytical framework were employed to elucidate and explain how forest governance has developed under the frequently shifting national political economy, on the one hand, and the dynamics in global forest-related discourses on the other. The historical development of forest governance involves dynamic trends of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization, shaped by a complex interplay of competing ideas, interests, and structural factors. The key contributory factors and conditions are competition between different discourse coalitions within the national forestry policy domain, macro-political and economic change, developments in the adjacent agricultural policy field, incidents of environmental calamities such as drought and famine, and the dynamics in global forest-related discourses. At national level, forestry was, most of the time, marginalized or subordinated to the dominant agricultural development paradigm. Nonetheless, forest governance experienced two reforms since the early 1990s. These reforms have enabled the decentralization of forest governance authority to subnational units of government; this process is referred to as multilevel forest governance (MLFG) reform. At the same time, these reforms have stimulated the involvement of non-state actors such as NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) in forest governance; this process is referred to as multi-actor forest governance (MAFG) reform.

Chapter 3 analyses in detail how the MLFG reform has developed and institutionalized at multiple political-administrative levels, giving special attention to the relation between national and regional state levels. It also assesses how the MLFG reform relates to the broader socio-political and economic changes in the country. Drawing on the multilevel governance concept, the PAA framework, and the sequential theory of decentralization (STD), this chapter describes the institutional changes over the past two decades from the ‘old’ centralized system to the ‘new’ multilevel forest governance arrangement. These changes were manifested in: (i) the emergence of decentralization as a dominant policy discourse, (ii) translation of this discourse into binding rules that fostered interaction among multiple administrative layers, (iii) the increase in the number and strength of actors supporting the MLFG arrangement, and (iv) the emergence of a new capacity among subnational actors to mobilize resources and influence the decision-making process. It is argued that, although some factors within the forestry sector – such as the growing discontent with the ability of the centralized forest management approach to address the persistent problem of deforestation – contributed to this institutional change, the MLFG reform is substantially shaped by the broader political and economic reform that drove federalization and regionalization programmes. This reform involved a change from a unitary state to a federal arrangement that transferred substantial policy issues from the central state to regional governments. The findings also suggest a strong link between the regional states’ historical setting within which the new governance reform has developed and the different degrees of institutional change. Relatively deep institutional change was observed in a state where the MLFG reform matched with the broader socio-political structure and the historical aspiration of regional actors.

In contrast, shallow institutional change was detected in a state where the MLFG reform mismatched with the broader socio-political structure and the demands of regional actors.

In addition to the MLFG reform, forest governance in Ethiopia also included MAFG reform. This reform significantly increased the number of non-governmental actors involved in forest governance.

Chapter 4 explores this emerging multi-actor governance mode by analysing the dynamic link between the ongoing processes of socio-political changes at national and international level; how that stimulated the involvement of non-governmental actors in the policymaking process, and the institutional achievements obtained in MAFG policy reform since the early 1990s. It gives specific attention to the various strategies employed by non-governmental actors to institutionalize a new forest governance approach and their impact on forest policymaking. Over the last two decades, non-governmental actors, particularly NGOs, have increasingly diversified their sphere of engagement and impact on forest policymaking. Historically, NGOs' activities were confined to drought relief and environmental rehabilitation, but over the last decade, NGOs have become active in initiating and catalysing the environmental policy process. They introduced a new system of forest governance in Ethiopia – the participatory forest management (PFM) approach. As NGOs have limited formal avenues to take part in the policymaking process, they used informal means to adopt new policy and law, such as framing dominant policy discourses, forming strong coalitions around the dominant discourse, mobilizing resources to influence public opinion, and pressuring decision makers. As a result of the increasing role and impact of NGOs, the PFM approach was formally included in Ethiopia's new forest policy in 2007. The institutionalization of the PFM approach at policy level is justified by its proponents as achieving better environmental, social, and economic outcomes than the conventional state-led approach.

Chapter 5 critically reflects on local performance of the PFM approach. Through an in-depth ethnographic case study in one of the pioneer intervention sites in south-west Ethiopia, it illustrates the relationship between the implementation of the approach and the resultant change in local social and forest management practices. The case study was conducted in a village where the PFM approach has been jointly implemented by NGOs and government agencies for nearly two decades. The PFM approach was implemented on the premise that a robust institutional arrangement is a necessary condition to mediate and guide local forest management practices towards the new policy goal of sustainability. Accordingly, a village-level forest management institution – a forest cooperative – was established by strictly following the common-pool resource design principles and by benchmarking some best practices from around the world. In practice, however, significant disparity was observed between the institutional design principles intended to guide PFM implementation and actual forest management practices. The result shows that the performance of local forest management is largely shaped by practical logics, which are strongly rooted in local histories, cultures, and settings, rather than by institutional principles expressed in policy discourses and externally introduced rules. Even when the PFM institutions are carefully crafted and implemented, they are often unable to modify these practical logics, situational events, and local actors' political-historical experiences.

Finally, **chapter 6** provides conclusions and reflections based on the study's findings. The first part discusses the empirical conclusions, focusing on the key manifestations of forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia and the underlying mechanisms of policy change and continuity. Then it presents reflections on

the theoretical framework and research methodology used in this study. The final part draws the following overall conclusions: (1) although the historical trajectories of forest governance in Ethiopia broadly mirrored international trends and traditions, the national political-economic priority dominated by the agricultural development paradigm was a key factor in shaping the dynamics in the forestry sector; (2) unlike in many other developing countries where decentralized forest governance reform has occurred as a result of an external push from the international community, the key driver in the Ethiopian MLFG reform process was internal political and administrative expediency aimed to fit with the country's broader federalization and regionalization programmes. Depending on how the reform in the forestry sector matches with the broader socio-political process and the historical ambitions of the regional policy actors, such decentralization processes can have very different effects at regional state level; (3) NGOs do have an influence on policymaking in a country like Ethiopia where a plural political process has not yet been well developed: when the formal avenue for their participation in the policymaking process is limited, NGOs utilize informal means to catalyse policy processes; (4) the implementation of PFM approach does not follow logically from the basic ideas as expressed in policy discourses and institutional rules, but largely depends on practical logics, which are strongly rooted in local histories, cultures, and settings; and (5) the analytical combination of the policy arrangement approach, the sequential theory of decentralization, and the practice-based approach is more appropriate to capture the nuanced realities of forest governance dynamics in Ethiopia than the conventional rational choice models and institutional theories.

Samenvatting - Dynamiek in bosbestuur in Ethiopië

De sturing van bosbeheer (*forest governance*) is een belangrijk onderwerp van studie. Het omvat niet alleen een nieuw veld van wetenschappelijke analyse maar ook een middel om de praktische problemen op het gebied van bosbehoud en beheer beter te begrijpen en aan te pakken. Gedurende de tweede helft van de 20e eeuw was het bosbeleid in de meeste landen, inclusief Ethiopië, gebaseerd op het uitgangspunt dat een optimale sturing van bosbeheer gebaseerd dient te zijn op de autoriteit van de staat. Dit uitgangspunt resulteerde in een uitgebreid regelsysteem van de centrale overheid en de oprichting van bureaucratische organisaties voor deze sturing. Sinds het einde van de 20e eeuw is deze traditionele door de overheid gestuurde top-down benadering onderhevig aan kritiek en sinds die tijd hebben er belangrijke aanpassingen in de sturingsbenadering plaatsgevonden. Deze veranderingen zijn gebaseerd op nieuwe ideeën over de organisatie van het bosbestuur in de vorm van deelname van verschillende belangengroepen op verschillende bestuurlijke niveaus en aanpassing van de beleidsmiddelen en instrumenten. Deze veranderingen worden verondersteld te resulteren in een verbetering van de gesteldheid van de natuurlijke hulpbronnen en een verbeterde situatie voor de mensen die van die natuurlijke hulpbronnen afhankelijk zijn. Bosbestuur ontwikkelde zich tot een complex systeem van interactie en samenwerking tussen de overheid en niet-gouvernementele actoren en richtte zich op een breed scala van activiteiten op het gebied van beleidshervorming, -uitvoering en -monitoring. Deze activiteiten omvatten verschillende scala in tijd en ruimte. Voor het verkrijgen van een goed inzicht in deze complexe en dynamische processen is het van belang om de hervormingsprocessen en hun resultaten in de context van een specifiek land te bestuderen. Hoewel Ethiopië de afgelopen vijf decennia werd geconfronteerd met een veelheid aan uitdagingen in bosbestuur, is dit land ondervertegenwoordigd in de huidige literatuur over bosbestuur. Het land biedt derhalve een goede mogelijkheid om nieuwe empirische inzichten op te doen over de hervormingsprocessen in de sturing van bosbeheer.

Deze studie heeft tot doel om een beter inzicht te verkrijgen in de ontwikkeling en de praktijk van de sturing van het bosbeheer in Ethiopië gedurende de afgelopen vijf decennia. De studie omvat een analyse van de historische dynamiek in de sturing en hoe die zich manifesteerde op verschillende politiek-administratieve niveaus. Hierbij wordt aandacht gegeven aan de zienswijzen van verschillende actoren en het effect van de hervormingen op de lokale praktijk van bosbeheer. De studie vormt een bijdrage aan de wetenschappelijke analyse van de sturing van bosbeheer vanuit het gezichtspunt van een land dat nog weinig bestudeerd is op dit gebied. Het geeft een veelomvattend overzicht van het proces van institutionalisering en uitvoering van Ethiopische hervorming in bosbestuur. De resultaten zijn van belang voor de betrokkenen bij het ontwerpen en uitvoeren van bosbestuur en aanverwante vormen van bestuur van natuurlijke hulpbronnen.

Hoofdstuk 1 introduceert het centrale onderzoeksthema van deze studie en motiveert deze keuze. Het geeft eerst een overzicht van de context van het onderzoek en beschrijft de dynamiek in de sturing van het bosbeheer in Ethiopië. Het beschrijft vervolgens hoe dit bosbestuur ingebed is in meer algemene politiek-economische processen en hoe de dynamiek ervan verweven is met deze processen. Vervolgens worden de processen van besturing en de dynamiek daarin theoretisch nader uitgewerkt; deze begrippen vormen de theoretische basis voor de analyse van de dynamiek in het Ethiopische bosbestuur. De beleidsarrangementen benadering (PAA= policy arrangement approach) vormde het voornaamste analytische raamwerk voor het bestuderen van de mechanismen die ten grondslag liggen aan de ontwikkeling in bosbestuur en de ermee

gepaard gaande institutionele verandering en continuïteit. De specifieke doelstellingen van de studie zijn het onderzoeken hoe het Ethiopische bosbestuur zich over de tijd ontwikkeld heeft (temporele analyse), hoe het zich manifesteerde op verschillende politiek administratieve niveaus (verticale analyse), welke actoren er bij betrokken waren (horizontale analyse) en hoe het op lokaal niveau in praktijk werd gebracht (effect op de lokale praktijk van bosbeheer). Het onderzoek richtte zich op vier onderzoeksvragen: (1) Hoe heeft het bosbeleid zich historisch ontwikkeld en hoe is het door de jaren heen veranderd? (2) Hoe is het zich ontwikkelende meerlagige systeem van bosbestuur geïnstitutionaliseerd op het niveau van de federale overheid en de regionale staten? (3) In hoeverre heeft de ontwikkeling van een multi-actor benadering in bosbestuur het mogelijk gemaakt voor niet-gouvernementele organisaties om invloed te hebben op de besturing van het bosbeheer? (4) Hoe werd de multi-actor benadering in de vorm van participatief bosbestuur praktisch uitgevoerd op lokaal niveau. Tenslotte beschrijft dit hoofdstuk de onderzoeksmethoden. De overkoepelende methode bestond uit een ‘nested case study’ benadering waarin studies op nationaal niveau, regionaal niveau (twee staten) en lokaal niveau (dorpsgemeenschap) gecombineerd werden. De gegevens werden voornamelijk verzameld via kwalitatieve methoden in de vorm van diepte-interviews met sleutelfiguren, participatieve observaties bij diverse bijeenkomsten over bosbeleid op nationaal, regionaal en lokaal niveau en analyse van documenten en beleidsstukken.

Hoofdstuk 2 behandelt de eerste onderzoeksvraag betreffende de evolutie van het Ethiopische bosbestuur. Op basis van een kwalitatieve historische analyse en het analytische raamwerk betreffende beleidsarrangementen (PAA) legt dit hoofdstuk uit hoe de besturing van het bosbeheer zich ontwikkelde tegen de achtergrond van enerzijds de frequente politiek-economische veranderingen op nationaal niveau en anderzijds de dynamiek in de wereldwijde opvattingen over bosbestuur. De historische ontwikkeling in bosbestuur omvat zowel processen van institutionalisering en de-institutionalisering; deze processen komen tot stand als gevolg van een complex samenspel van elkaar beconcurrerende ideeën en belangen en van structurele factoren. De belangrijkste factoren en omstandigheden zijn concurrentie tussen verschillende ideële groeperingen binnen het nationale circuit van bosbeleid, macro politieke en economische veranderingen, ontwikkelingen in de aangrenzende agrarische beleidssector, het optreden van ecologische rampen in de vorm van droogtes en hongersnoden, en de dynamiek in het wereldwijde bosbeleid. Bosbouw was op nationaal niveau meestal van marginaal belang en ondergeschikt aan het dominante paradigma van landbouwonwikkeling. Toch onderging het bosbestuur sinds de jaren negentig twee belangrijke hervormingen. Enerzijds ging het hierbij om de decentralisatie van bosbestuur naar de regionale staten; deze hervorming wordt gekarakteriseerd als een ontwikkeling van meerlagig bosbestuur (*multilevel forest governance* MLFG). Anderzijds betrof het een toenemende betrokkenheid van niet-gouvernementele organisaties en lokale gemeenschappen bij de besturing; deze hervorming wordt gekarakteriseerd als een ontwikkeling in multi-actor bosbestuur (*multi-actor forest governance* MAFG).

Hoofdstuk 3 geeft een gedetailleerde analyse van de wijze waarop de MLFG hervorming tot meerlagig bosbestuur zich ontwikkelde en hoe het werd geïnstitutionaliseerd op de diverse politiek-administratieve niveaus. Het geeft specifieke aandacht aan de relatie tussen het nationale en regionale niveau. Het beschrijft tevens hoe de MLFG hervorming zich verhoudt tot de meer algemene sociaal-politieke en economische veranderingen in het land. Het hoofdstuk beschrijft, op basis van het concept van meerlagig bestuur, het PAA analytisch raamwerk en de theorie van sequentiële decentralisatie (STD), welke institutionele veranderingen gedurende de afgelopen twee decennia zijn opgetreden in het proces van het ‘oude’ gecentraliseerde bosbestuursmodel naar het ‘nieuwe’ meerlagige bosbestuursmodel. De volgende

veranderingen vonden plaats: (i) de ontwikkeling van decentralisatie als een dominante beleidsopvatting; (ii) de vertaling van deze beleidsopvatting in bindende regels betreffende de interactie tussen de verschillende administratieve niveaus; (iii) een toename in het aantal en macht van de actoren die de MLFG benadering ondersteunden; en (iv) de ontwikkeling van nieuwe capaciteit van actoren op het sub-nationale niveau tot mobilisatie van hulpmiddelen en beïnvloeding van besluitvorming. Hoewel sommige factoren binnen de bossector – zoals de groeiende ontevredenheid over het vermogen van het gecentraliseerde bosbestuursysteem om de problemen van voortgaande ontbossing aan te pakken – hebben bijgedragen aan de institutionele verandering, is de MLFG hervorming voornamelijk tot stand gekomen als gevolg van meer algemene politieke en economische hervormingen die ten grondslag lagen aan de programma's voor federalisatie en regionalisatie. Als gevolg van deze hervorming veranderde de eenheidsstaat in een federale staat en werd substantiële politieke bevoegdheid overgeheveld van de centrale overheid naar regionale overheden. De onderzoeksresultaten suggereren dat er een duidelijk verband bestaat tussen de historische setting van de diverse regionale staten en de wijze waarop de hervorming in bestuur en de daarmee gepaard gaande institutionele verandering zich ontwikkelde. Een relatieve intensieve institutionele verandering vond plaats in een staat waar de MLFG hervorming goed aansloot bij de algemene sociaal-politieke structuur en de historische wensen van de regionale actoren. In een andere regionale staat echter, waar de MLFG hervorming niet erg overeenkwam met de algemene sociaal-politieke structuur en de wensen van de regionale actoren, was de institutionele verandering veel oppervlakkiger.

Behalve door de MLFG hervorming werd het bosbestuur ook beïnvloed door de MAFG hervorming en de ontwikkeling van multi-actor bosbestuur. Deze hervorming had tot gevolg dat het aantal van niet-gouvernementele actoren in de besturing van bosbeheer toenam. Hoofdstuk 4 beschrijft deze ontwikkeling op basis van een analyse van de dynamische relatie tussen de processen van sociaal-politieke veranderingen op nationaal en internationaal niveau. Het beschrijft tevens hoe deze processen tot gevolg hadden dat niet-gouvernementele actoren een toenemende rol speelden in beleidsprocessen en welke resultaten werden geboekt sinds de jaren 1990 in de MAFG hervorming. Speciale aandacht wordt besteed aan de verschillende strategieën die werden gebruikt door niet-gouvernementele actoren bij de institutionalisering van het nieuwe besturingssysteem en de invloed daarvan op het proces van bosbeleid. Niet-gouvernementele actoren en hun organisaties (Ngo's) hebben gedurende de afgelopen twee decennia hun betrokkenheid bij en invloed op bosbeleidsontwikkeling aanzienlijk uitgebreid. Historisch gezien waren de activiteiten van Ngo's voornamelijk gericht op droogtebestrijding en milieuhervorming, maar gedurende de laatste tien jaar zijn zij ook actief geworden op het gebied van het initiëren en stimuleren van programma's op het gebied van milieubeleid. Zij introduceerde een nieuwe meer participatieve benadering in bosbestuur: de PFM benadering. Omdat de Ngo's slechts beperkte toegang hebben tot de formele beleidsprocessen van de overheid gebruikten zij met name meer informele manieren tot beïnvloeding van bosbeleid en bosregulering in de vorm van het formuleren van nieuwe zienswijzen, de ontwikkeling van sterke coalities voor het uitdragen van deze zienswijzen, het mobiliseren van de publieke opinie en lobbying bij beleidsmakers. Als gevolg van het toenemende belang en invloed van Ngo's werd de PFM benadering formeel opgenomen in de nieuwe Ethiopische boswet van 2007. De voorstanders van deze benadering zijn van oordeel dat de verdere institutionalisering van deze benadering tot betere resultaten op ecologisch, sociaal en economisch gebied zal leiden dan de conventionele staatsgestuurde benadering.

Hoofdstuk 5 geeft een kritische analyse van de praktische uitwerking van de PFM benadering op lokaal niveau. Op basis van een gedetailleerde etnografische case studie in een gebied waar de benadering

oorspronkelijk werd ingevoerd beschrijft dit hoofdstuk de relatie tussen de praktische uitvoering van deze benadering en de gevolgen voor de lokale sociale omstandigheden en voor bosbeheer. Deze lokale studie vond plaats in een dorp waar de PFM benadering gedurende bijna twee decennia gezamenlijk werd uitgevoerd door Ngo's en overheidsorganisaties. De toepassing van de PFM benadering was gebaseerd op het uitgangspunt dat er op lokaal niveau een robuuste institutioneel arrangement tot stand moest worden gebracht op basis waarvan het lokale bosbeheer op duurzame wijze georganiseerd kon worden. Op basis van dit uitgangspunt werd er een nieuwe dorpscoöperatie voor bosbeheer opgericht. Daarbij werd uitgegaan van theorieën over bosbeheer als een gemeenschappelijke activiteit en van internationale voorbeelden van de beste praktijken. De case studie toont aan dat er een discrepantie bestaat tussen de formele criteria voor institutionele vormgeving van de lokale beheerorganisatie en de werkelijke praktijk van het beheer. De manier waarop het beheer werd uitgevoerd werd niet zozeer bepaald door de institutionele principes die ten grondslag lagen aan de PFM benadering en de daarop gebaseerde nieuw ingevoerde regelgeving, maar door de lokale uitvoeringspraktijk. Deze werd in sterke mate bepaald door lokale historische en culturele omstandigheden. Deze bevindingen geven aan dat zelfs in het geval dat PFM institutioneel zorgvuldig wordt vormgegeven deze benadering vaak niet in staat is om de lokale logica en praktijken, die primair gebaseerd zijn op de politiek-historische ervaringen van de lokale actoren, te veranderen.

Hoofdstuk 6 presenteert de algemene conclusies van de studie en een reflectie daarop. Het eerste gedeelte betreft een discussie over de empirische resultaten. Hierbij wordt aandacht besteed aan de voornaamste manifestaties van de dynamiek in de besturing van bosbeheer in Ethiopië en de onderliggende processen van continuïteit en verandering. Daarna volgt een reflectie op het theoretische raamwerk van de studie en de onderzoeksmethodologie. Het laatste deel omvat de algemene conclusies van de studie. Deze luiden als volgt: (1) Hoewel het historische proces van bosbestuur in Ethiopië gelijkenis vertoont met de internationale trends in bosbestuur, werd de dynamiek in de bossector primair bepaald door de politiek-economische prioriteit die werd gegeven aan landbouwontwikkeling. (2) In tegenstelling tot veel andere landen waar de hervorming naar gedecentraliseerd bosbestuur het resultaat was van externe invloeden van de internationale gemeenschap, was het Ethiopische hervormingsproces naar meerlagig (MLFG) bosbestuur voornamelijk gebaseerd op interne politieke en administratieve overwegingen gerelateerd aan de nationale programma's van federalisatie en regionalisatie. Afhankelijk van de mate waarin de hervormingen in de bosbouwsector overeen kwamen met de algemene sociaal-politieke processen en de historische ambities van de regionale actoren kan het proces van decentralisatie in bosbestuur een zeer verschillende uitkomst hebben op regionaal niveau. (3) In landen zoals Ethiopië waar pluriforme politieke processen nog niet sterk ontwikkeld zijn, kunnen Ngo's toch invloed hebben op beleidsontwikkeling: indien de formele weg naar participatie in beleidsontwikkeling gebrekkig is, kunnen Ngo's de beleidsontwikkeling op informele wijze stimuleren. (4) De toepassing van participatie methoden voor bosbeheer kan niet eenduidig afgeleid worden van de ideeën die ten grondslag liggen aan beleidsbenaderingen en institutionele regelgeving, maar zijn sterk geworteld in de lokale historische en culturele omstandigheden. (5) De combinatie van verschillende analytische benaderingen in de vorm van de beleidsarrangementen (PAA) benadering, de sequentiële decentralisatie (STD) benadering en de praktijk-georiënteerde benadering is meer geschikt voor het begrijpen van de genuanceerde realiteit van de dynamiek in bosbestuur in Ethiopië dan de conventionele benaderingen gebaseerd op theorieën over rationele keuzes en institutionele vormgeving.

About the author

Alemayehu Negassa Ayana was born on 14 January 1977 in East Wollega, Oromiya national regional state, Ethiopia. After completing his secondary education at Gidda Senior Secondary High School, he joined Alemaya University of Agriculture (now renamed Haramaya University) in September 1994 and graduated with a BSc degree (with distinction) in forestry in July 1998. In the same year, he joined Oromiya Bureau of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources, and worked as a Forestry Expert and subsequently as a Project Coordinator of Megada State Forest (now part of Oromiya Forest and Wildlife Enterprise). He then joined the Forestry Research Centre of the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) as a Research Assistant. In this capacity, he assisted and partly designed and implemented forestry and natural resource management-related research projects in different parts of Ethiopia.

With a scholarship from the Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP-NUFFIC), Alemayehu joined Wageningen University in 2003. He obtained a Master of Science Degree (cum laude) in Forest and Nature Conservation Policy and Economics in 2005. His MSc research dealt with understanding and addressing institutional factors that affect collective action and sustainable management of common property resources, with a particular emphasis to participatory forest management.

After successfully completing the MSc programme in 2005, Alemayehu continued working for EIAR and served the institute in different capacities including Associate Researcher in policy and economic aspects of natural resource management and National Agroforestry Research Project Coordinator. The main tasks in the latter post include coordinating and providing leadership for all agroforestry research projects both at federal and national regional state level, providing technical support to the federal agroforestry research and extension network, and assisting in the development of guidelines, manuals, and training materials relating to agroforestry. In addition to his duties and responsibilities at EIAR, Alemayehu was involved in professional activities through presentations of scientific papers at workshops and conferences, active participation in different professional associations, and providing consultancy services to various national and international organizations in the field of agroforestry, non-timber forest products, participatory forest management, and economic and policy analysis on forest and nature conservation.

In September 2009, Alemayehu joined Wageningen University to pursue a PhD study – under the supervision of Professor Bas Arts, Associate Professor Freerk Wiersum, and Professor Arun Agrawal (from University of Michigan) – that resulted in this dissertation. His PhD research focused on understanding how forest governance has developed and been practiced in Ethiopia over the past five decades. His current research interests are: governing sustainable use and management of forest landscape (and biodiversity) resources and enhancing the role of agroforestry in food security, livelihood improvement, and environmental resilience.

List of Publications

Peer-reviewed publications

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Name of the learning activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS*
A) Project related competences			
FNP research seminar and proposal presentation	FNP	2009-2010	3
Writing research proposal	FNP	2010	3
Participatory forest management as practice and performance	FNP Summer school	2011	3
"The dynamics and trends of the 'new' forest governance in Ethiopia: lessons from the policy practices of the last two decades"	Ethiopian Forestry Society (EFS)	2012	1
Executive education course on sustainable development diplomacy	Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of Tufts University, WUR, and the Sustainability Challenge Foundation	2013	0.5
B) General research related competences			
Research Methodology I: From topic to proposal	WASS	2010	4
Institutions and Resources: Theory and Methods Research Seminar	University of Michigan	2010	8
YRM-60806 Qualitative data analysis	YRM-WUR	2009	6
ENP-35306 Political Theory	ENP-WUR	2009	6
C) Career related competences/personal development			
Scientific writing	WGS	2013	1.8
End note/ library	WGS	2010	1.5
Supervision of MSc-thesis	FNP- Erasmus Mundus Program	2012	1
Total (30 - 45 ECTS)			38.8

*One credit according to ECTS is on average equivalent to 28 hours of study load

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