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Access to forest resources and forest-based livelihoods in highland Kafa, Ethiopia : a resource management perspective

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**ACCESS TO FOREST RESOURCES AND FOREST-BASED LIVELIHOODS  
IN HIGHLAND KAFA, ETHIOPIA:  
A RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE**

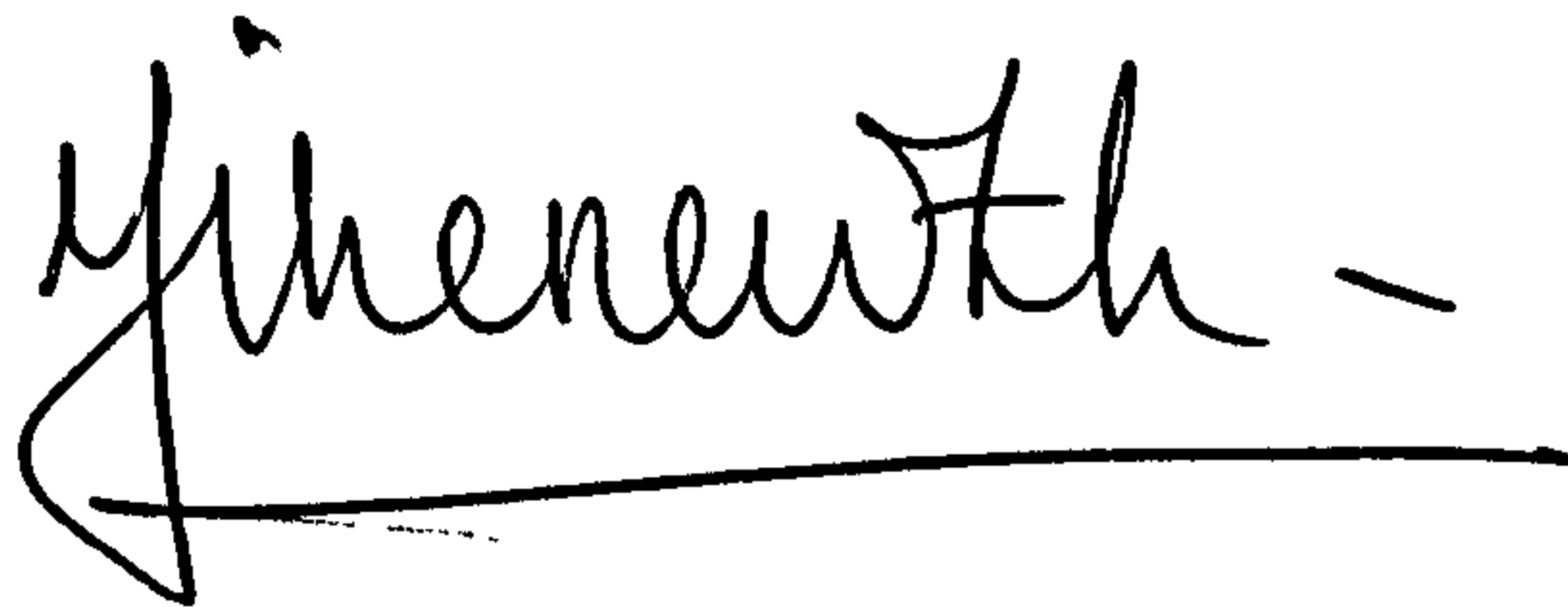
**Yihenew Zewdie**

**A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**August 2002**

**Declaration**

I declare that no material in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yinewuth". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a long, straight horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved nephews and nieces, who have always ensured that I saw their school report cards and aired my views on their academic performance. This work is dedicated to them in a spirit of reciprocity!



## **Abstract**

### **Access to forest resources and forest-based livelihoods in highland Kafa, Ethiopia: a resource management perspective**

**Yihenew Zewdie**

Ethiopia's forest resource base, which is mostly found in the southwestern highlands, supports a multitude of agricultural production systems. However, similar to the trend in other parts of the developing world, deforestation has taken a heavy toll in this part of Ethiopia. Cognisant of this, recently policies and strategies have been devised that emphasise the need for citizens' participation in natural forest management. Yet, in Ethiopia there is little field-based analytical literature that throws light on the stake that villagers have in forest resources and the workings of local level forest access channels.

Against this backdrop, the research examines state-community and intra-community relationships in the course of accessing forest resources under governments of widely differing political persuasions, and investigates the current importance of forests to the local household economy. This is achieved through a case study of six forest communities in a rural district of highland Kafa, southwest Ethiopia. The study employs a time line approach to trace the evolution of state-community interactions in the provision and administration of forest tenure at the local level. To this end, the research has examined the political history of Kafa and the land management policies of successive Ethiopian governments that had a bearing on local forest access and use. The broader themes of the research are informed by the literature on natural resource tenure establishment and household level forest use in agrarian systems and the discourse on management regimes in common pool resources.

The research has established that throughout much of Kafa's history forests were accessed through customary tenure principles. However, following Kafa's incorporation into the Ethiopian State the central government became an important organ of forest allocation, and this situation favoured outsiders and local notables in acquiring private forest rights. The 1975 Land Reform decree extinguished all such claims, bestowed the State with exclusive land ownership rights, and created grassroots Peasant Associations (PAs) with a wide range of land administration roles. The PAs in some localities allocated village forests to rural households. Crucially, though, the State used its land ownership prerogatives to impose a range of measures that went contrary to the forest access interests of the local people.

Formal state tenure notwithstanding, traditional principles and channels of forest access such as territoriality, patrilineal descent, and share cropping continue to play critical roles in the local tenure scene. These locally tailored mechanisms also command the protection and enforcement to which other formally recognised forest access channels have been accorded. The factors that permitted the co-existence of formal and informal means of access have also called for the involvement of traditional community-based organisations (CBOs) alongside state sponsored ones in the mediation of local access provision and dispute settlement.

The empirical analysis underscores that local people stake forest resources with the view to producing forest goods, which are found to be important livelihood resources. Forest dependency, however, reflects the socio-economic differentiation existing in the study communities. The operational implications which the research draws are based primarily on the observed high degree of dependence of local people on the forest for their livelihoods and the communal ethos that characterise forest access provision and tenure enforcement.

Finally, the influence of past patterns of access principles on the current situation; the divergent outcomes of the forest use process; and the local importance of forest goods has enabled the research to identify issues that would enrich the discourse on common property theory. These centre on the relevance of 'stewardship' in the study of resource access; the utility of examining inter-CBO interactions in the analysis of CPR access and management; the need to look beyond the 'tragedy'/'comedy' dichotomy in the conceptualisation of resource management outcomes; and the desirability of re-orienting the discourse on CPR analysis towards development ideals contained in the notion of 'the sustainable community'.



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**Glossary of Ethiopian terms**

<i>Akgni abat</i>	Indigene of an area; the term is usually applied in connection with the <i>Rist</i> system of northern Ethiopia.
<i>Alamo</i>	Spirit medium in Kafa. See also <i>Qallu</i> .
<i>Aleqa</i>	A senior partner in group-based land acquisition procedures of post WWII Ethiopia. See <i>Aleqa-Minzir</i> .
<i>Aleqa-Minzir</i>	A system of group-based and <i>gasha</i> -sized land ownership where land taxes are paid in the name of one person, usually a senior member of the lineage ( <i>Aleqa</i> ), representing other co-owners ( <i>Minzir</i> ), who often were his siblings or close relatives.
<i>Awraja</i>	An intermediate tier of government that had been in use during much of the Imperial era and under the <i>Derg</i> . ‘Province’ can be thought of as its nearest equivalent.
<i>Balambaras</i>	A low level administrative title in Imperial Ethiopia.
<i>Birr</i>	Ethiopian currency (in July 2002, 1USD was approximately 8.57 <i>Birr</i> ).
<i>Chiqashum</i>	The village chief in Imperial Ethiopia, whose office served as a community-level administrative tier.
<i>Daado</i>	A traditional work party involving reciprocal exchange of labour.
<i>Deboo</i>	A non-reciprocal traditional work party.
<i>Dejo</i>	A traditional thanks-giving ceremony among farmers in Kafa.
<i>Derg</i>	The military government that ruled Ethiopia from 1974-1991 under different institutional forms.
<i>Dubio</i>	Tribute exacting authority which the Kafa kings (and, in some measure, the post-conquest Imperial Ethiopian government) gave to members of the Kaffecho nobility.
<i>Enset</i>	<i>Ensete ventricosum</i> : a long-maturing root crop grown in middle elevations of southern Ethiopia. The <i>enset</i> tree offers flour rich in starch.
<i>Gacheukiro</i>	A Kaffecho owner of a <i>gasha</i> of land. <i>Gacheukiros</i> had also some quasi-administrative duties in Imperial Ethiopia.
<i>Gasha</i>	A unit of land measurement (c. 40 hectares or 100 acres).
<i>Gebbaro</i>	Tribute-paying peasant in Kafa.
<i>Gebreterel</i>	A term designating an area of land over which tax had not been paid pursuant to the land tax policies of the post-WWII Imperial Ethiopian government.
<i>Gedafo</i>	Close kinsmen of <i>Dubio</i> right holders who had been assigned to work under the latter as part of the post-conquest policy of co-opting Kaffecho nobility.
<i>Gimet-zellel</i>	A term designating any land in excess of the size for which the owner had paid tax pursuant to the land tax policies of the post-WWII Imperial Ethiopian government.

<i>Girazmach</i>	'Commander of the left', a politico-military title above <i>Balambaras</i> .
<i>Gogoo</i>	A share cropping arrangement that stipulates 'equal' sharing of both the production inputs and the harvest among the partners.
<i>Gult</i>	Land given to a nobleman (or soldiers in southern Ethiopia) to administer, against a right to tax peasants in Imperial Ethiopia.
<i>Gumbo</i>	A supra-clan integrative principle in ancient Kafa that binds together lower and upper clan community members.
<i>Ibedegoda</i>	The chief spirit medium in highland Kafa.
<i>Idir</i>	Village-based and farmer-led socio-territorial organisation with a wide range of social functions.
<i>Kaffecho</i>	A person from Kafa in southwest Ethiopia.
<i>Kebele</i>	Conveys the meaning of a local community. Under the <i>Derg</i> , the concept of <i>Kebele</i> (in rural localities) came to be associated with the area within a Peasant Association (PA). From the mid-1990s onwards several PAs merged to form <i>Kebele</i> Administration. The spatial domains of former PAs are now regarded as sub- <i>Kebeles</i> .
<i>Kebele Administration</i>	The lowest administrative tier in (rural) Ethiopia.
<i>Kella</i>	Toll-post.
<i>Lem/tef/lem-tef</i>	Land classification categories referring, respectively, to farmland, forested land, and semi-converted land.
<i>Maderia</i>	Land in lieu of salary.
<i>Manjo</i>	A group of people believed to be among the original inhabitants of the Kafa area, southwest Ethiopia. Manjos are ethnic Kaffechos whom other indigenous community members despise on account of their "unclean feeding habits", among others.
<i>Mikrecho</i>	A seven member council that advised the Kafa kings.
<i>Minzir</i>	A junior partner in group-based land acquisition procedures of post WWII Ethiopia. See <i>Aleqa-Minzir</i> .
<i>Oromo</i>	The largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. According to the 1994 census, the <i>Oromo</i> constitute 32.2 per cent of the country's population.
<i>Outo</i>	A mechanism of justice administration used in Kafa to screen out crime suspects.
<i>Qallu</i>	Spirit medium among the Oromo.
<i>Quter gebbar</i>	A system of allocating tribute exacting authority to Emperor Menilik's lower level officials and soldiers commensurate with their rank and status.
<i>Ras</i>	The highest traditional title next to King.
<i>Rist</i>	A lineage system of land access that gave usufruct rights to the claimant during Imperial Ethiopia.
<i>Semon</i>	Land whose income accrued to a local church.

Sub-Kebele	See <i>Kebele</i> .
Tef	See <i>Lem/tef/lem-tef</i> .
Teff	<i>Eragrostis teff</i> . small-seeded grain, endemic to Ethiopia; staple crop in most urban areas and northern Ethiopia.
Timad	A measure of land (c. 0.25 ha).
Warwaro	Name given in Kafa to Emperor Menilik's warriors of northern origin.
Wejoo	a grant of land resource made by fathers to their sons.
Woreda	Administrative unit in (rural) Ethiopia which often is used interchangeably with 'District'. It is the unit above <i>Kebele</i> Administration.
Yemengist meret	State land.
Zone	An intermediate administrative tier in the post- <i>Derg</i> period, which is below the level of Regional State and above that of <i>Woreda</i> .



**List of abbreviations and acronyms**

ADLI	Agricultural-Development-Led Industrialisation
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BFCDP	Bonga Forest Conservation and Development Project
BNFPA	Bonga National Forest Priority Area
BoF	Bureau of Finance (Regional State level)
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resources Management
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CFR	Common Forest Resource
CFWCP	Community Forest and Wildlife Conservation Project
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CPR	Common Pool Resource
CSA	Central Statistical Authority
CV	Coefficient of Variation
DA	Development Agent
DAKS	The Development Association of Kafa-Sheka.
DoA	Department of Agriculture (Zonal level)
DoTIT	Department of Trade, Industry and Tourism (Zonal level)
DoF	Department of Finance (Zonal level)
DTCC	Development Through Co-operation Campaign
EARO	Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organisation
EDP	Ethiopians' Democratic Party
EEF	Environmental Entitlements Framework
EFAP	Ethiopian Forestry Action Programme
EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EVDSA	Ethiopian Valleys' Development Studies Authority
EWNHS	Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FARM Africa	Food and Agricultural Research Management - Africa

FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FHH	Female-headed household
FPDC	Forest Protection and Development Committee
FWCDA	Forests and Wildlife Conservation and Development Authority
GO/NGO	Governmental Organisation/ Non-Governmental Organisation
ha	Hectare
HH	Household; Household head (HHH)
IBCR	Institute for Biodiversity Conservation and Research
IEG	Imperial Ethiopian Government
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
JARC	Jimma Agricultural Research Centre
JFM	Joint Forest Management
KA	<i>Kebele</i> Administration
km	Kilometre
KPSC	<i>Kebele</i> Peace and Stability Committee
KSC	<i>Kebele</i> Social Court
KSZ-AC	Kafa-Sheka Zone Administrative Council
KSZ-CO	Kafa-Sheka Zone Co-operatives' Office
KSZ-DoA	Kafa-Sheka Zone Department of Agriculture
KSZ-DoPED	Kafa-Sheka Zone Department of Planning and Economic Development
MEDaC	Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operation
masl	Metre Above Sea Level
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoCTD	Ministry of Coffee and Tea Development.
MoNRDEP	Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection
MoPED	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
MoWR	Ministry of Water Resources
NCS	National Conservation Strategy
NFPA	National Forest Priority Area
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product

NWFP	Non-Wood Forest Product
PA	Peasant Association
PADETES	Participatory Demonstration and Training Extension System
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council
PMGSE	Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SNNPRS	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Regional State
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TLU	Tropical Livestock Unit
WBISPP	Woody Biomass Inventory and Strategic Planning Project
WIC	Walta Information Centre
WTDE	Wushwush Tea Development Enterprise
WWII	Second World War

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Overview**

This is a study about farmers' experiences with natural resource tenure and forest use. Specifically, the research examines state-community and intra-community relationships in the course of accessing forest resources under governments of widely differing political persuasions and investigates the current importance of forests in the local household economy. The research has a focus on agrarian systems, hinges on data collected from a forested sub-region in southwest Ethiopia and employs a social science perspective in its deliberations.

Section two of this chapter sets the scene by providing a synopsis of the state of forest resources worldwide and proceeds to introduce the broader academic context within which the research is pursued. Section three outlines the aims and objectives of the thesis. Section four explores the record of research on land matters in Ethiopia and locates a niche for the present study. The final section provides an overview of the organisation of the thesis.

## **1.2 Background**

### **1.2.1 The forest resource base worldwide**

The natural environment provides human beings with a wide range of economically valuable assets and priceless life support services. Forests are one such complex and multifunctional assets. Forests cover an estimated 3,870 million ha, which is about 30 per cent of the earth's land area. Of this almost 95 per cent are natural forests and 5 per cent are forest plantations. Tropical and sup-tropical forests comprise 56 per cent of the world's forests. Africa has some 650 million ha of land under natural forests (642 million ha) and forest plantations (8 million ha), which together account for 22 per cent of its land area and 17 per cent of world's forests (FAO 2001).

Forests render a multitude of climatic, ecosystem and socio-economic services. They provide invaluable environmental services in the local, regional and global natural systems. At local levels forests have important watershed protection functions. In high rainfall areas they retard surface run off, help mitigate soil erosion and enhance the hydrological regime. Forests and trees, particularly on mountain slopes, help prevent landslides, avalanches and flooding. Forests have also significant roles in carbon sequestration; hence, they are instrumental in improving air



quality and regulating climates. It has been estimated that forests contain about 53 per cent of the 1.2 billion tonnes of carbon found in terrestrial vegetation and soil (FAO 2001).

Equally, forests are repositories of biological diversity. It is reported that "half of the world's biological diversity is contained in forests and that probably more than four-fifths of many groups of plants and animals are found in tropical forests" (FAO 2001). The resulting natural biota helps, among others, to degrade wastes, recycle nutrients, and pollinate crops and natural vegetation, thereby engendering sustainable agriculture and forest development (Pimentel *et al.* 1997: 110). The role of animal species in pollen transfer and seed dispersal is a vital element in respect of sustainable resource use in tropical forests (Peters 1996: 24-25). Furthermore, tropical forests, in particular, are believed to be storehouses of undiscovered pharmaceuticals (Peters 1996: 23). These forests also serve as sanctuaries for the multitude of wild animals that are of considerable educational and tourism value worldwide.

Forests are also important livelihood resources. According to Pimentel *et al.* (1997) "[w]orld forests directly or indirectly supply the food for an estimated 200-300 million people annually" (91-92), and it is intimated that the bulk of this population resides in the developing countries. At the international level the annual value of trade in gathered forest resources such as fruits, nuts and similar tree products accounts for at least USD 11 billion, while "the general direction of the trade is from developing to developed countries" (Iqbal, cited in Ndoye *et al.* 1997: 3). Forest resources are also vital for meeting industrial roundwood demands, which in turn are triggered by the need to produce sawnwood, panels, pulp, and paper. It is estimated that "about 80 per cent of the industrial roundwood is produced and consumed in the developed countries" (Sharma 1992: 24). It is also worth noting that, in a number of industrialised countries local forests are valued sources of other products such as mushrooms and berries, both for home use and for the market (McLain and Jones 1997: 6-7; Saastamoinen 1999; Olmos 1999). Forests are also generators of revenues for governments' worldwide and profits for national and international companies engaged in the timber trade.

Often, however, utilisation objectives tend to override the socio-economic and environmental significance of the forest resource base. Particularly in the tropics deforestation has taken a heavy toll. For instance, during the 1990s the extent of deforestation in the tropics was 12.3 million ha per annum, (FAO 2001). The tropics are largely made up of less industrialised societies, and the causes for heavy deforestation in these countries are many and varied. In general, these range from natural calamities (e.g. fire hazard owing mainly to changing weather patterns) to destructive agricultural and forestry practices. The latter are considered to be the

commonest and the greatest threat to forest resources in the developing world (Jepma 1995: 64; Mather 1990: 247-248).

One of the most relevant consequences of unsustainable forest use practices is their incompatibility with the diverse use of the natural environment, thereby adversely affecting the delicate balance between local economic interests, environmental functions and global biodiversity concerns. In the short to medium term, the burden of forest degradation is apt to weigh more on the world's poor who, as indicated earlier, depend most on such resources for their survival. This notwithstanding, the available evidence suggests that in much of the developing world attempts and interventions aimed at counteracting forest decline and the associated natural resource depletion have for the most part been less than satisfactory (FAO 2001).

In the following section, the conceptual foundations of the dominant policy responses informing forest and other natural resource management activities are outlined and their limitations sketched. These provide the perspective from which the present research should be seen.

### **1.2.2 A prelude to the academic context of the present research**

Historically, policy and research interest in the tropical forests has focused on wood and related dimensions of forest use. Other forest products of local subsistence importance were given marginal attention and this is reflected in their characterisation as minor forest products (Arnold and Perez 1996: 2; Jepma 1995: 31). This bias is not unique to the forestry sector; the tradition of natural resource management in general is noted for its emphasis on single-species and commodity-orientation and for viewing traditional resource users as "sources of constraints and demands on the system" (McCay 2000: 1-2).

It is worth noting that natural resource management has for the most part been the province of technical foresters and other natural scientists who consider themselves as the sole guardians of the physical environment (Buttoud 1997: 45; FAO 1993b: 90; Grandin 1987: 203; Jepma 1995: 62; Smith 1994). The philosophical foundations of ecological sciences, with which the above professionals are most familiar, have been built upon "notions of equilibrium, balance, harmony and functional order" (Leach *et al.* 1997a: 12). Consequently, in much of Africa forest policy and practice has been informed by the assumption of linear vegetation decline over time that the subject of ecology offered, with little or no application of social science insights in the analysis of factors accounting for landscape changes (Buttoud 1997; Leach *et al.* 1997a: 12; see also McCay 2000). Furthermore, over the years, the aesthetic beauty of the African wilderness and the significant ecological functions it renders on the one hand and the recurrence of droughts and famines on the other have been subjects of scholarly interest and media attention (Harrison



1987). An enduring outcome of these has been the sense of urgency they instilled towards rescuing degraded landscapes as well as in protecting the greenery from degenerating into the Saharan-like deserts (Leach and Mearns 1996b: 2).

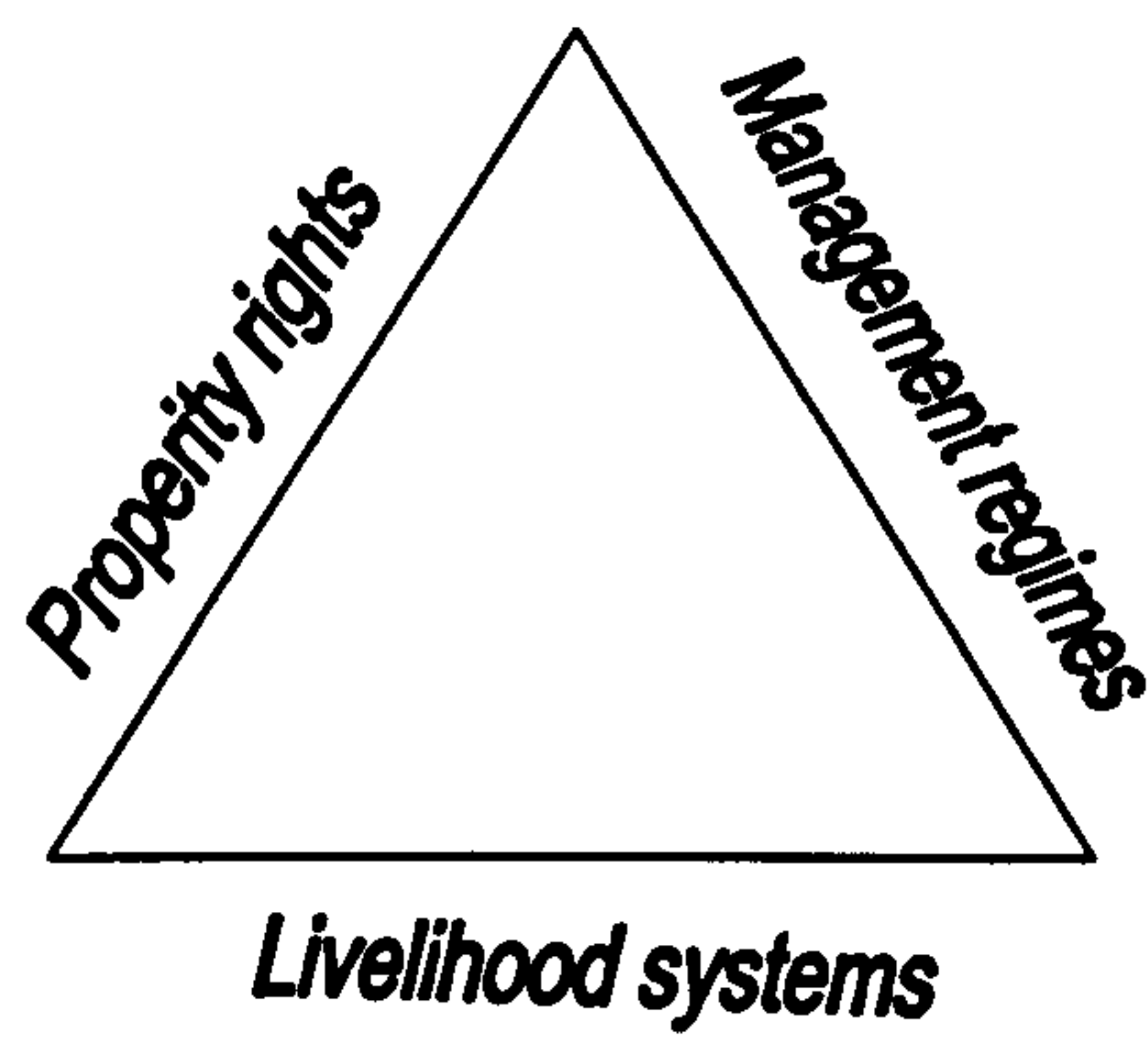
As a result, 'rehabilitation' of degraded landscapes was conceived as a mission to restore a "spoiled Eden" and, in soil conservation and related schemes, this resulted in a strong emphasis on the establishment of supposedly high-impact physical structures (Hoben 1996: 196). Yeraswork (2000) has shown that two decades of such land reclamation activities in Ethiopia, where one of the largest environmental rehabilitation programme anywhere in Africa was implemented, neither met their environmental objectives nor mitigated farmers' predicaments. In particular, the afforestation and soil conservation schemes took little cognisance of the particular circumstances of the farmer and the expected agricultural technology transfer failed to materialise.

In better endowed regions of Africa and elsewhere in the developing world, the drive towards nature conservation led to the "imposition of wilderness", as exemplified in the creation of game reserves, national parks, and state forests, that were to be free from anthropogenic pressures (Neumann 1998). In other words, in Africa, nature preservation via the protected area scheme has been pursued at the cost of indigenous people's resource use rights and livelihoods, prompting several environmental activists and practitioners to see this not only as a development problem but also a human rights issue (see, for instance, Lane 1998). While several initiatives have been made to reconcile local peoples' needs and resource conservation imperatives in protected areas, close observers are, however, doubtful of the contributions of these schemes to conservation or to development. An underlying reason for this is the lack of adequate familiarity of the professional resource managers with the tools of perceptive socio-economic analysis and resource management planning (Shepherd *et al.* 1999).

The multiple jeopardy to which natural resources in Africa have been subjected has prompted a growing number of scholars to call for a fresh look at the history and governance of the African environment. Some have advocated the need to assess the validity of old certainties held about the continent's natural environment through empirical research, bearing in mind the specificity of lessons to be learnt from such an endeavour (see, for example, Batterbury and Bebbington 1999; Leach and Mearns 1996a). They underscore the fact that any resource management and/or ecosystem rehabilitation action ought to be preceded by a thorough examination of area-specific reasons behind the issues, including the socio-historical processes at work. In particular, social foresters and tenure specialists have underlined the necessity of understanding people's rights in land and the incentive structure for land use in the quest for effective natural resource

management (Bruce *et al.* 1993; Brown 1999; Wily 2000). These concerns can be illustrated diagrammatically as follows (Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1: Perspectives in resource analysis**



Thus, recent trends in resource analysis emphasise the relevance of understanding the nature and adequacy of local people’s resource rights, the livelihood opportunities these resources generate and the management systems in place to ensure the longevity of the resource base. This thesis explores the research on the above themes further in Chapters Two and Three through a review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature.

The above voices are integral parts of a wider movement in academic and development circles towards a more pragmatic view of the workings of the natural resource sector in the developing world. In this regard, the mid-1990s saw a proliferation of resource management models that tested earlier theoretical advances in natural resource analysis. At the same time, innovative schemes and projects provided insights to yet more advances in the discourse on natural resource management. The combined effect of these and related global deliberations, such as the 1992 Rio Conference on the Environment, has been to influence donors and national governments to examine critically their natural resource and environmental support policies in line with the new dispensation. However, the diversity of situations within which natural resources are accessed and used as well as the multiplicity of factors affecting these processes has made the search for conceptual clarity an important engagement and the crafting of informed policies and strategies all the more essential. The present research attempts to track the wider academic path that this tradition paved.



### **1.3 Aims and objectives of the research**

The research has two interrelated aims. Firstly, it aims at exploring local people's experience with forest access and the significance of forest resources in their livelihoods. Within this context, the research identifies and analyses the role of such principal institutions as the State, the family, community management bodies, production-based institutions, and the market in the conferral, protection, and/or promotion of local forest access rights and villagers' forest livelihood interests. Secondly, the research seeks to draw out policy implications and broader conceptual lessons for the adoption of resource management approaches that take into account the interests of resource uses and users. These aims are achieved through a case study of six forest communities in a rural district of highland Kafa, southwest Ethiopia. The specific objectives of the research are:

1. to examine the historical evolution of access to forest resources and study their longer term influences;
2. to analyse the current formal and informal mechanisms of access to forest resources and assess state-community as well as inter- and intra-household interactions in the forest tenure scene;
3. to investigate the organisational bases of forest access enforcement and dispute settlement at the local level and examine the efficacy of the forest governance system;
4. to study the current local uses of forests and associated production practices and explore their tenurial, management, and livelihood ramifications; and, on the basis of the above empirical deliberations,
5. to draw out operational implications for forest management in the Ethiopian context, and
6. to contribute to the discourse on the social dimension of resource analysis and management.

### **1.4 Significance of the research**

The rural land holding systems that prevailed in historical Ethiopia have been one of the most attractive subjects for empirical analysis by anthropologists, historians and other students of Ethiopian development. However, compared with the interest shown in the northern parts of the country, where the grain-plough system of cultivation is of long-standing, publications dealing with analysis of land rights within the context of the southwest were conspicuous by their absence. The latter houses a multiplicity of farming systems and most of the country's natural forests. In the early 1990s, following a change of government and the attendant reorientation of the country's economic policies, the desire to inform possible land policy changes has prompted academics, rural specialists and government technical experts to examine topics such as access rights to land resources, resource management and tenure reform options. Most of these works

were later published (Dessaiegn 1994a). As in the past, much of the above and related research drew on case materials from the central and northern parts of the country and to a lesser extent from pastoralist and agro-pastoralist systems found in southern and eastern areas (*cf.* Dessaiegn 1994a; Dessaiegn 1995). However, none of them dealt with the issue of access to land resources in the context of Ethiopia's forested regions.

All in all, there is little field-based and publicly available research that throws light on the stake which villagers have in forest resources and the rights that shape these interests. It is curious to note here that, in much of the literature on environment and agricultural development in Ethiopia, forest destruction is always seen in terms of lost food grain production, to the utter neglect of the impact these may have on forest-based livelihoods (*cf.* Taye 1999). It appears, therefore, that the dynamics and workings of local level access to and uses of forest resources in Ethiopia's most wooded regions are still poorly understood academic subjects. For sometime now, the Ethiopian State has been undergoing a fundamental rethinking of the ways in which land resources should be managed. Evidently, in an ecologically and sociologically diverse country such as Ethiopia, crafting of effective land/natural resource policy packages stands to benefit from informed debates on farmer-level natural resource access experiences across a wide spectrum of situations. The value of empirical research in this regard cannot be overemphasised.

### **1.5 Organisation of the thesis**

The remainder of the thesis is organised as follows. Chapter Two discusses analytical categories and empirical experiences pertaining to property rights, forest use systems and rural livelihoods. Chapter Three examines the different strands of thought developed to analyse the management of natural resources and is enriched by insights from recent theoretical advances in livelihood-oriented environmental analysis. This chapter then concludes by providing a synthesis of the overall theoretical underpinnings of the study.

Chapter Four provides a general background to the study sub-region, Kafa-Sheka Zone. Chapter Five presents the nature, type and source of field data collected and the relevance of the same to the research problem investigated. Chapter Six discusses the socio-economic and physical features of the case study sites.

Against the above background, from Chapters Seven to Ten the empirical results are analysed. In particular, Chapter Seven outlines forest tenure experiences from a historical perspective, examines the effects of state tenure in land resources on local forest access, and assesses the roles of state-sponsored organisations in tenure enforcement and forest governance. Chapter Eight goes beyond the influence of formal land laws and explores the workings of family-centred

forest access mechanisms and culture-bound tenure enforcement experiences. Continuing with the theme of 'informal access', in Chapter Nine forest production practices are detailed and their tenurial significance assessed, giving particular emphasis to the role of locally concluded share cropping arrangements in forest goods production and marketing. In Chapter Ten the livelihood importance of forest products across the different sample household categories is explored. The analysis of the data in this chapter throws light both on the financial stake that rural households have in village forest resources as well as the implications of forest dependency for forest management endeavours.

Chapter Eleven synthesises the empirical findings and, in light of the conceptual framework of the research and the context within which forest production activities have been pursued, draws out operational and theoretical implications that are of relevance to the quest for community-based and livelihoods-oriented resource management modalities. Finally, Chapter Twelve concludes by providing a reflective overview of the research process and its findings as well as the types of further relevant research work that need to be undertaken.



## **2. Property rights in natural resources and common forest resource use**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the conceptual background for the study of access to forest resources and local level forest uses. It develops the research themes outlined in Chapter One and seeks to contextualise the discussion through examining the economic significance of forest resources in rural agrarian production systems. The point of departure for this chapter is the emphasis many resource use analysts give to the critical role of the legal-social context of land rights in determining economic behaviour in general and natural resource use in particular.

The remainder of the discussion is organised into five sections. The next section outlines the importance of understanding land rights in the discourse on natural resource analysis and provides a case for complementing tenurial considerations with livelihood analysis. Section three furnishes operational definitions of some basic concepts pertaining to land rights, and locates these analytical categories to a particular class of resource systems called *common pool resources* that are of direct relevance in understanding forest use. Section four details the tenurial context within which natural resources are accessed and the privileges protected. The fifth section gives a livelihood content to the discussion by illustrating the workings of forest use systems in agrarian societies. Section six draws together the issues raised in the chapter.

### **2.2 The relevance of the conceptual background to the research objectives**

One FAO (1995) document underlines the necessity of obtaining answers to the following queries before embarking on any form of forest management intervention: "Who owns the resource? Who has the right to use the resource? What restrictions apply to management?" (2). In the same vein, Bruce and Fortmann (1988) argue that "[g]roups and individuals have distinctly proprietary attitudes about resources, attitudes that may or may not receive formal recognition but which actually affect behaviour" (1). According to Pearse (1993) an adequate understanding of access rules in forest use systems is the "linchpin" that helps unravel the nature of rights and obligations of users and the existence or otherwise of restrictions on their activities (81). In short, access rules and conventions could create, constrain or distort the incentives that govern forest use decisions and "there are important causal relationships between rights in natural resources and the patterns of their use and abuse" (Bruce and Fortmann 1988: 1).

In predominantly agrarian societies, such as those in Africa, rights to land resources are said to touch upon all aspects of rural life and are regarded as "a prime source of social position and

power” (Birgegard 1993: 3). Moreover, it has been established that the land holding system provides the context within which forest resources are accessed and used, and that land relations govern the interest people have in forest management (Wily 2000). A study of resource access in such a setting is bound to throw light on intra-community relations and power distribution both at village and at household levels (Batterbury and Bebbington 1999: 282). This in turn goes a long way in assessing the social dimensions of resource use and the changes in the physical landscape. Moreover, understanding land rights is a vital ingredient for exploring the nature of government-community interactions in rural Africa as the State has considerable interests in land resources (Birgegard 1993: 5). From a planning point of view, a clear articulation of the factors affecting household land and resource use rights is of central importance in predicting the likely effects of forest sector policy developments, programme interventions and/or planned changes in the structure of property relations (Bruce and Fortmann 1988: 6).

Any empirical analysis concerned with the socio-economic dimensions of natural resource use should, however, go beyond issues of land rights. Indeed, knowledge of the resource base and a closer understanding of local uses of the resource represent the essential conditions for establishing appropriate resource management modalities (FAO 1995: 19). Two main reasons are advanced for this. “First, successful improvements in forest management usually resemble and build on traditional activities already practised in the area. Second, if innovators do not understand local practices and know which local groups rely on which specific products, they may introduce innovations that are technically feasible but bring negative socio-economic effects” (FAO 1995: 19). As regards forest dependency, several researchers have underlined the importance of understanding the cash income villagers generate from forest resources, not least because key transactions require cash expenditures and that access to cash income plays a critical role in determining the well-being of forest dwellers (Cavendish 1999: 9; Wollenberg 2000: 777).

Forest utilisation is not effected in a political vacuum. Hence, policy issues at higher levels of social organisation should be of the utmost consideration. Generally, “[h]ow land is used, depends not only on who accesses it and the bundle of resources at that land user’s disposal, but also the dominant, and competing notions regarding how resources should be used” (Batterbury and Bebbington 1999: 283). Several authors have underlined the existence of incongruence between the notions of forest use upheld by African governments and the interests of their business and political backers on the one hand and, on the other, those of local farmers’ which are informed, on the whole, by livelihood concerns (Brown 1999: 7, 12; Conte 1999).



Overall, access analysis *per se*, divorced from the utilisation regime of the resource, is unlikely to provide an adequate framework for a livelihood-oriented study of resource management, issues towards which this research gravitates.

## **2.3 Conceptualising property rights and common pool resources**

Property rights refers to “a set of rights and responsibilities concerning a thing” (Bruce 1993: 3), and signifies a social relationship between resource use claimants and others who have a duty to observe the associated terms and conditions of the claims (Bromley 1989: 871). Establishment of property rights in natural resources is generally perceived as a response to mitigating and/or forestalling conflicting claims over resource use (McKean and Ostrom 1995: 4). Whilst property arrangements are to be found “along a continuum” (Bromley 1989: 875), the literature identifies three ideal analytical categories of property rights: open access, private property, and common property (McCay 1995: 95). Open access refers to an “[a]bsence of enforced property rights” (Ostrom 1999: 279); “...an open access situation is one of mutual privilege and no rights” (Bromley 1989: 871). At the other end of the spectrum are private property rights, where exclusive rights to a resource rest with an individual/individuals (McCay 1995: 95; Ostrom *et al.* 1999: 279).

Common property is easier to describe than to define. Salient features of common property include “a right to use something in common with others; or a right not to be excluded from the use of something; and some expression of equality or equitability in the allocation of rights” (McCay 1995: 95). Seen in this way, common property rights encompass a large class of claims including those under direct government control. In fact, some authors prefer splitting what is here regarded as ‘common property rights’ into ‘group or communal’ on the one hand and ‘government’ property rights on the other. According to Ostrom *et al.* (1999) “[g]overnment property involves ownership by a national, regional, or local public agency that can forbid or allow use by individuals”, while, on the other hand, group property refers to “[r]esource rights held by a group of users who can exclude others” (279).

A frequently employed concept in the literature on natural resource analysis is *tenure*, which refers to “the terms on which land is held: the rights and obligations of the holder of the land.... In recent years, the term resource tenure has also become popular for describing rights not only in land but in water, trees, and other resources” (Bruce 1993: 1). Evidently, (resource) tenure and property rights are conceptually synonymous and, in this research, they are used interchangeably. On the other hand, “[a]ccess to land or a resource means that the person having access is in fact able to make some use of the resource; it says nothing one way or another about whether the person has a legal right to use the resource”. The term describes

“situations rather than rules” (Bruce 1993: 5). Thus, ‘access’ appears to have a wider connotation than ‘tenure’ as it is closely intertwined with ‘resource use’, while a right to a property can be held regardless of its use. At the same time, unlike ‘tenure’, which at the minimum has a quasi-official appearance, ‘access’ can also include a state of resource claim via informal arrangements that may not be officially defensible. Ribot (1998) has extensively dealt with conceptualising access and it is worth quoting him at length here:

Access includes the *de jure* and the *de facto* or extra-legal (310). Legal ownership, tenure, and title are just a few mechanisms among many that people use to support their ability to benefit. An access analysis is empirical: it is concerned with who has the ‘ability to obtain or make use of’ benefits (in this case from natural resources) and how. It does not presume any set of rights, structures, processes, and so forth, that confer this ability; instead it derives them from observed practice. ‘Access’ does not replace the term ‘property’, but rather it encompasses property, ...(312).

Particularly in the less industrialised world, natural resource rights are claimed by a myriad of users, each with different access conditions and obligations. Hence, the ideal-analytical property right categories discussed above need a conceptual revamping if they are to serve a useful purpose for understanding these situations (Schlager and Ostrom 1992). Resource systems characterised by such diffused property right arrangements are said to be subject to a “bundle of rights” regime (Bruce 1993: 2), also known as “mixed tenurial regimes” (Cousins 2000: 155) or “overlapping rights” (Peters 1987: 171). In this regard, the notion of access, rather than the “blunt-edged” concepts of property and tenure (Bruce *et al.* 1993: 628), could be gainfully employed to understand the way resource use rights are arrayed across the different claimants. As will be shown below, ‘the commons’ or ‘common pool resources (CPRs)’ are the often-cited resource use systems where mixed tenure applies in full force.

Common pool resources “include natural and human-constructed resources in which (i) exclusion of beneficiaries through physical and institutional means is especially costly, and (ii) exploitation by one user reduces resource availability for others” (Ostrom *et al.* 1999: 278). Understood in this way, CPRs include “large bodies of water, rivers, fishes, and other wildlife, air and the airwaves, even information and genetic material...” (McCay 1995: 92). In general, CPRs are resource systems where the principles of exclusion and subtractability/rivalry are critical considerations. While excludability refers to the extent to which potential beneficiaries could be prevented from resource use, subtractability implies that the quantity consumed by one individual diminishes other user’s gains from the resource (Ostrom 1992: 295-296).

Some of the material benefits of forest resources, which are referred to in Chapter One (see Section 1.2), can only be realised through product harvesting, thereby reducing the availability of the forest stock to other users. Likewise, interference in the ecological processes of the forest ecosystem impinges on its environmental functions, which could be felt by future generations or



by downstream users or both. On the other hand, the multifaceted uses of forest resources make exclusion of potential beneficiaries a difficult task. No wonder, therefore, the issue of forest use has been a frequent subject of discussion in the literature dealing with CPRs (Birgegard 1993; Knudsen 1995, Ostrom 1999:1). In fact, researchers have long started using terms such as common forest resources (CFRs) to designate the common pool nature of many aspects of forests (see FAO 1993a).

Especially in the developing world, CPR/CFR usage occurs on lands “under a variety of customary and formal tenure arrangements” (Arnold 1993: 159). In the context of Africa, Cousins (2000) characterised the commons as showing complex combinations of state, community, and *de facto* private rights of ownership and/or use (155). In line with the objectives of the research, it should be of the utmost interest to understand the forms and dynamics of the mechanisms employed to establish tenure in CPRs. Both provision and enforcement of access are mediated through and bound together by institutional processes and organisational frameworks. ‘Institutions’ are understood as formal rules and informal constraints such as sanctions and codes of behaviour that dictate human interaction (North 1991: 97), while ‘organisation’ refers to constituent bodies and is defined as “groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives”. Organisations operate within the context of specific institutional arrangements, and at the same time shape the evolution of institutions (North 1990: 4-5). In rural research, analysts identify two forms of community-based organisations (CBOs): formal (often state-sponsored) and informal, which are community-initiated and locally managed.

## **2.4 The mechanics of tenure establishment in common pool resources**

### **2.4.1 Formal tenure in land resources: overlapping rights in perspective**

Formal tenure is often understood in terms of private or state property rights. The literature identifies an array of factors behind the establishment of formal tenure in land resources. In some places the complexity of traditional tenure practices is found to be an anathema to a government bureaucracy compartmentalised along functional lines (Platteau 2000: 67). This has led governments, as in Kenya, to issue land titles to individuals, thereby effectively privatising CPRs (see Cousins 2000: 156). However, the most prevalent form of formal tenure in CPRs is state ownership, and this manifests itself either through outright nationalisation of land resources and/or through targeted ownership of forested lands (Buttoud 1997; Fortmann 1988: 19). In both cases the State, through its bureaucratic apparatus, has the sole right to exclude land users.

In the recent past African governments which professed Marxist socialism as their ideology, including Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Mozambique, nationalised all land resources and extinguished



pre-existing claims to forest resources (Dessalegn 1985; Moyo *et al.* 1993: 142-144, 239-240). Consequently, the State established grassroots organisations and mandated them, among other duties, to oversee tenure enforcement processes. Peasant Associations in Ethiopia and Village Development Councils in Tanzania are good cases in this regard.

The other mechanism through which the state exercises direct tenurial rights has a long history and in sub-Saharan Africa predates independence. In Francophone Africa, in particular, State monopoly over forest ownership was regarded as a direct reflection of the rather strong centralist tradition of public management in France (Buttoud 1997). Post-independence African governments also continued with direct ownership of public lands including forests mainly because they saw the alternatives of community/clan ownership as an anathema to the emerging nation state (Buttoud 1997; Ribot 1995: 12-13; Shepherd 1988: 4).

In the context of state tenure in common forest resources, local inhabitants have *de jure* secondary rights only, and these rarely extend beyond the use of tree products and grazing (Cousins 2000: 155; Egbe 1997: 14; Fortmann 1988: 19). This by itself is a manifestation of mixed tenure in practice. In many places, however, one observes a parallel operation of more enduring local forest access arrangements alongside official tenure, utilisation and day-to day management resting *de facto* with local communities who “have no formal rights to do so” (Cousins 2000: 155). As Place *et al.* (1994) noted, “[i]n much of Sub-Saharan Africa, state enforcement is generally less than absolute, and the outcome is a syncretic mix of two or more systems of concurrent land rights” (21).

For some time now, state tenure in land resources has been undergoing a radical reorientation. Indeed, in Africa since the mid-1980s and early 1990s legislative reforms have started recognising locally concluded CPR rights (discussed below). The forms of recognition differ widely among countries. In west Africa, these range from “mere tolerance” (Burkina Faso) to a mapping of all existing land rights in the Ivory Coast “in order to give them legal status” (Delville 2000: 110). In southern Africa, where “land in the former ‘reserves’ continues to be registered in the name of the state”, there is an ongoing debate as to how best property rights could be transferred from the State to the *de facto* owners (Adams *et al.* 2000). The changes envisaged in the above situations are captured under the rubric ‘tenure reform’, which is a planned attempt at altering the terms and conditions on which a particular resource is used. This could entail adjustments in the terms of contracts between owners and tenants or could refer to the conversion of informal access into formal property rights (Adams *et al.* 2000: 135; Bruce 1993: 2, 13).

## **2.4.2 Customary tenure practices and common pool resources**

### **2.4.2.1 Conceptualising customary tenure**

The traditional conception of customary tenure has been succinctly expressed by two west African chiefs thus: *“land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living and countless members are still unborn”* (Egbe 1997: 3, emphasis in the original). Drawing from his knowledge of the nature-culture interface in Cameroon, Egbe elaborated on the above perception. He attributed the offering of periodic sacrifices in forest areas as a way of reciprocating in kind for “the conditional right” of use of land resources the “ancestors” bestowed upon the “living” (3). Traditionally, disputes that arose from the utilisation of CPRs are said to have been of a rare occurrence, and were at any rate settled through involving village elders and local notables. In such a setting, “penalties were always symbolic” (Egbe 1997: 3).

It is, however, recognised that the demographic and socio-economic factors that informed such a social perception of natural resources appear to have been altered profoundly. Nonetheless, it is believed that, some of the fundamental elements of traditional tenure still prevail in most of rural Africa (Delville 2000: 98). In this connection, the term ‘customary tenure practices’ refers to the broad range of socially determined land resource allocation rules operating at village levels of community organisation (Delville 2000: 99). Customary tenure is “a norm generating activity” (Egbe 1997: 19) and is said to be “procedural”: “It does not define each person’s rights, but the procedures by which access to resources is obtained” (Delville 2000: 98).

In most agrarian systems, the allocation of land and resource use rights is a supra-household affair where decision making authority rests with a hierarchically organised lineage or kinship group (Delville 2000: 110; Fortmann 1988: 17; Hilhorst 2000: 181; Shepherd 1988: 153). In the context of west Africa, Delville (2000) found that these organisational forums exhibit distinct divisions of labour amongst themselves: while village headmen oversee territorial control of land resources, heads of residential units/the compound preside over everyday resource use. He characterised these as a case of “interlocking rights” in tenure administration such that the former corresponds to management of administration right and the latter to management of use right (110). With this as a background, the following section discusses the different forms of customary access arrangements observed in different parts of the developing world in general and sub-Saharan Africa in particular.



#### **2.4.2.2 The mechanics of customary tenure establishment in land-based CPRs**

Different communities have their own ways of allocating access to land-based CPRs. Table 2.1 summarises the most observable conditions under which resources are accessed through customary tenure arrangements. In general, customary tenure is backed by claims based on 'prior occupancy' or 'indigenous occupancy'; hence outsiders (e.g. migrants and settlers) have restricted rights, if any at all (Fortmann 1988: 19). Similarly, the youth would only have secondary rights to CPRs. Customary access to common pool resources is also contingent upon the descent and inheritance system at work. In general, where patrilineal lineage dominates, as in south Asia and much of east Africa, women's access to CPRs is secured through their male kinsfolk or husbands (see, for example, Chant 1997: 96; Hilhorst 2000: 181). In matrilineal societies, women tend to have more secure, locally recognised, access rights to tree products than in patrilineal arrangements (Hilhorst 2000: 187).

In most cases customary tenure rules systematically exclude divorced and widowed women from having access to land resources (Birgegard 1993:24-25). In general residence rules upon divorce or widowhood, and sexual stereotypes concerning women's ascribed role in the community, militate against a fuller realisation of women's land rights and CPR access at their places of household establishment. Synthesising the literature on women land rights in sub-Saharan Africa, Hilhorst (2000) concludes that "[i]n many cases, once widowed, a woman is expected to return to her own family group", thereby forfeiting any residual CPR access opportunity she might otherwise have. In much of Africa divorce settlements and inheritance provisions are handled within the realm of traditional norms, which as a rule are subject to varying interpretations and are least likely to champion the causes of women (Rocheleau 1988: 255; Hilhorst 2000: 182). For instance, in societies where polygamy is practised, widows without sons or those with no children at all are unlikely to inherit land from their deceased husband, and this is bound to circumscribe their access to village CPRs (Hilhorst 2000: 186). Some writers also argue that, given the intensely political nature of land inheritance, women may be less enthusiastic about pursuing the matter "if it involves disrupting other kin-ascribed entitlements that guarantee survival and security" (Chant 1997: 96).

There are, however, important exceptions to the above analysis. Research undertaken on the Tanzanian coast found that "as many women owned palm trees as did men". Similarly, women could inherit rubber trees in Malaysia. These were attributed to the positive influence of the Islamic law of inheritance (Fortmann 1988: 24). In places where widowed women have rights of

**Table 2.1****An overview of the workings of customary tenure principles in land-based CPRs**

Customary tenure parameters	Scenarios	Outcome
<b>A. User-related</b>		
Ancestral origin	Local; migrant/settler	Prior/ indigenous occupancy enhances claims.
Descent systems	Patrilineal; matrilineal	Lineage influences beneficiary gender.
Inheritance practices	Secular; religious laws	Variable outcomes across gender.
Gender and age of HH members	Male; female and young; old	Femaleness/female-headship and youth entail less enforceable secondary rights. Divorce entails less enforceable secondary rights than widowhood. Seniority in polygamy entitles better access.
Household headship	Male-headed; female-headed	
Marital status of FHH	Widowed; divorced	
Marital background of widowed FHH	Monogamy; polygamy	
Production organisation	Own production; share cropping	Share cropping entails less enforceable secondary rights.
History/intensity of resource use	Occasional; constant use	Persistent labour input creates tenure.
<b>B. Resource-related</b>		
Type of resource	Planted; self-propagated	Labour creates tenure.
Location of resource	Nearness to residence/work place	Proximity enhances claims.
Nature of use	Subsistence; commercial	Marketability limits claimants
Season of use	Seasonal; year-round	Seasonality in product use engenders multiple claimants.
Species composition	Upper storey; lower storey	Trees have more protected rights than shrubs.

Source: Cousins 2000: 155, 157; Delville 2000: 117; FAO 1993a: 102-103; Fortmann 1988: 16-25.

residence within the village of their affinal family they tend to command some residual rights to the use of CPRs. Biggelaar's study among southern Rwandan women shows that such women household heads did not face any tenurial restrictions concerning tree planting and ownership: "women without husbands are men" (1995:14). The same study has also shown that increased scarcity of natural vegetation has loosened cultural rules that had traditionally prohibited married women from planting and owning trees (Biggelaar 1995:14). Moreover, according to Rocheleau (1988) among sedentary farmers, women household members have access to CPRs near to home gardens, because these are considered as extensions of the domestic domain (260). On the other hand, "... in some groups on the Kenyan coast, widows retain exclusive rights to harvest fruits and nuts from trees, while the land itself may be inherited and managed by another relative" (Rocheleau 1988: 258). This corroborates the generally held view that rights to forestland may be held separately from use rights to trees and other forest products (*cf.* Fortmann 1988: 21).



The literature on share cropping as a locally concluded instrument of access to CPRs is rather limited. Most studies dealing with share cropping examine its workings in crop farming activities that are undertaken on individual holdings. Some view the relationship between sharecropping partners through the prism of patron-client dichotomies and underline the inherent social inequality the institution represents (Otsuka and Hayami 1988; Pertev 1986). Others have regarded share cropping as a means through which enterprising farmers seek to increase production and earnings (Bardhan and Rudra 1980). In the Ethiopian context sharecropping has been identified as an important mechanism of access to agricultural land that share tenants would otherwise have found it difficult to come by (see, for example, contributions in Dessalegn 1994a).

Fortmann (1988) synthesised earlier works on the possible influence of share cropping in farmland on tree tenure, and concluded that sharecropping gave clients' residual rights to use "self-propagated trees" found around individual farm plots (22). No such attempt has, however, been made by the various land tenure studies covering the Ethiopian scene. More generally, there is a dearth of information regarding the possible *direct* role of sharecropping in accessing CFRs and other land-based CPRs. This being so, some research has been undertaken on share cropping in sea-based CPRs. For instance, Platteau and Nugent (1992) examined share cropping in the context of both artisanal and large-scale industrial fishing activities and established the importance of this institution as an access mechanism for fishermen who, on account of limited access to the needed capital equipment, would not otherwise have taken advantage of the opportunities presented by the common pool nature of the resource. In this arrangement, choice of contractual partners is said to be of critical importance. In general, ethnic, community and family ties are said to characterise the choice of agents - the fishing crew (Platteau and Nugent 1992: 399). In the context of Ethiopian agriculture, however, share renters and share tenants were found not to have been related, and the arrangement is described more as "market-like" than welfare-oriented (Bereket and Croppenstedt 1995: 342).

Turning to the one remaining 'user-related access attribute' (Table 2.1 above), studies have indicated that labour investment, that is some form of labour expenditure on a hitherto unused resource, creates locally recognised use rights particularly to trees and tree products (FAO 1993a:103; Fortmann 1988:18; Shepherd 1992:113). For instance, "among the Tanzanian Sukuma, banging pegs into a tree suitable for hanging honey barrels ensures exclusive access to the tree" (FAO 1993a: 103).

As regards 'resource-related attributes', spatial proximity is regarded as an important factor responsible for conferring local rights of tenure: "... those who live near important natural resources have stronger rights to them than 'outsiders'" (Shepherd 1986: 15). On the other hand,



subsistence uses of CPRs such as firewood collection, gleaning of bark, collection of wild foods and plant medicines tend to be residual or secondary rights that individuals are entitled to by virtue of being members of a given user community. Finally, it is reported that forest dwelling rural communities have specific rules for different species. This is especially so in multi-storey cropping systems where access to the shade tree in the upper most storey is more restricted than the produce in the lower storeys (Fortmann 1988: 17-20).

To conclude, the above has shown the multiplicity of customary tenure practices surrounding CPRs. While the norms informing the establishment of customary tenure are context-specific, some broad generalisation regarding the nature of rights in customary tenure can be made. Tenure specialists categorise land rights into three analytical groups. These are *use rights*, *exclusion rights*, (i.e. the right to exclude others from using the resource) and *transfer rights* (i.e. the right to transfer title either temporarily or permanently) (Place *et al.* 1994: 22). As will be shown below, the different forms of customary tenure share some features of the above categories.

To start with, customary tenure practices engender two types of *use rights*, namely primary and secondary. These arrangements also allow *exclusion rights* to be exercised at community/group level and at individual level. At community/group level, descent and lineage are used to exclude outsiders, while at the individual level, use rights are upheld through a shared set of values and norms and local level enforcement mechanisms. Finally, customary tenure practices confer *transfer rights*, but these are confined to what are termed as “preferential transfer rights”. These include gifts and bequests that are directed by “normative preference to family or kin” (Place *et al.* 1994: 23). Customary tenure practices do not, however, allow for transfer by sale, which is a defining feature of “complete/permanent transfer rights”. Nonetheless, in several instances, due both to government policies and the dynamics of capitalist penetration, land resources held under customary tenure principles have been made open for sale, thereby militating against the bundle of rights such resources have been subject to. The distributional implication of changes in the property rights system under which CPRs are held is the subject of the next section.

#### **2.4.2.3 Changing property rights in CPRs and social equity**

In general, changes in customary tenure practices surrounding access to CPRs manifest themselves in several ways. The principal ones include alteration of the descent system, individualisation of tenure, and changes in land use practices. Each of these changes affects all secondary right holders such as women, the youth and migrants; however, some of the above factors have a differential impact on the various categories of households.

In countries such as Malawi and Tanzania legislation, which aims at standardising the descent system at the national level, resulted in a uniform patrilineal system, and this is said to have negatively affected the residential land rights of matrimonial communities (Rocheleau 1988: 255-256). From experiences of countries such as Kenya, it is known that the process of land titling led to “unfair assignment of rights to the powerful”, to the detriment of the overlapping multiple use rights of women, the youth, pastoralists, and people belonging to “minority tribes” (Delville 2000: 111; Platteau 2000: 66-68). Rocheleau (1988) was of the opinion that “the erosion of women’s customary rights under modern legal forms (colonial and post-independence, capitalist and socialist) is a widespread phenomenon” (256).

Finally, changes in land use practices such as permanent cropping or destructive harvesting (e.g. commercial wood/timber production) would impinge on the stock of CPR themselves, thereby making the acquisition of secondary rights of limited practical significance (Rocheleau 1988: 258, 261-262). Section 2.5.2 below illustrates some of the processes that accentuate changes in the property rights regime of common forest resources.

All in all, the observed unidirectional changes affecting customary CPR rights had negative repercussions on the maintenance of social equity. In particular, this tendency erodes the efficacy of village-level tenure provision mechanisms that are said to have ensured some form of livelihood security to otherwise marginalised community groups (Platteau 2000: 67). In this regard, it is of interest to examine the manner in which CPR use rights account for the sustenance of rural livelihoods. This is the subject of the next section and focuses on the resource object of the research, CFRs.

## **2.5 Common forest resources and rural livelihoods**

This section discusses forest utilisation in agrarian systems within the context of the literature on rural livelihood analysis. First, the salient features of the conceptual framework are presented, then, employing these perspectives and drawing case materials from the developing world, the livelihood significance of the different modes of forest utilisation are discussed.

### **2.5.1 A theoretical overview of forest use and rural livelihoods in agrarian systems**

The various uses of forest resources referred to in Chapter One fall under the following three categories: non-use values, indirect use values, and direct use values. Non-use values consist of the cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, aesthetic and “existence” values of forest resources, while indirect use values refer to the ecosystem service functions that forests render. Direct use



values, on the other hand, connote those that derive from human consumption and include forest conversion into agriculture, tourism, logging, and the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) (Barbier 1992: 21). NTFPs include all wildlife, other than timber, collected or hunted by people for whatever purposes. Thus, this term encompasses plants used for food (e.g., fruits, nuts, and berries), fodder, fuel, medicine, spices, fibres, and gums, as well as wild animals hunted for direct home consumption/medicinal values, sale or for cultural/religious reasons (De Beer and McDermott 1989:17). NTFPs belong to the category of outputs labelled variously as the “hidden harvest” and the “subsidy from nature” (see IIED 1995). A related concept is non-wood forest products (NWFPs), which “... consist of goods of biological origin other than wood, as well as services derived from forests and allied land uses” (FAO1995: 1). It is highly conceivable that, of the above categories of forest use values, the nature and magnitude of direct use values are the single most important determinant factors affecting the livelihoods of people in forested regions.

Synthesising earlier works on the theme of poverty and the environment, Scoones (1998) defines a livelihood as that which “... comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base” (5). In general, rural people in agrarian societies are said to pursue a wide range of livelihood goals including maximisation of current household income levels, reduction of household vulnerability to stresses and shocks, and investment in social networks (Ellis 1998; Hussein and Nelson 1998; Rakodi 1999). The capacity of people to fulfil household set goals depends on the amount and quality of the assets at their disposal. Building on earlier works on the subject, Rakodi (1999) categorised these resources into natural capital (e.g. forests), physical/produced capital (e.g. physical infrastructure), financial capital (e.g. cash income), human capital (e.g. nutrition, skills), social capital (e.g. networks at household and community levels), and political capital, including access to decision making (316-318). These resources are complementary; and to a certain degree they can be interchangeable.

The specific activities rural households undertake and the options individual household members have in this regard may not always be under the direct control of the household. Often, a combination of structural factors, including the roles of government, and the private sector and cultural variables, such as social norms and belief systems, influence the economic logic of household strategies (Ellis 1998: 10-11). For instance, agrarian societies are characterised by a good deal of reciprocal exchange relationships (Ellis 1993: 12) such that Hyden (1980) described at least the African case as the “economy of affection”. This alternative economy is an upshot of the peasant mode of production “... in which the affective ties based on common descent,



common residence, etc., prevail” (Hyden 1980: 18). In this economy social considerations are key factors influencing economic action. Hyden did not lose sight of the larger picture in which the economy of affection functions; in fact, he postulates the existence of a two-way traffic in the operations of both the traditional and the modern economic sectors (19).

Based on empirical work in southeast Asia, Scott (1976) had earlier expounded what he called “the moral economy of the peasant”. He saw subsistence as a moral claim and asserted that village economies operate on the principle that the poor had the social right of subsistence (32-33) and that, under normal circumstances, “survival of the weakest” is an important consideration in village-wide resource allocation decisions (40). The significance that the recent literature on rural livelihoods attach to the necessity of understanding the social structures and processes through which livelihoods are pursued in agrarian systems is very much in line with the above theoretical underpinnings (see Scoones 1998: 11-12; Rakodi 1999: 317-318).

In general, a closer look at household decision-making experiences reveals the existence of four generic types of livelihood strategies open to rural people: agricultural extensification, agricultural intensification, livelihood diversification, and migration (based on Scoones 1998: 9). The first three of these are pursued within the rural milieu and tally well with the orientation of the present research, which is assessing residence-based forest activities as livelihood strategies. Agricultural extensification is a process by which livelihood is enhanced through putting more land under cultivation, while, agricultural intensification refers to increment in output per unit area through increases in labour and/or capital investment (Scoones 1998: 9). On the other hand, livelihood diversification encompasses “... both on- and off-farm activities which are undertaken to generate income additional to that from the main household agricultural activities, via the production of other agricultural and non-agricultural goods and services, the sale of waged labour, or self-employment in small firms and other strategies undertaken to spread risk ...” (Hussein and Nelson 1998: 3).

The following two sections examine the direct use values of forest resources within the context of the above three clusters of livelihood strategies.

### **2.5.2 Agricultural extensification in a forest environment**

It is clear from the above characterisation that forest conversion is a livelihood strategy open to rural dwellers in forested regions. In particular, many rural agricultural households clear forested land to make room for new fields or to increase their pasture for livestock. In addition to natural population growth, several farming-system related explanations are put forward for agricultural

extensification in forested regions. One is the lack of secure resource tenure. Often communities are unable to secure use rights to unconverted forest (Shepherd and Kiff 1996: 3). To cite an example, “[l]and tenure in Ecuador requires that owners “occupy” the land. Occupation is often interpreted as removing the forest cover and planting crops. An owner who resorted to collecting products from an existing forest, stands a non-zero probability of losing his land” (Grimes *et al.* 1994: 410).

Farmers’ increased access to agricultural production technology is said to accentuate forest conversion. A good case in point is the introduction of the plough and the use of oxen for traction. Using empirical comparisons of labour productivity under different technical production conditions, Orent (1978) concluded that in African agricultural systems where communal labour is used in preparing fields for planting, “the switch from hoe to plow opened up three times the area for purposes of cultivation (192). An important development worth noting here is the expansion of settler agriculture of diverse forms into forested areas and the consequent disregard the settlers/agricultural colonisers show for the intricacies of the forest ecology (see, for instance, Alemneh 1990; Brown 2001; Pichon 1996; Shepherd and Kiff 1996: 3). The depletion of the natural resource base that this process entails and the attendant vulnerability of once forested areas to meteorological and agricultural drought were among the factors that popularised the dictum “drought follows the plow” (Glantz and Howard 1994).

Another major explanation for the incidence of forest conversion is the low economic importance accorded to protective forms of forest use. A case study of forest land use options in the Philippines indicated that “[t]he initial ‘windfall’ from the sale of charcoal and from high rice production on the newly-cleared soil raises the [net present value] dramatically” (Stewart 1992: 234), hence favouring land extensification. Similarly, in the context of Peruvian Amazon, Pinedo-Vasquez *et al.* (1992) reported higher economic incentives for local people to continue with swidden agriculture than to practice other forms of sustainable forest use. Moreover, governments employ traditional pricing tools that are incapable of assessing fully the economic value of forest resources. As a result, activities such as logging and large-scale livestock ranching, established through forest clearance, end up having an edge over other eco-friendly land use options (see Humphreys 1996: 9-10; Jepma 1995: 17-21). On the other hand, empirical studies have shown that economic adjustment programmes have led to a renewed emphasis on the expansion of export crops at the expense of the forest (see Kaimowitz *et al.* 1999).

The factors inducing forest conversion coupled with increased availability of “the cheap chainsaw” (Poore 1989: 161-162) have also facilitated small-scale logging activities (Mather 1990: 250-251; Rudel *et al.* 2000). It is anticipated that, the poor performance of African economies is likely to

continue in the foreseeable future as well, thereby prompting households to opt for quick returns from forest uses to alleviate their poverty. This inevitably will lead to intensification in small-scale logging and timber exploitation (Umeh *et al.* 2001).

From the above it follows that agricultural extensification is bound to undermine the stability of the forest-agriculture interface system and in the long run would render the livelihood system unsustainable. The factors responsible for agricultural extensification are as much indigenous as externally induced. Either way, these factors have the same effect of altering the CPR nature of forests and contribute towards individualisation of tenure.

### **2.5.3 Non-timber forest products and rural livelihoods**

#### **2.5.3.1 Introduction**

The literature on forest use in agrarian systems establishes the crucial livelihood importance of NTFPs. In what follows attempt is made to locate NTFP uses and associated production practices within the context of the two remaining livelihood strategies discussed earlier, namely, diversification on the one hand and intensification on the other.

#### **2.5.3.2 NTFPs and livelihood diversification**

As indicated in Chapter One, both in industrialised and developing countries forests engender non-timber benefits of varying significance. In the interest of maintaining focus the following discussion draws case materials from the less developed world. Here most forest-based gathering activities are undertaken as a supplement to food crop farming and or livestock husbandry activities. Indeed, empirical studies have shown that most people take part in commercial NTFP collection during the agricultural lean season (Malhotra *et al.* 1993: 5; Wickramasinghe *et al.* 1996: 508). Even among traditional forest communities, such as the Amazonian population, commercial NTFP collection takes into account, among other factors, the compatibility of the enterprise with the agricultural calendar and the price relationship between agricultural and extractive products (Homma 1996: 77). In short, in much of the developing world, NTFP operations are primarily a form of livelihood diversification strategy that forest villagers pursue. Ellis (1998) draws a conceptual distinction between diversification as a risk management option on the one hand and as a coping strategy on the other. He sees 'risk' as "... *ex ante* income management and coping as *ex post* consumption management in the wake of crisis" (13). As is shown below, NTFP uses fit into these descriptions.



Several researchers have underlined the considerable direct role of wild foods in the mitigation of household food shortfalls during the 'hungry gap' as well as in emergencies, thus signifying the role of NTFPs as coping instruments (see, for example FAO 1991: 34-37). These food items include a wide range of nuts, fruits, vegetables, bushmeat, and wild fish. For instance, in the case of rural Mali, Gakou *et al.* (1994) found that some 90 per cent of tree products villagers collect are obtained from natural forest areas as open access benefits and that the majority of these products contributed significantly to household food needs. From the present writer's field experience in the Orissa State of India it was known that poor people subsist for an average of three months a year on mushrooms and wild tubers. Field-based studies have also established the important contributions NTFPs make to household cash income, and this aspect of livelihood diversification pertains to what has been referred to above as "ex ante income management". Table 2.2 summarises a selection of such research outputs from different parts of the developing world.

**Table 2.2**  
**Estimates of income from /monetary values of/ NTFPs**

Author	Country	Products	Income contribution/comparative land use value
Townson 1995	Ghana	Wild foods, spices, medicines, wrapping leaves, materials for personal care, climbers, woodfuel, wood carvings, and bushmeat.	34 % of households earn over half of their cash income from NTFP-based activities.
Monela <i>et al.</i> 2000	Tanzania	Wild fruits, honey, and woodfuel.	61% of cash income/HH/annum.
Cavendish 1999	Zimbabwe	Wild foods, wild goods (gum, oil, resins, and dyes), firewood, construction materials, and grazing.	13.7% of cash income/person/annum; 36.9% of total income/person/annum.
Gunatilake <i>et al.</i> 1993	Sri Lanka	Fuelwood, food, spices, medicinal plants, grazing, basketry and carpentry.	55.1% of cash income/HH/annum; 42.2 % of total income.
Grimes <i>et al.</i> 1994	Amazonian Ecuador	Benefits from products of trees 10cm density at breast height (dbh).	Net present values: NTFPs (\$1257-2939); Timber (\$188); (Cattle ranching \$57-287); Agriculture (<\$500).
Gram 2001	Peruvian Amazon	Wild fish, game, honey, and plant-based NTFPs.	57% of "local economic value" of products/HH/annum.
Brown 2001	Brazilian Amazon	Honey vs. field crops	Returns to labour (per person-day): honey (\$33.13); rice (\$9.31); corn (\$6.67); cotton (\$6.64); beans (\$5.76).

These studies cover a diverse range of forest products, use varying income estimation methods and report their results in different ways, thereby making comparison and generalisation very difficult. The works on Ghana, Tanzania, and the Brazilian Amazon have dealt mainly with the direct cash income contributions of a wide range of traded CPRs most of which are NTFPs collected from CFRs. Of the remaining four studies, the ones on Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, and the Peruvian Amazon focused on assessing the values of marketed and own-consumed NTFPs as

freely provided environmental goods. While, on the other hand, the study on Amazonian Ecuador considered the potential values of CFRs under different land use alternatives. Nevertheless, all of the studies point to the substantial current and/or potential economic significance of NTFPs to forest dwellers.

Some of the above authors also compared the income significance of the different basket of NTFPs and emphasised the existence of huge inter-product differences in current market returns and growth prospects. For instance, in the case of Sri Lanka, Gunatilake *et al.* (1993) established that cardamom, which is “grown as an understory crop inside the forest”, accounted for about 90.4 per cent of the annual NTFP cash income. In the case of Ghana, Townson (1995) measured NTFP-specific elasticity of demand, which is a yardstick used to assess the responsiveness of demand for a commodity to changes in income, and determined that honey had an elastic demand. This signifies that expenditures on this product are expected to rise much faster than incomes, thereby indicating a higher growth prospect (24).

Townson (1995) also underlined the importance of “locality” on demand for NTFPs and hence on the composition of cash income among forest dwellers. He noted that some NTFPs, such as bushmeat and honey, command a greater market demand in “semi-urban” areas than in “larger urban areas”, locations where expenditures on NTFPs are dominated by those on woodfuel (24). Monela *et al.* (2000) have also shown that woodfuel in “peri-urban” areas of Tanzania constituted some 62.3 per cent of the cash income from NTFPs, while in “remote areas” this source accounted for only 19.2 per cent, honey accounting for the rest.

The above notwithstanding, “[t]he importance of forest income usually lies more in its timing than its magnitude” (Arnold and Townson 1998: 3). In this regard, forest income is said to play a crucial role in meeting household level seasonal cash flow gaps (so-called “income buffer” role) as well as in helping meet specific one off expenses such as the purchase of seeds (Arnold and Townson 1998: 3; Falconer 1996: 144). Given that involvement in NTFPs reflects the degree to which one is adequately endowed with the capital assets mentioned earlier, it is bound to differ markedly across households. In general, livelihood diversification was regarded as a matter of critical importance for the poor, as this category is more vulnerable to stresses than richer households (Ellis 1998: 18). In this connection, the empirical study on NTFP income showed that the better off rural households tend to be heavier users of local forest resources than the poor. Yet, the latter derive a greater proportion of their income from CFRs, where there are low barriers to entry, than the rich (Arnold and Townson 1998; Cavendish 1999).



Women and children also exercise their secondary CPR access rights in respect of NTFP collection. Typically, NTFP harvesting, with no or limited access restrictions, tends to generate low returns (Arnold and Townson 1998). In the case of rural Sri Lanka, Wickramasinghe *et al.* (1996) identified a limited involvement of women in high value NTFP gathering activities. This tallies well with the general picture. Having reviewed the literature on gender and livelihood diversification, Hussein and Nelson (1998) concluded that "... diversification activities open to women are often less lucrative than those pursued by men" (9). It appears that, the continued involvement of the resource poor in low return activities is a reflection of the low opportunity cost of their labour and the corresponding high marginal utility of income from these sources to participating individuals/households. However, analysts are of the opinion that income sources from CPRs accessed through customary principles contribute towards a fairer wealth distribution at the community level, and especially more so " when economic opportunities in the outside economy are few and no alternative insurance systems exist" (Platteau 2000: 67).

#### **2.5.3.3 NTFP domestication as livelihood intensification**

"Domestication is a two stage process in plants: the bringing into cultivation of wild plants or exposing them to some form of management, and subjecting these to differential production or selection" (Janick *et al.* in Leakey and Newton 1994: 8). Thus, domestication encompasses both the provision of management care in a wild state (that is creation of so called 'managed species') and cultivation, also called "preparation of an agroecosystem" (Leakey and Newton 1994: 9).

Low cost of production, high demand elasticity of NTFPs, and high returns to land and labour have been identified as the most important factors spurring domestication of extractive products (Homma 1996: 69-70). Homma cited pepper (*Piper hispidinervium*) as an example of market-induced domestication in Amazonia. This was attributed to the presence of *safrol* in the leaves of the plant, which is "an oil used in the perfume industry and for organic insecticides. In its natural state, the density of *Piper hispidinervium* is very low, which makes its extraction unprofitable on commercial terms" (72), thereby necessitating its domestication.

Therefore, it is highly conceivable that NTFP domestication represents a shift towards more valuable outputs and is aimed primarily at raising land productivity. Seen in this way, NTFP domestication can be considered as an agricultural intensification strategy. For that matter, this activity is not structurally dissimilar to horticultural undertakings in general and commercial vegetable gardening in particular, which are always seen as a form of intensification (see, for instance, Carswell 1997: 8).



#### 2.5.3.4 Constraints to NTFP-based livelihoods

A number of factors constrain the potentials of NTFPs as livelihood resources. The principal ones include: their amenability for substitution, ineffective marketing arrangements in place, low level of product processing, limited attention given to quality control and standardisation measures, and forest resource depletion (Arnold and Townson 1998; Hyman 1996; Leakey and Newton 1994: 84; Peters 1996). The following discussion elaborates on each of the above factors in that order.

**Product substitution:** With increased market penetration arising largely from improvements in road infrastructure and related service facilities, many NTFPs are liable to be victims of cheap industrial substitutes. In the case of Ghana, Townson (1995) indicates the amenability of mats and baskets woven out of plants for substitution by plastic materials (26). In northern India the present writer's field experience point to the increased competition under which leaf plates have become from factory made substitutes. In addition, advances in technology also lead to substitution of natural products such as rubber, wax, and natural gums by synthetics, thereby impinging on NTFP livelihoods. According to Homma (1996) "... three-quarters of the world's consumption of elastic gums is based on synthetics" (67). There is, however, a silver lining to this process. In particular, "substitution is never perfect" and there is a demand limit for synthetic substitutes beyond which "... any increase in consumption of the synthetic is accompanied by a complementary increase in demand for the natural resource" (Homma 1996: 67).

**Marketing issues:** Most NTFPs are exchanged in "over-saturated markets" that engender intense internal competition that drives down product prices (Arnold and Townson 1998: 4; Ndoye *et al.* 1997: 6). In the case of rural Mali, for instance, "... two-thirds of the products are sold at the village weekly markets and city markets" (Gakou *et al.* 1994: 217). With reference to experiences in southeast Asia, "[a] considerable flow of traded goods circulates in the markets of forested rural areas" (De Beer and McDermott 1989: 69). In some cases low incomes obtained from the sale of NTFPs are ascribed to the weak bargaining power of the rural producers in the face of the involvement of a chain of middlemen. This, however, is a contested issue. In the context of Nepal, an analysis of marketing margins for seven unprocessed NTFPs used for the production of essential oils yielded an average price difference of 332 per cent between a village market and a central market, middlemen pocketing the bulk of the resulting profit (Hyman 1996: 207). In the case of Cameroon, on the other hand, Ndoye *et al.* (1997) saw market intermediaries in a positive light. They concluded that the net margins that traders obtain from involvement in four major NTFPs were commensurate with the crucial role they play in realising the marketable surplus (15).

**Value addition:** Researchers have underlined the potential price gains from NTFP processing and value addition. In practice, however, “[g]atherers often sell NTFP unprocessed because they need money immediately; are not organised into groups; lack knowledge of processing techniques, capital and markets; and cannot afford to take risks” (Hyman 1996: 203). In the same vein, absence of quality control and standardisation was reported to have negatively affected forest incomes. In east Africa open access collectors of NTFPs such as frankincense and myrrh had to put up with unduly low commodity prices and this was attributed to the above product management factors (Leakey and Newton 1994: 84). Overall, unlike timber production, which has been the concern of formally organised state and private enterprises, production and utilisation of NTFPs have been considered outmoded operations with little or no agricultural/industrial extension support by governments and have continued to be pursued as informal activities with little value addition.

**Forest depletion:** Compared with forest clearing and logging, NTFP harvesting is regarded as benign. However, a closer look at production practices reveals that this activity entails a significant ecological risk. Some of the more observable ecological side effects of plant-based NTFP harvesting include a “gradual reduction in the vigour of harvest plants” and a “decrease in the rate of seedling establishment of harvest species” (Peters 1996: 21-22). In addition, it is reported that “ ... a large number of non-timber forest resources are actually harvested destructively” (Peters 1996: 27), which have the potential to kill the plant. The upshot of the above is to reduce the stock of NTFPs available to forest villagers.

There is also an access and market dimension to the dangers of resource depletion arising from NTFP harvesting. Ease of entry to CFRs and the existence of high market demand for some of the extracted/gathered NTFPs have led to unsustainable use and, in some instances, to near extinction of the plant resource itself. A good case in point is the market-driven overexploitation of plants used to extract the essential oil *linalol*, rubber latex and latex used in chewing gum. In Tropical Africa, *Prunus (Pygeum) africana* has been singled out as being particularly vulnerable because it is subjected to debarking for medicinal purposes (Leakey and Newton 1994: 30). Extensive NTFP commercialisation is not, however, an unmitigated ecological disaster. As noted in Section 2.5.3.3 in some cases market forces accelerate the extent of domestication of hitherto gathered forest products, thereby enhancing the stock of the resource base itself. Several researchers have also underlined the environmentally degrading impact of the woodfuel trade in sub-Saharan Africa (see, for example, Monela *et al.* 2001; Ribot 1998). Ribot (1998) in particular has indicated how the multiplicity of local and national interest groups in commercial charcoal production from village commons has speeded up the pace of forest destruction and impinged on



other locally valued forest uses. All in all, “the ecological impact of NTFP utilisation depends on the nature and intensity of harvesting and the particular species and type of resource under exploitation” (Peters 1996: 26).

## **2.6. A summing up**

The discussions in the above sections provide a review of the literature on the mechanisms of access to CPRs such as forests and the significance of these resources in the livelihood system of peasant communities. These deliberations have been informed by the realisation of the centrality of understanding forest access rights and forest use patterns in the search for appropriate forest management options.

The empirical literature on tenure establishment points to the relevance of mixed tenure in characterising access to CPRs, whereby culture-bound tenure establishment principles operate alongside formally sanctioned access rights. The discussion on forest use underlines the crucial role of common forest resources in general and NTFPs in particular in generating key livelihood assets. The principal observation that emerges from both the access-focused and livelihoods-oriented discussions can be summarised as follows. Forest villagers in different parts of the developing world are heavily dependent on forest resources (natural capital), which they access via a variety of *de jure* (political capital) and *de facto* (social capital) mechanisms, and which they exploit using their skills and experiences (human capital) to meet their subsistence (human capital) and cash income needs (financial capital). In this regard, customary forest product access principles, which are a manifestation of social capital in action, are found to be especially important in addressing the livelihood needs of resource poor forest villagers.

The discussion also highlighted the detrimental effects of changes to the CPR nature of forest resources on the livelihoods of marginal groups in society. In this regard, a closer look into forest-based production strategies has shown the potential of market forces and tenure insecurity to erode forest-based livelihoods through encouraging activities that impact negatively on the resource base. Moreover, the undeveloped organisational frameworks within which villagers pursue their forest-based gathering activities were found to have constrained the growth prospects for NTFPs as livelihood sources. At the same time, the discussion has underlined the tenacity of forest villagers' in respect of enhancing the stock of forest resources through plant domestication efforts. In short, while there are powerful factors at work that could dissipate the potential benefits of forest commons, there are also livelihood strategies that contributed to the longevity of the resource base. The critical issue here is one of understanding the broader context within which CPRs are accessed and used. This holds the key for understanding whether



a given use regime is sustainable, that is, whether it could contribute both to resource conservation and livelihood maintenance at the local level without compromising the needs of downstream users and/or the future generation. These are issues to which neither the literature on property rights nor that on rural livelihoods provides adequate answers. Indeed, the mode of utilisation of forests as CPRs is best addressed through analysing the literature on governance systems, which is the subject of the next chapter.

### **3. Governance systems in common pool resources: theory and empirical context**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Having examined the specific processes related to tenure establishment and CFR use, this chapter assesses some of the major competing frameworks developed to analyse governance systems in CPRs. The rest of the chapter has five sections. Section two sets the scene by examining the conceptual link between property rights and governance systems. Section three traces the evolution of common property theory in the context of resource management. In particular it introduces the 'tragedy of the commons' paradigm and provides a critique of the concept from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Section four presents the alternative framework, also known as the 'comedy of the commons' approach, and its applications in the management of CFRs in the Third World. Section five provides theoretical insights into the weaknesses of the comedy of the commons approach that the research develops later in the thesis. Finally, the chapter concludes by synthesising the overall theoretical underpinnings of the research and outlines the linkages between the research objectives and the conceptual framework developed to guide the research.

#### **3.2 Typology of governance systems in common pool resources**

Governance systems, also known as management regimes, refer to the institutional context within which resources are put to use (McCay 1995: 97). More germane to the present research, "[f]orest management consists of a group of deliberate activities for conservation and possible enhancement of useful forest resources and controlled utilization of those resources" (FAO 1993a: 29). There is a close link between property rights and management regimes; however, the two are conceptually distinct (Table 3.1).

It is evident from Table 3.1 that open access CPRs are more than likely to be exploited without any form of regulated governance, while, on the other hand, the market is the most obvious mechanism that guides the management of resources under private property rights. Yet, in both cases, other management regimes have some roles to play. Similarly, resources under common property rights regime are open to a wide spectrum of management systems which could range from a collective to a nation state and to some international governance arrangements. In short, there is no simple one-to-one relationship between the system of property rights in place and the attendant management regime.

**Table 3.1**  
**Property rights and governance systems**

Property rights	Management regimes				
	<i>Laissez-faire</i>	Market	Communal	State	International
"Open access"	XX	?	X	X	X
Private property	X	XX	X	X	?
Common property	X	?	XX	XX	XX

Notes: X = Possible; XX = Most obvious; ? = Problematic or unlikely

Source: McCay 1995: 97, Table 2.

Given that CPRs can be held under a variety of property rights situations, they can as well be subjected to a multitude of governance regimes. A number of instances can be cited to amplify this point. To start with, there are cases where CPRs found in an open access state are subjected to a formal management regime. For example, in Nordic countries such as Finland and Sweden, NWFPs are open access benefits, but this arrangement is an integral part of the state forest management system. In these countries, the major problem affecting the supply of NWFPs is underutilisation, and in order to encourage NWFP harvesting no restriction is placed on their harvesting (Saastamoinen 1999).

On the other hand, CPRs held as private property can at times be subjected to communal management rules. A relevant case in point here is the inability of individuals to sell their farmland held within the framework of customary tenure arrangements (see Section 2.4.2.2, Chapter Two). Furthermore, in some cases the state controls management decisions of resource systems that are owned and operated formally as private property. For instance, in Cameroon forest laws prohibit individuals from harvesting privately-held forest trees "without prior notification of the Forestry Services", and this is justified on environmental grounds (Egbe 1997: 14). In some countries forest laws prohibit people from felling what are considered as rare or endangered tree species, irrespective of their occurrence and ownership status. Specific examples are given in a number of contexts (see, for example Cassidy 2000: 26, for Botswana; FAO 1993a: 112, for Senegal; and Malla 2001: 294, for Nepal).

When CPRs are held as 'common property' they can be subjected to a collective management regime. In the context of forestry, collective management is understood as "all kinds of forest management carried out on the basis of group action" (FAO 1993a: 28). Such an arrangement involves "a variety of regulations for controlled use of specific products". It, therefore, requires "a decision making structure" in charge of the planning and implementation of the management practices and overseeing the distribution of benefits (FAO 1993a: 29-30).

It is, therefore, clear from the above illustration that CPR governance regimes are much more complex than the simple arraying of property rights seem to suggest, and, for this reason, CPR



management arrangements have been studied from a perspective of contending theoretical frameworks. The principal body of reasoning used in the analysis of governance systems in CPRs is known as “common property theory”. The theory, which originated in connection with problems of regulating fishing, dates back to 1911, but has been updated and enriched substantially, especially in the mid-1950s and again with special reference to the study of fisheries (Knudsen 1995: 36). However, common property theory “entered popular parlance” with the tragedy of the commons paradigm (Bruce and Fortmann 1988: 2), a thesis Hardin (1968) enunciated.

### **3.3 “The tragedy of the commons” paradigm: construct and criticisms**

#### **3.3.1 The theoretical construct**

Based on an analysis that pictured “a pasture open to all”, where “... each herdsman will try to keep as many cattle as possible ...”, Hardin (1968) concluded that the resultant unrestricted entry and unregulated use is bound to cause unsustainable exploitation, a phenomenon he termed as “the tragedy of the commons” (1243-1244). Hardin proposed two solutions for forestalling the disaster that the commons are bound to face: strong state intervention and law enforcement or the institution of private property rights regimes.

CPR analysts expounded Hardin’s thesis and synthesised two interrelated reasons for the inevitability of “ruin” in open access property regimes. According to Runge (1981) these are the ‘assurance problem’ (also sometimes known as the ‘free-rider problem’) and the phenomenon of ‘market failure’. The root cause of the assurance problem lies in the supposed expectation that in open access regimes regulated use of the resource by some will not be reciprocated by others. This discourages the competing individuals from establishing a management scheme that would benefit all of the stakeholders, but rather leads to free-riding, i.e., to indiscriminate exploitation. In this context, market failure arises from “... the divergence of private from social cost” (Runge 1981: 595), because each decision making unit gains by increasing its own use level, while the opportunity costs of that increase are eventually borne by the stakeholders as a whole. In general, whenever exclusion arising from the ‘jointness of use’ (that is a high degree of possibility of deriving benefits jointly) is costly and the resource is characterised by highly subtractive flows, effecting co-operative actions among the stakeholders can be a difficult undertaking. This is what is called the commons dilemma or collective action problem. The tragedy of the commons paradigm has, therefore, been viewed as an exposition of this particular concern.

The conceptual link Hardin's thesis had with the earlier powerful Malthusian predictions has made his arguments influential in development decision-making circles. For instance, Hardin's thesis gave the philosophical bases for the nationalisation of forest lands and the conversion of pastoralists' domains into individual ranches (Benjaminsen 1997: 127; McCay 1995: 90; Runge 1981: 596), and in some cases to the division of pasture land into individual herder allocation (Banks 1999: 300-302; Sneath 1998: 1148). Along with the popularity of Hardin's thesis in the natural resource policy arena, there emerged a sustained interest in examining the efficacy of the alternative management regimes that he proposed and, in general, the limitations of his analysis, which is the subject of the next discussion.

### **3.3.2 The criticisms: a look at the "revisionist perspective"**

#### **3.3.2.1 Limitations of Hardin's analysis**

In this research, 'revisionist perspective' refers to the body of literature that criticises Hardin's analysis for its incompleteness and the lack of universality his thesis claims. The term 'revisionist perspective/view' is credited to McCay (1995) - herself a leading critique of the 'traditional' approach which Hardin spearheads and a protagonist of the new school (94). "The thrust of the revisionist critique has been empirical, that is, to bring forward new evidence that rebuts Hardin's thesis" (Knudsen 1995: 18).

Many CPR analysts acknowledge the occurrence of tragedies in the unmanaged commons. However, according to the revisionist school, an examination of the "generality" of Hardin's theory points to some drawbacks. To start with, his analysis is based on a model that assumes all individuals are "selfish, ... maximizers of short-run results" (Ostrom *et al.* 1999: 279) and that "... all the players act on their own, independently of the social context" (Benjaminsen 1997: 127). Some even wondered if "Hardin's herdsman ever talked to one another" (Birgegard 1993: 27). In short, "[i]t is an error to suppose that an individual calculus can explain a common system - rather, one has to understand the socially and politically embedded commons to explain the individual calculus" (Peters 1987: 178).

Furthermore, Hardin's critics recast his axiom as a question: "If a commons has in practice become an open access resource, what historical factors have brought this about?" (Peters 1987: 175). The answers to this question also led analysts to take issue with Hardin's proposals for averting tragedy on the commons. For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, nationalisation is believed to have rendered large tracts of forests and intensively managed common pool woodlands *de facto* open access resources where the propensity to poach became far greater

than that to manage (Birgegard 1993: 27; FAO 1993a: 41; Shepherd 1991: 162). Empirical studies have also demonstrated failures of both government ownership and that of privatisation to deliver the promise of sustainable resource management. Sneath (1998) notes how government ownership in southern Siberia/Russia and individual allocation of pasture lands in northern China accentuated resource degradation in these areas. Similar such experiences have also been documented for pastoral east Africa (Birgegard 1993: 22; Grandin 1987).

Feeny *et al.* (1990) underlined that in the context of less industrialised countries, state governance does not necessarily ensure sustainable use. They attributed this state of affairs to a poorly developed resource management professional structure and to problems of law enforcement (11–12). Azhar (1993) provided evidence of how the introduction of state tenure in a hitherto locally administered forest area of Pakistan accelerated forest degradation. The key factor in this process was the alliance forest administrators' forged with the local population in assigning to forests exclusive private property rights through outright bribes and other favours - a behaviour known as "rent seeking" in the academic literature. Shepherd (1988) also documented similar observations in the context of Somalia. She showed that nationalisation of communal woodland areas and the subsequent introduction of state-sponsored charcoal production as well as the inability of government agencies to monitor these operations brought about rapid depletion of tree resources on which local agricultural communities were so dependent for their livelihoods.

Citing similar practical experiences arising from the policy narratives that Hardin prescribed, McCay (1995) concluded that "[s]uch events have often undermined or destroyed the option of communal management of common property and generated tragedies of both the commons and the commoners" (McCay 1995: 90). It is worth noting that, in the above analyses, no claim is made to discredit the potential potent resource management roles that private property or government ownership of the commons could play. It is, however, curious to note that the option of *communal or group management* is conspicuous by its absence from Hardin's propositions. In regard to rehabilitation of the commons, the crux of the argument is that, "... more solutions exist than Hardin proposed" (Ostrom *et al.* 1999: 278).

In a major conference on CPR management held in the USA in 1985, leading protagonists of the revisionist school presented "the first concerted effort" (Knudsen 1995: 1) challenging Hardin's thesis empirically and in a variety of CPR contexts. To this end, they used a conceptual tool developed by Ronald Oakerson, so called "Oakerson's framework", for the purpose. This is a template designed to make comparisons and generalisations across diverse CPR management situations (Oakerson 1992). In view of the pertinence of this framework for subsequent



discussions a slight *detour* is made to highlight its salient features before presenting some of the empirical findings that critics use to rebuke Hardin.

3.3.2.2 Oakerson’s framework

The framework identifies four mutually exclusive analytical categories that are deemed relevant for understanding the nature of CPR management. These are the *physical and technical attributes of the resource, decision-making arrangements, patterns of interaction, and the outcomes* (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2**  
**A summary of Oakerson’s framework**

Components	Key characteristic features
Physical and technical attributes	Jointness; exclusion; and divisibility.
Decision making arrangements	Collective choice rules; operational rules; and external arrangements.
Patterns of interaction	Co-operation vs. prospect of “riding free”.
Outcomes	Efficiency vs. equity.

Source: Oakerson 1992: 43-57.

**Physical and technical attributes:** It is held that the natural characteristics of the resource and the forms of production practices employed to harness it affect governance options. Relevant questions to be asked here include (a) whether CPR benefits can be shared among potential users, (b) amenability of the resource to exercise exclusion of outsiders and feasibility of technical options (e.g. fencing/enclosure) to facilitate this, (c) feasibility of dividing up the CPR into viable individually owned units (Oakerson 1992: 43-46).

**Decision-making arrangements:** Here the main concern is on “... *who* decides *what* in relation to *whom*” (Oakerson 1992: 46, emphasis in the original). These were to be viewed in terms of (a) “collective choice rules”, which establish the framework for group co-operation, (b) “operational rules”, those regulating day-to-day CPR use, and (c) rules governing “external arrangements”, including government policies and working procedures directly affecting the performance of collective action (Oakerson 1992: 46-49). A key concept employed to evaluate alternative institutional arrangements is that of *transaction cost*, which in this context is understood as “... the cost of collective regulation, that is, the cost of initiating and performing regulatory task” (Baland and Platteau 1999: 780). Feeny (1992) categorised these into “cost of intragroup enforcement, cost of extragroup exclusion, cost of decision making, and cost of coordination” (272).

**Patterns of interaction:** These refer to the choice individuals make on the basis of comparing the benefits (inducements) and costs (obstacles) of alternative actions. Primarily, these

alternative actions manifest themselves in either co-operation or non-co-operation in the collective management of the CPR in question (Oakerson 1992: 49-50).

**Outcomes:** These refer to the effects of the management arrangements in place. Oakerson (1992) put forward “efficiency” and “equity” as the relevant criteria for evaluating outcomes (51-52). Efficiency in this context refers to a situation of sustainable rates of resource use, while equity denotes the extent to which individuals get “a reasonable and fair return on their contribution to a collective undertaking that regulates behaviour” (Oakerson 1992: 52). Ultimately, the types of outcomes generated are taken as reflections of the extent of “good fit” between the resource characteristics and decisions taken for its utilisation.

Against the above background, the following section examines experiences with traditional community resource management regimes in a wide range of settings.

### **3.3.2.3 Illustrations and insights from traditional group management of CPRs**

Employing Oakerson's framework a number of researchers have made valuable contributions to the debate on the proactive role local communities' play in addressing the commons dilemma. Two of these experiences, namely those investigated by McKean (1992) and Wade (1992), are reported in Table 3.3 (next page). In addition, the table contains a selection of empirical findings that have established the longstanding practice of collective resource management in both industrialised and developing countries.

In sharp contrast to Hardin, the experiences outlined below have shown that when faced with a CPR dilemma, people come up with collective solutions. A closer look at the above works shows that the CPR systems under review: (a) enhanced jointness of use, (b) put in place a mechanism of excluding outsiders, (c) devised ways of regulating intra-group resource use, (d) were mediated through and co-ordinated by traditional authorities of some degree of legitimacy and autonomy, and (e) ensured efficient use of CPRs without compromising social equity. A note of explanation on major aspects of the workings of these systems is in order.

The mechanisms employed to regulate free-riding reflected in the main the level and sophistication of social organisation reached by each of the studied communities. For instance, in historical Japan and the southern Indian villages, the operational as well as collective choice rules were highly formalised and codified, with observance of these rules involving, among others, community-level patrolling. On the other hand, in much of sub-Saharan Africa traditional religious considerations, group pressure and/or the prospect of social ostracism have important deterrent roles.



**Table 3.3**  
**Traditional group management experiences of CPRs**

Author/s	Setting	CPR	Management mechanisms
CFWCP, 1994b	Ethiopia (Gurage Zone)	Village forests/grassland	Access rules and sanctions by Informal village-level social organisation.
Shepherd, 1988	Somalia (Bay region)	Woodland/grazing	Chiefs restricting “hacking good-pole trees for goat fodder” and encouraging planting of alternative fodder trees.
Shepherd, 1991	Botswana (Southeast)	Village forests	Chiefs banning felling of “village amenity trees” and arranging a range of tree use zones.
	Kenya (The Turkana)	Grazing/woodland	Elders issuing tree management directives that addressed animal feed and conservation concerns.
Wade, 1992	India (South)	Irrigation and dry season grazing	Traditional village councils evolved elaborate intra- and inter-village CPR use and penalty regimes.
Cox, 1985	England (19 <sup>th</sup> Century)	Grazing land	Stinting rules to control number of livestock for grazing.
Jones <i>et al.</i> , 1998	Switzerland (The Valais canton)	Irrigation system	Formal governance structures deciding on water distribution.
	Maltese Islands	Irrigation system	No formal CPR organisation, but system upheld through “collective conscience”.
McKean, 1992	Japan, until the 1950s (Yamanashi prefecture)	Grassland, irrigation, & village forests	Village level product-specific and yield-based harvest rules; rigorous enforcement systems; and graduated penalty regimes.

It should be noted that, in most of the above examples there is no CPR-specific traditional authority as such. In the case of sub-Saharan Africa “[b]y and large, the tenure and authority regimes which once governed the successful use of forest, are also those that govern the use of farmland and all other local resources” (Shepherd 1991: 152). Both in historical Japan as well as in Southern India the same village level organisations cater for the management of pastureland, irrigation systems and/or woodlands as interdependent local production systems.

On the other hand, the experience of water management in the Maltese Islands (Jones *et al.* 1998) brings to light the possibility of a co-operative outcome via *ad hoc* arrangements, and sits well with the workings of individual-led CPR management reported for much of sub-Saharan Africa. With regard to the latter, “[i]n many cases, management is conducted almost entirely by people with rules only in their heads and without coercion” (Shepherd 1991: 151). Steelman and Carmin (1998) took the argument a step further. They wrote, in situations where the “institutional norms” of group property management regimes are not formalised “... it may be impossible to detect the existence of a common property resource until the regime becomes engaged in some



overt or clearly delineated form of activity. New management structures may be established or informal regimes may become formalised when the stability or the security of the resource system is threatened" (488).

Finally, most of the above traditional resource management systems have a strong showing in terms of engendering efficient and sustainable use of the resources under study. As regards the equity outcomes of the management arrangements several of the authors note that the CPR organisations in question were dominated by local elites; and yet, the resource poor were treated fairly in the distribution of benefits. In historical Japan, a range of measures, including lottery assignments to CPR harvest areas and use of a rotation system was used to ensure that poorer community members also benefit from the communal governance system at work (McKean 1992: 88). In south Indian villages Wade (1992) noted that the substantial private interests of the elite councillors contributed immensely to the maintenance of the collective good provisioning process (223). Moreover, "[t]he village-wide arrangements allow economies of scale in monitoring and policing the grazing animals, and also save on transaction costs" (Wade 1992: 217), which disproportionately benefit the poor. In the context of village forests in highland Ethiopia, CFR use was restricted to what could loosely be regarded as wealth-neutral activities. These included, new house construction at time of household establishment, harvesting of building poles in the event of damage to the house because of fire hazard or similar other causes, and meeting of village-wide wood demands (CFWCP 1994b).

In sum, the above corroborate the tenacity of group-based natural resource use systems in different parts of the world and such sets of experiences are cited as justifications for underlining the relevance of 'communal governance' in CPR analysis (Feeny *et al.* 1990; McCay 1995). In an assessment of the historical focus of development assistance schemes Bromley (1989) lamented donors' exclusive interest in pro-poor land reform programmes and their neglect of the "... rich array of institutional alternatives whereby land and related resources might be managed" (875). He underlined the economic significance of "the resources of the public domain" in the developing world and reiterated the existence of time-tested management practices in "commonly-controlled resources" (875). He then advised the development community to give deserved attention to the revitalisation of local institutional arrangements that bear upon CPRs. He called such an undertaking *the other land reform*, juxtaposing it with the land redistribution measures that are so often emphasised in the discourse on economic development in the developing world (867, 875). McCay (1995) argues in the same direction:

From the revisionist point of view, a broader and more complex range of alternatives comes into view. Alternatives include a stronger emphasis on potentials of people as social actors to manage their affairs and on more decentralised and cooperative management - what is here meant by 'comedy of the commons' (99).

The 'comedy of the commons' paradigm rests on examining the institutional environment within which the commons operate and the conditions for effective institutional intervention and development. This perspective envisages varying degrees of stakeholder involvement in resource management that range from public stewardship to state-resource user partnership to self-governance and community level autonomy. However, "[m]uch of the promise of the 'comedy' perspective derives from case studies of communal regulation of the commons (McCay 1995: 100).

Advocates of the comedy of the commons approach emphasise the virtues of common property regimes over privatisation of the commons. McKean (2000) provides a synthesis of earlier works on the subject, including her own, and concluded as follows: "[m]any natural resource systems can be far more productive when left intact than when sliced up, suggesting that they should be managed as intact wholes, or certainly in large swathes, rather than in uncoordinated bits and pieces. This is particularly true of forest ecosystems" (37). She cites four justifications for this: "indivisibility" (i.e., "the production system may simply not be amenable to physical division or demarcation"); "uncertainty in location of productive zones" (i.e., "nature may impose great uncertainty on the productivity of any particular section of a resource system" and creation of a common property regime enables a sharing of the associated risks); acquisition of "productive efficiency via internalizing externalities" (i.e., a common property arrangement counteracts the possible negative effects of uncoordinated resource use on the resource base and its beneficiaries); attainment of "administrative efficiency" (i.e., a common property regime helps circumvent the administrative infrastructure that enforcement of private property rights demand, and which in most cases is in short supply) (McKean 2000: 37-40). In this regard, one of the most influential outcomes of the 'comedy of the commons' approach is the development of 'design principles' that are believed to guide the evolution of successful community-oriented CPR management regimes.

### **3.4 The 'comedy of the commons' approach: principles, practices and pitfalls**

#### **3.4.1 Design principles in co-management of CPRs**

In the context of forestry, co-management is defined as "working partnerships between the key stakeholders in the management of a given forest", whereby local communities make crucial contributions (Brown 1999: 1, after Carter 1999). Central to any co-management arrangement is local people's motivation and capacity for collective action. Oakerson's framework has shed some light on the conditions necessary for enhancing collective action in CPR management. However, Ostrom (1999) is credited for synthesising and developing theoretical advances dealing



with the institutional bases of co-management regimes. As part of this endeavour she identified a set of theoretical attributes conducive to self-organisation in CPR management (Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4**  
**Conducive factors for self-organisation in CPR management**

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Desirable features</b>
<b>Resource-related</b>	
Feasible improvement	Fairly rich and productive resource base.
Indicators	Availability of reliable, valid, and cost-effective information about the resource.
Predictability	Ease of establishing specific resource benefits.
Spatial extent	Size and location of resources permit effective use and enhance users' familiarity of the environment.
<b>User-related</b>	
Salience	High degree of livelihood importance of the resource.
Common understanding	Users are collectively aware of the impact of their actions on the resource.
Discount rate	Users have conservation ethos.
Distribution of interests	Effects of current patterns of use are likely to affect all users.
Trust	Users trust each other to work together as a unit.
Autonomy	Users have sufficient clout to develop own resource use rules.
Prior organisational experience	There is some collective organisational experience.
Group size	Number of participants should be sufficiently large to undertake physical monitoring, but be small enough to implement effective sanctioning system.
Group heterogeneity	Context-specific.
<b>Factors relating to the external environment/"the larger regime"</b>	
Conducive policy framework	Decentralised/devolved authority of decision making.
Supportive working procedures	Users are provided with organisational and technical assistance.

Source: Adapted from Ostrom 1999: 3-6; 8-9.

According to the mainstream common property theory, resource-related attributes provide the necessary material bases for setting in motion co-operative action. As such, the existence of resources in sufficient quantity and quality constitutes an essential first step for the initiation of group action. User-related attributes, on the other hand, define the incentives and capabilities necessary to make group management a reality. Key considerations in this regard are the sufficiency of benefits an individual gets to compensate for their contributions to the collective action and the ability of resource users, as a group, to receive sufficient benefits to make collective action a worthwhile endeavour (Schlager and Blomquist 1998: 101-105).

As the discussion on CPR tenure has shown (see Section 2.4), the ability of individuals to access and utilise CPRs vary considerably. This has its own impact on the evolution of collective action, for "[a]dvantaged users may refuse to cooperate because they are effectively insulated from the effects of CPR dilemmas, at least for a time" (Schlager and Blomquist 1998: 101). There is, however, a strand of thought that regards group heterogeneity as a positive factor that facilitates co-operative action. This is, for instance, the case when a "privileged group" exists among users of a particular CPR. The term "privileged group" designates individuals with the assertiveness and clout to initiate community-wide activities. Thus, when, for a variety of reasons, influential



individuals are willing to bear the costs of organising and enforcing a group property regime, co-operation is said to stand a better chance of success (Ruttan 1998: 46; Schlager and Blomquist 1998:101). Baland and Platteau (1999) reviewed the available evidence concerning the role of the "privileged group" in setting off collective action only to arrive at an inconclusive verdict. They present cases where the costs of initiating collective action is largely borne by the "economic elite", but also cite instances of "wealthier users" undermining collective action (780-782).

The role of external agencies such as the state in the quest for appropriate group management modalities is of utmost significance. This is because, local level co-operation for resource management cannot be expected to take place in a political and administrative vacuum. Indeed, autonomous co-management regimes are likely to thrive best in environments where there is a respect for bottom-up initiatives. Moreover, resource user groups operate effectively where the public sector is structured in such a way as to provide the necessary technical backstopping to the same, which, in this context, includes capacity building and the back up of local monitoring and sanctioning efforts (Ostrom 1999: 4).

Analysts recognise that most CPRs may not meet all the desirable qualities necessary to set in motion organised management action. As Ostrom (1999) argues "[t]he crucial factor is not whether all attributes are favourable but the relative size of the expected benefits and costs they generate as perceived by participants" (6).

The existence of a well functioning organisational basis is at the heart of enduring group CPR management, because this provides the necessary forum for directing intra-group activities and for representing the unit in its dealings with the larger regime. Cognisant of this, CPR theorists also deliberate upon a set of design principles that could enhance the effectiveness of local organisations as resource managers (Ostrom 1999: 7). Consistent with the conceptual distinctions drawn between 'organisations' and 'institutions' (see Section 2.3.1) some of Ostrom's design principles relate more to organisational structures while others pertain to associated rule configurations, which are here considered as institutional variables.

In terms of organisational structure, the following are among the essential ingredients: (a) *organisational autonomy*, where there is little interference by government authorities; (b) *ownership of key tasks*, that is to say, key organisational functions such as monitoring of CPRs and their utilisation should be done by, or be made accountable directly to, the group; (c) *conflict resolution function*, where management bodies "have rapid access to low-cost, local arenas to resolve conflict among users or between users and officials"; and (d) *nested enterprise*, that is in

CPRs that are part of larger ecosystems (e.g. forests), local level management groupings should ideally be integral parts of similarly constituted “multiple layer” bodies.

In a similar vein, the following institutional principles are identified as critical to the success of CPR management regimes: (i) *clearly defined CPR boundaries* from which known resource users derive benefits in accordance with laid down rules; (ii) *congruence*, which means that use rights and sanctions are adapted to local conditions; (iii) *majority rule*, where modification of operational rules reflect the wishes of the majority; and (iv) *graduated sanctions*, whereby penalty regimes reflect proportionality of offences. Management bodies that fulfil the above attributes are regarded as *robust*, which means that “they survive for very long periods of time utilising the same basic rules for adapting to new situations over time” (Ostrom 1999: 7).

Given the resource management thrust of the research, it will be worthwhile to assess the extent to which the above design principles have been translated into practice and the lessons of experiences gained from the record of planned co-management regimes.

### **3.4.2 Examples from forest co-management regimes: a critical reflection**

The last decade has seen a proliferation of CPR management systems embodying the principle of co-management. Aside from a realisation of local people’s resource management capabilities, a number of developments have been cited as factors precipitating the adoption of community involvement in natural resource management as a matter of deliberate public policy. These pertain to system-wide changes and, in the context of forestry, to sector-specific features. The former refer to (i) changes in the international political climate and the growing emphasis on political accountability and transparency; (ii) the widespread adoption of economic adjustment measures and the attendant streamlining of the role of the state and the structure of its bureaucracy; (iii) increased government recognition of the failure of past approaches; (iv) demonstration effects of successful pilot efforts of community involvement in NGO operated projects; (v) ascendancy of “populist approaches in development”; and (vi) associated shifts in patterns of aid financing towards community-oriented initiatives (Brown 1999: 1-3; Thompson 1995: 1521-1522). The context-specific factors include, in a nutshell, (a) proximity of villagers to, their intimate knowledge of, and dependence on the forest resource base; (b) cultural diversity of forest dwellers and the need to evolve flexible and adaptive management systems; and (c) the cost-effectiveness of community involvement in forest management in the light of budget austerity facing forestry departments (Brown 1999: 1-3).



Forest co-management schemes are known by different names in different contexts. Table 3.5 provides a summary of the main features of a 'representative' selection of co-management schemes in the Third World. Appendix 1 discusses in greater detail the workings of these models, and the following is a synthesis of the observations made therein.

The specific components of the co-management schemes under study reflect partly the history of forest exploitation and partly the nature of policy provisions governing the schemes. Given the vital contributions of NTFPs in the local livelihood system most of these models provide for regulated use of NTFPs by forest villagers. Moreover, quite a few of the schemes entitle forest villagers to benefit from the sale of wood. In some instances, co-management has also entrusted communities with pursuing forest-based businesses. In this regard, forest villagers have been encouraged to organise as geographical communities and discharge forest-specific management activities.

**Table 3.5**  
**Profile of some selected planned co-management experiences in the forest sector**

Author	Country	Scheme	Key components	Local organisations
Hobley 1996	India	Joint forest management (JFM)	Regulated subsistence NTFP use	Forest protection committees
			Forest employment	
			Access to thinned wood	
			Revenue sharing	
	Nepal	Community forestry/ User group forestry	Subsistence forest use Forest employment	Forest user groups
Klooster 1999	Mexico, Oaxaca state	Community-based forestry (CBF)	Concessionnaire logging	Community assemblies and other task-specific units.
			Community logging	
			Regulated subsistence wood use	
Morrow and Hull 1996	Peru, Palcazu valley	Communal forest management	Timber sale	Forestry co-operative (with strong donor backing)
			Wood processing	
			Land titling	
BNRMP 1999 and Cassidy 2000	Botswana	Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM)	Designation of forest reserves for community management	CBOs and district authorities
			Forest lease in/around CCHAs* for commercial use of plants	
Brown 1999	Cameroon, High Forest Zone	Community-based management (CBM)	Revenue sharing	"Community initiative groups (G/C)" and local councils
			Timber sub-contracting	
Brown 1999 and CFMU 1999	Ghana, High Forest Zone	Collaborative forest management (CFM)	Revenue sharing	Forest committees (FCs) and traditional authorities
			Compensation measures	
			Favourable NTFP use regime	
			'Land-for-conservation'	
Berglund and Nilsson 1997	Tanzania, Arusha region	Decentralised forest management (DFM)	Regulated NTFP use	Sub-village and village forest committees
			Forest land use planning	

\* CCHA = Community controlled hunting area.

The diversities of experiences aside, most of the case studies presented above share a couple of common fundamental characteristics. First, all of the group management regimes have in one



way or another benefited from conducive national political and administrative measures taken in their respective domains of implementation. This in a way vindicates the instrumentality of Ostrom's (1999) "larger regime" (see Table 3.4) in providing the impetus for the practice of co-management. Secondly, co-management represents an improvement over previous styles of management that excluded forest villagers from the management process. In most instances, the drive for co-management has been as much resource conservation as enterprise development.

It is, however, recognised that there is more to be gained from understanding the weaknesses of the co-management system than from a celebration of its successes. One of the commonest pitfalls of co-management is the social inequality of its outcomes and its vulnerability to what Klooster (1999) called "the problem of elite capture" (366). In most forested regions tree resources are, naturally, key economic assets that also attract the attention of the rich and the powerful, who, as documented in Appendix 1, use every means to occupy leadership positions in local forest organisations. This has militated against a more equitable distribution of the benefits that accrue from co-management and, in some instances, has threatened the sustainability of the resource system itself. The other shared feature of the weaknesses of co-management relates to the wider environment within which the scheme operates. This in turn could be viewed from two perspectives. Firstly, there is the perennial problem of relinquishing crucial management power to forest villagers such that in most co-management arrangements the locus of decision making is still in the hands of the state authorities. Secondly, loopholes in the policy framework have also created opportunities at the field level for forestry staff to exclude villagers from reaping the full benefits that co-management could provide them with. This should be seen against the background that most co-management arrangements operate within a framework of state forest ownership.

As far as academic discourse goes, the initial whole-hearted support to the "comedy of the commons" approach is now being tempered by critical analyses of its theoretical foundations. In particular, the lessons of experience outlined above have prompted a wider debate concerning the notion of *community* in co-management arrangements and the conceptual bases of the various design principles enunciated to facilitate group-based CPR management.

### **3.5 The critical discourse: locating 'plural perspectives' in resource management**

#### **3.5.1. Community heterogeneity and co-management outcomes**

Several of the writings referred to in 3.4.2 above have addressed the notions of asymmetry in community composition and the divergent outcomes of collective action in the forest management

arena. Some of the concerns of these and other related works have usefully been synthesised and given a theoretical underpinning in a recent body of critical literature on the performance of community-based sustainable development programmes (Leach *et al.* 1997a, b). This analysis, known generally as the Environmental Entitlements Framework (EEF for short), elucidates the effects of intra-community dynamics on the supply and composition of environmental goods and services. The framework has also provided important insights into more recent critical assessments on institutional aspects of CPR management.

Leach *et al.* (1997a) employed the concepts of *endowments*, *entitlements*, and *capabilities* as essential building blocks in their analytical framework. “[W]hile endowments include various formal and informal rights over resources that the social actors have in principle, entitlements refer to the sets of utilities that they are able to derive in practice”. Environmental entitlements are thus entitlements arising from the stock of environmental goods and service flows at one’s disposal. “Entitlements enhance people’s capabilities, which are what people can do or be with their entitlements” (17). EEF places considerable emphasis on how pervasive intra-community differences can be and the “contested nature of resource claims”. In such settings *institutions* are said to play an important mediating role, thereby affecting the transformation of endowments into entitlement benefits. Institutions here are understood not just as the rules of the game (cf. North 1990: 4-5) but as formal and informal rules that are “... constantly made and remade through people’s practice” (Leach *et al.* 1997a: 26).

Cousins (2000) contrasted the conceptual foundations of the EEF with the rule-bound and principle-dominating view of mainstream common property theory and hailed the former perspective as grounded on institutional orders that take explicitly into account “unequal and dynamic social relations” (165). The dynamism in intra-community relations is derived from the “multiplicity of institutional relations in which people are engaged at any one time” (Leach *et al.* 1997a: 26). Therefore, in order to bring about collective action in environmental management, which is a precondition for co-management, EEF emphasises the need for taking “plural perspectives” that would allow “negotiated outcomes”, through processes that are bound to be conflict prone. Otherwise, “... collective choice and consensus come to seem illusory goals” (Leach *et al.* 1997a: 30). More germane to forest co-management, Klooster (1999) observed that in situations where communities are rife with conflict over access to resources, devolving forest management responsibility alone would not address the twin objectives of forest conservation and rural livelihood maintenance. Instead, he argued for a “more nuanced approaches to community-based land restoration strategies” (366). As will be shown below other writers have also taken on board the above analysis in their criticisms against specific elements of the mainstream common property theory.



### 3.5.2 A critique of the conceptual bases of design principles in CPR management

One of the principal defining features of common property theory as exemplified both in 'Oakerson's framework' (Section 3.3.2.2) and in Ostrom's 'design principles' (Section 3.4.1) is the emphasis given to co-operation and non-co-operation as the only strategies social actors adopt when faced with a commons dilemma. Cousins (1993) has long observed that "[s]hort of a complete collapse of cooperation, less powerful groups and individuals within a community may resist changes in definitions of property rights in covert and indirect ways" (14). These mechanisms correspond to what Scott regarded as "everyday forms of peasant resistance" (1985) and, as noted in Section 3.4.2 above, are frequent happenings in co-management undertakings.

Cousins (1993) also takes issue with the emphasis common property theory gives to individuals as the major social actors, as in, for example, individual membership into forest protection committees. He emphasises the role of "intermediate social structures", or in the phraseology of Leach *et al.* (1997a), *meso level institutions* (21), in influencing patterns of interaction in a CPR management context. According to Cousins (1993), collective action outcomes may entail "... coalitions and alliances between groupings within a community, groups which may have different stakes in the commons" (14). Moreover, local interest groups may forge alliances with Government/NGO professionals and help bring about a semblance of community-wide co-operation in the management of CPRs (Cousins 1993: 14; Leach *et al.* 1997b: 94). Such alliances could be prompted by a desire to portray "an image of community cohesion" to outsiders (Leach *et al.* 1997b: 94) or could be used to reproduce the marginalisation of the majority by the elite, a form of alliance which Klooster (1999) characterised as the "weapons of the not-so-weak" (372).

Cleaver (2000) is critical of the preoccupation of the mainstream common property theory with "getting the institutions right" and the attendant focus on the establishment of organisational structures that would maximise collective resource management with minimum transaction costs (361). She writes "[t]he predominant model of institutions in common property resource management literature is essentially bureaucratic; ascribing value to formal manifestations of association and unilineal progressions from 'weak' to 'robust' forms" (364). In contrast, she asserts that in many rural communities the preferred mode of decision making is through community meetings "rather than through more exclusive structures" and that such settings are characterised by high initial transaction costs (370-371). She also queried the emphasis placed on 'clear and explicitly enforced graduated systems of sanctions' in common property theory. In



the context of rural Africa, from where she drew her case materials, Cleaver (2000) observes the existence of a higher degree of propensity for people "to spend more time negotiating consensus than establishing and imposing sanctions" (374) and that rules are interpreted generously, "only *approximate compliance* usually being required" (375, emphasis in the original; see also Morrow and Hull 1996: 1649).

Cleaver (2000) also challenged another of Ostrom's 'design principles' that emphasised the maintenance of 'clear CPR use boundaries' and the crafting of organisations to deal with them. Cleaver saw this as too mechanical a requirement, for rigid boundaries are an anathema to resource use practices in most agrarian societies and the livelihood networks that define CPR use and management are not necessarily constrained by given administrative or physical boundaries (372). In these contexts institutional principles informing CPR management are often borrowed from, and build on, existing social relationships and styles of thinking. These are often spatially unbounded in location, and could appear *ad hoc* and conjectural in style. In this regard, one of the lacunae of common property theory has been identified as the limited attention it gives to the need for congruence of CPR management bodies with traditional decision-making processes (Morrow and Hull 1996: 1647). In a similar vein, the emphasis of the commons theory on creating organisations for particular functions has been challenged. Cases abound where local organisations have broadened their mandates to take up a wide variety of resource management functions (Cleaver 2000: 380; Yihenew 1996b). To conclude, "[i]nstitutions for resource management may be multi-purpose, management may be both intermittent *and* robust, an integral part of social relations *and* subject to negotiation" (Cleaver 2000: 379, emphasis in the original).

Evidently, the above criticisms do not as such challenge the fundamental premise of co-management, which is an institutional grounding of management at the lowest scale of community organisation. Rather, the issues raised pertain to improving the conceptual bases of understanding the institutional environment within which collective action and co-operative management are effected. In sharp contrast to this, several authors seized upon the unequal partnership observed between communities and the state in the various co-management arrangements. As a result, they view the emphasis which CPR analysis gives to the crafting of community level organisational frameworks as contributing, unwittingly, to the capturing of peasant communities by an all powerful state apparatus in the name of decentralised management (Gauld 2000: 248-249). This same concern has also been echoed with reference to different contexts. Based on India's JFM programme Sundar (2000) noted that, with all its local significance, the focus on village-based participatory forest management enterprises has created "a discourse that diverts attention from the real issues", these being the empowerment of the poor

to benefit from the democratic order (276). According to Murombedzi (1999) " [CBNRM] approaches to tenure reform are fundamentally minimalist as they are not predicated on holistic land reform processes...", and he saw little chance for them of ensuring sustainable livelihoods in the long term (3-4). Other analysts have also arrived at similar conclusions regarding the efficacy of CBNRM programmes (Dzingirai 1999).

Some writers maintain that in order for existing forest co-management arrangements to take root, they need to be accompanied by measures aimed at addressing broader land use management issues (Brown 1999: 28). In this regard, a broadening of co-management arrangements to include not just forest commons but also other CPRs is called for. As Sundar (2000) puts it "... people's lives are not divided into separate compartments - what happens in one sphere affects their ability to participate effectively in others" (267).

Other writers challenge the efficacy of the notion of local level participation in decision making, which is a *sine qua non* in collective action endeavours and a concept underpinning forest co-management. For instance, Yeraswork (2000) noted that, "...participation is itself an outcome of certain structural and institutional prerequisites" (35) and wondered if such a process has ever brought about changes in the pattern of control over resources. He writes, "... participation can never serve as a substitute for the policy environment that can give rural people secure access to resources and that can help legitimize their local level institutions". Seen in this way, "[o]ver-occupation with the participatory strategy can deflect attention away from crucial policy issues ..." (47). Brown (1999) has also deliberated on the difficulty of utilising participatory principles where "the notion of 'community' is a contested one" and in a situation of "fundamental political imbalance". He observed, "[a]t the end of the day, concepts such as 'community' and 'participation' have to be regarded as a second-order terminology, inferior in strength and legitimacy to those of 'accountability' and 'democracy'" (30). Yeraswork (2000) also concurs with this conclusion (46). However, unlike Yeraswork, Brown (1999) ascribes a major opportunity to the notion of participatory resource management even in countries where representation and transparency are lacking. He is optimistic that in such contexts the "movement for co-management" could serve as an essential entry point in the quest for addressing sustainable livelihoods and good governance (30).

### **3.6 A synthesis of the conceptual underpinnings of the research**

This section synthesises the major conceptual foundations of the research as discussed in this and the preceding chapter.



### 3.6.1 A summary of the conceptual bases for the study of CFR access and management

The theoretical perspective employed in this research has three major building blocks: *property rights*, *livelihood systems* and *governance regimes*. This is predicated on the conviction that resource rights become real in the course of utilisation, and that an adequate understanding of the strength of interest villagers have in their common pool resources and the organisational framework within which such interests are staked underpin the resource management system in place. Thus, conceptualising the above three components as interdependent elements of a CPR regime is seen as the key for examining the prospect of people-centred CFR management, which is the thrust of the research (see Section 1.3). Figure 3.1 summarises the conceptual foundations of the research, which is a further development of that outlined in Figure 1.1.

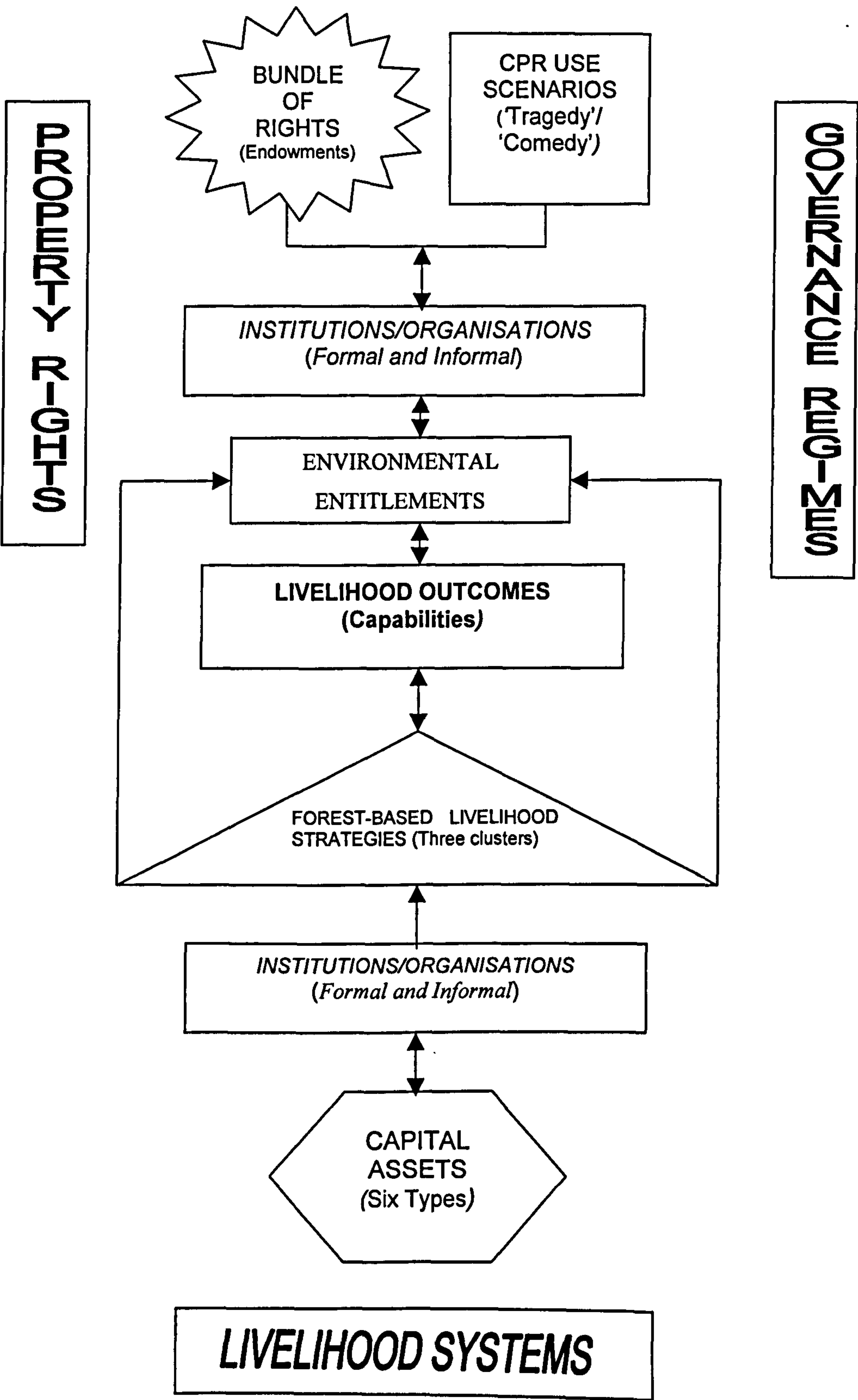
At the centre of the diagram are the *capabilities* that households command. These are conceptualised as *livelihood outcomes*, and the elements directly above this focal issue depict the conceptual linkages existing between *property rights and CFR governance systems* on the one hand and their interrelationship with *livelihood outcomes* on the other. The part of the diagram below the focal issue describes the constituent parts of *forest livelihood systems*. It is recognised that the three conceptual strands are context-specific and that the enquirer is expected to have a good grasp of the broader political economy and environmental factors within which these systems operate.

A note of explanation on the main elements of the conceptual framework is in order. A perspective on tenure helps establish the forms in which common pool natural resources are accessed. In agrarian societies access to CPRs reveals a unique pattern of property rights system whereby a resource is subjected to multiple users having distinct *de facto* or *de jure* rights over its different benefits, a so called *bundle of property rights*. This is not an unmediated process. Indeed a range of formal rules and myriad of informal conventions determine the identity of right holders and the types of rights each stakeholder can exercise. These rights represent household *endowments*.

The sets of forest use rights individual households have in principle and the collective behaviour and actions of other stakeholders in a given CFR, i.e., the management regime in place, influence the outcome of CFR use: the onset of tragedy or judicious use of the forest commons. This is contingent on the existence or otherwise of rule systems that exclude outsiders, regulate offtake levels, and establish mechanisms for dealing with free-riding behaviour. CFR use outcomes in turn condition the flow of benefits – *entitlements* - individuals derive from forest resources, thereby affecting the place a given household holds in the local socio-economic system. This



Figure 3.1: A schematic summary of the conceptual framework



notwithstanding, the particular position of individuals in the social matrix also influences the extent of the benefits they derive from the CFR management system in operation. Thus, there is always a two-way relationship between *entitlements* and *capabilities*, for, irrespective of the CFR management regime, the current social/economic position people occupy contributes to the set of environmental goods and services they will have control over in the future as well.

The research also recognises the need to view these interrelationships from the perspective of the day-to-day workings of the rural household economy, which is conceptualised in terms of the construction of livelihood systems. In other words, a more complete understanding of livelihood outcomes demands an analysis of issues beyond the institutional mechanisms that the narrative on property rights and governance regimes alludes to. Thus, a major consideration has been given to the literature examining rural producers as resilient operators capable of pursuing a range of livelihood strategies in consonance with their resource endowments. In this regard, the material and social resources available to households in agrarian societies, also called *capital assets*, play key roles in determining the course of action a household takes. Capital assets include not only the traditional factors of production but also aspects of the social and political networks that rural people use in pursuing their livelihoods.

Within the framework of CFR use, three clusters of livelihood strategies, which are concerned with forest conversion, forest product diversification and intensification, have been identified. Livelihood analysis has also provided adequate consideration of community differentiation and the effect this has on the supply of capital assets across the broad spectrum of community members and the choice of forest livelihood strategies open to individuals. The degree to which a household succeeds in pursuing these strategies determines the quality of the livelihood outcomes. Here, too, a two-way interaction is postulated between *livelihood outcomes* and *environmental entitlements*. The households' livelihood status at a given point in time is expected to influence the range of capital assets the household will have access to in the future and thereby its relative position in drawing on these assets to pursue desirable livelihood strategies. In general, rural people's choice to pursue the different clusters of forest livelihood strategies depends on the institutional incentives and constraints they face. These include the nature of agricultural production practices in place, the conduciveness of local marketing arrangements, and government policies on fiscal matters, rural production and forest conservation. Moreover, informal production-oriented organisations, such as work parties and formal organisations including co-operative societies, shape the way livelihood outcomes are realised.



The above is the framework that guided the nature of field data collected and its organisation, analysis and synthesis. The following section locates the above conceptual framework within the objectives of the research.

### **3.6.2 The conceptual framework in the context of research objectives**

As introduced in Chapter One, the objective of the research is to examine past and current forest access issues; to assess the organisational bases of tenure establishment and enforcement; to study forest use systems and forest livelihoods; and, based on the findings, to identify operational and conceptual implications for people-centred resource management.

In the present research property rights in forest resources will be examined giving proper consideration to historical developments, socio-political processes and the diversity of local actors. The influence of socio-economic stratification (including gender, occupational group status, and ethnicity) on forest access is an important perspective employed all through the analysis. Within this context, the research deliberates on the workings of local tenurial rights in forests and trees through examining how rights to trees and forests are conferred; who in the localities and in the household has recognised access to the same; the circumstances under which these rights are exercised; and the organisational basis for tenure provision and/or protection. These issues are investigated in Chapters Seven and Eight and benefit from the discussion on the country's governance systems and land and natural resource management policies (as detailed in Appendix 2) as well as the specific historical, ethnographic, ecological and socio-economic conditions of the study areas, as discussed in Chapters Four and Six. This sits well with the empiricist tenets of the conceptual framework.

An appreciation of livelihood issues in the conceptual framework enabled the research to go beyond the 'rights perspective' in assessing forest access. In particular, the research explores the relevance of forests in the local livelihood system and the significance of forest use patterns in engendering forest access: issues entailing a closer examination of product-specific experiences (Chapter Nine). Moreover, the research examines forest and non-forest agricultural cash income sources in the case study communities and the factors influencing forest livelihood outcomes across the different wealth and social categories (Chapter Ten). In this way, the research seeks to establish a conceptual bridge between the largely anthropological question of who has what tenure (*endowments*) and the mainly economic one of who derives what forest benefits and how much (*entitlements and capabilities*).

From both the 'rights-oriented' and 'livelihoods-focused' discussions it was thought possible (a) to discern the influence of past patterns of forest tenure on current state of forest access and identify contemporary forest access principles; (b) to examine the access-livelihood nexus; (c) to characterise the forms of forest management in place; and (d) to put forward practical management options and theoretical lessons of experience. These themes are addressed in Chapter Eleven. Here, too, in line with the conceptual framework developed above, the issues will be explored in conjunction with the broader socio-political (including the policy context) and ecological setting within which rural agricultural activities have been undertaken, as described in Chapters Four and Six and in Appendix 2.

In sum, the three conceptual guiding posts of the research reinforce one another. It is believed that these perspective not only have provided useful insights into the organisation and development of the discussion on each of the analysis chapters in which the specific research objectives are pursued, but also have furnished important pointers for synthesising key findings.



## **4. The study sub-region: background to Kafa-Sheka**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Ethiopia's new constitution, which was ratified in December 1994, established a parliamentary form of government and characterises the country as a Federal Republic composed of nine member states and two chartered cities (Figure 4.1) each of which share legislative, executive, and judicial powers with the federal/central government. Most of the Regional States house communities that show a remarkable degree of internal uniformity in terms of ethnicity and language attributes; the major exception in this regard is the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS). At the time of fieldwork for this study the Regional State was divided into nine Zones and five Special *Woredas*. Kafa-Sheka is one of these nine Zones and is found within the geographic location of 06°15' - 08°10'N and 35°12' - 36°48'E (see Figure 4.2). The Zone has its capital at Bonga, which is situated some 446 kms southwest of Addis Ababa and is found at an altitude of 1725 masl (EWNHS 1996: 205).

This chapter provides research relevant background information on Kafa-Sheka Zone giving particular emphasis to the Kafa sub-region. The remainder of the chapter is divided into five main sections. Section two presents the socio-political history of Kafa. Section three describes the socio-economic and agro-ecological features of the Zone. Section four outlines organisational bases of forest conservation and use in the Zone. Section five summarises the major features of the Zone that are of relevance for the thrust of the research.

### **4.2 The political history of Kafa**

The discussion on Kafa's socio-political history rests on the conviction that in agrarian societies such as Ethiopia, land is the principal means of production and control over land is a major determinant of political power. In such settings, tenurial issues are mirrored through the systems of governance in place and the political processes that give rise to these systems (see, for example Bruce *et al.* 1994: 264).

#### **4.2.1 The kingdom of Kafa: origin, governance structure and external relations**

The early history of the Kafa region in present-day southwest Ethiopia and the establishment of political authority in the area are replete with myths and legends. One of the most enduring legends has to do with the peopling of highland Kafa by waves of immigrant groups mainly of Amhara and Tigray stock from present day northern Ethiopia. The earliest of these groups were

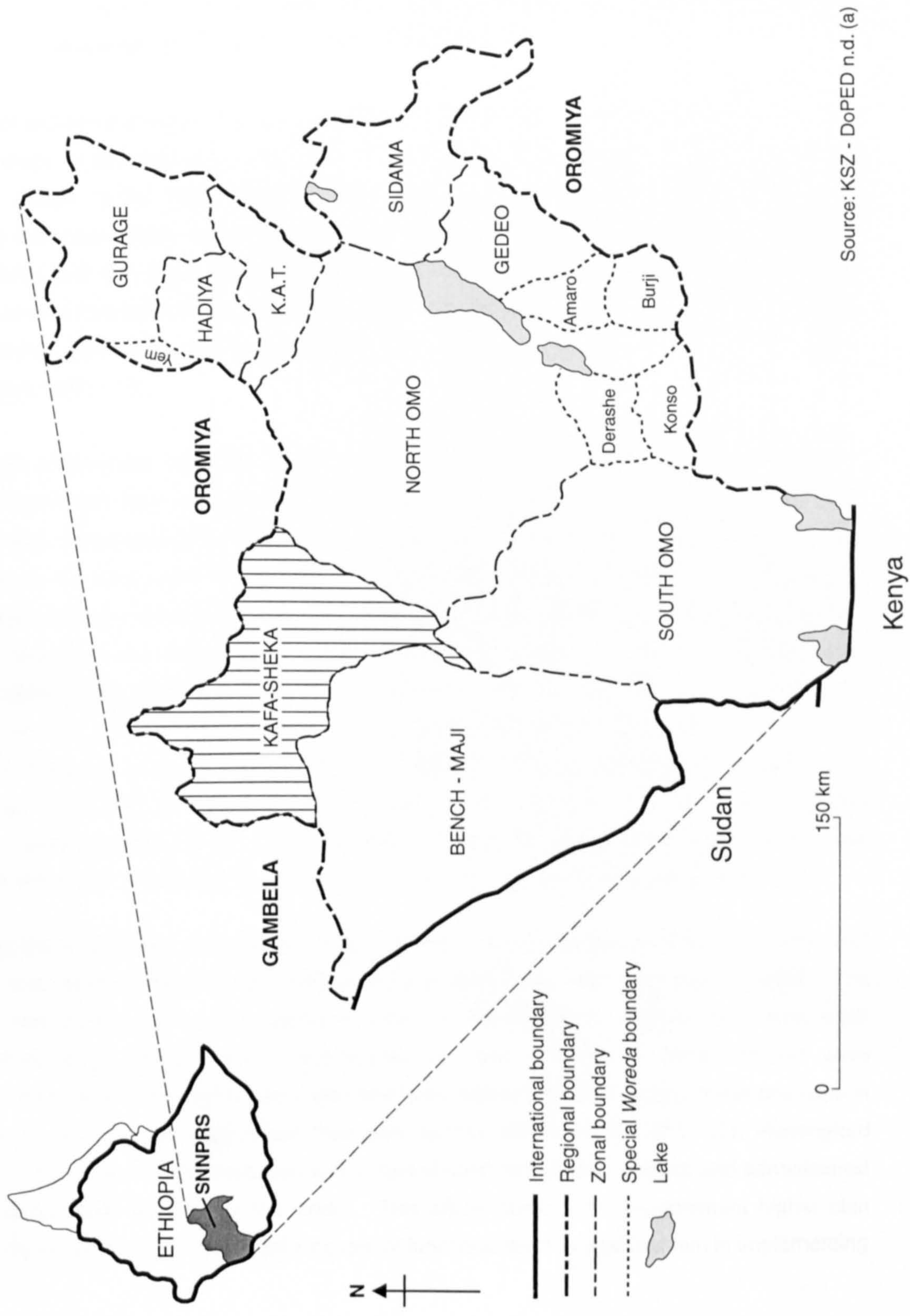


Figure 4.1: Ethiopia: administrative map - first level



Source: FAO / GIEWS 2000

Figure 4.2: Kafa-Sheka in SNNPRS and Ethiopia



Source: KSZ - DoPED n.d. (a)



also believed to have usurped power from the indigenous ruling dynasty (Lange 1982: 180), a legend shared by other kingdoms (e.g. the Wolaita and the Yem) in contemporary southern Ethiopia (Cerulli 1956: 104; Huntingford 1955: 137). Indeed, several researchers present plausible religious and linguistic evidence to confirm that the Kafa region has historically been home to a wide range of ethnically diverse peoples and acted as a melting pot of heterogeneous cultural systems (Lange 1982: 248-271; Orent 1969: 62-67).

In terms of social organisation, the mingling of people of diverse origin meant "an adjustment from a clan-lineage organization to a hierarchy of chiefs, eventually leading to the formation of a kingdom" (Orent 1970b: 273). Synthesising earlier works on the history of the various clans inhabiting the present Kafa region and the contacts some of them had with neighbouring polities, Orent (1969) took the period 1500-1600 as the time of the "formation of the kingdom of Kafa" (56). Central to this political development was the organisation of the people of Kafa (known as the Kaffecho) into series of minority 'high' clans and majority 'low' or 'commoner' clans (Huntingford 1955: 113).

At the apex of the social structure was the nobility - a handful of clans that had a prerogative to own and administer land resources and hold governorship positions. Most migrant groups are said to have constituted the high clans. Conversely, the low clans, most of whom were indigenous to the area, were farmers and servants of the nobility. The royal clan was regarded as the highest of the upper clans. By the same token, craft workers and the Manjos, who are variously described as "submerged classes" (Huntingford 1955: 131, 136) and "occupational castes" (Lange 1982: 261), occupied collectively a lower social status than the farmers. The Manjos, who are considered to be among the 'original' inhabitants of highland Kafa and hence are ethnic Kaffecho, were at the foot of the social ladder. This, reportedly, was because of the widespread belief that Manjos had "questionable human descent" and that they practised "unclean" feeding habits (Lange 1982: 264-268). The social structure described above had important influences on the pattern of resource tenure that evolved in the area (Appendix 3).

The kingdom of Kafa had an elaborate administrative structure where the king, *Tato*, who was assisted and advised by a seven member council (*Mikrecho*), was the head of state. The kingdom was divided into twelve (eighteen since the mid-nineteenth century) provinces, each administered by a governor called *Woraforasho* (lit: ruler of chiefs). These officials were appointed from among the higher clans who had "prescriptive rights" to occupy these positions in provinces where they had established their own centres (Orent 1970b: 283, 291; Huntingford 1955: 113, 123). Each of the provinces was in turn divided into several districts and administered by the *Rasheshowo* (lit: chief of the lands). This officer came from the dominant higher clan found in the particular district and had a couple of functionaries who assisted him in implementing



orders from the *Woraforasho* (Orent 1970b: 292). At the village (*Gafo*) level, the clan elder, *Dukeniho* (lit: father of the people) was the village chief and acted as a bridge between his *Gafo* and the office of the district chief (Orent 1970b: 283, 292).

Over the centuries the kings of Kafa had continually re-organised and centralised their administrative structure in response to strengthening the kingdom's military postures. Furthermore, in part to insulate the kingdom from the perennial threats of invasions from the larger of their neighbouring states to the east, the Kafa kings expanded their tribute base through, among other mechanisms, conquering smaller kingdoms in their vicinity (Orent 1978: 188-189). The direction of territorial expansion of the Kafa kings was, with minor exceptions, westwards-into the more heavily forested regions of present day Ethiopia's southwestern border (Cerulli 1956: 91). "Annexation of these lands meant enslavement of their inhabitants and exploitation of their natural resources; the resultant economic reality translated into unparalleled prosperity and power for Kafa owners" (Lange 1982: 198).

Kafa had long realised the virtues of inter-regional trade for adding value to the treasures they had in the form mainly of coffee, ivory and slaves and in enabling them to acquire goods they were not able to produce at home. Thus, ancient Kafa had trade relationships with neighbouring states (Kochito 1979: 13) and with distant places alike (see Abir 1966; Neumann 1902: 400). As shown below, of fundamental relevance to the long-term political fate of the region was the long distance trade relationship that the kingdom of Kafa had with the Christian kingdom in the north, i.e., with the then Ethiopian polity (see Appendix 2.2.1B).

It is necessary to view Kafa's relationship with the northern kingdom in its historical context. For instance, in the later part of the sixteenth century the northern kings established the institution of Christianity in highland Kafa, using Enarya - the Christian kingdom's most southwesterly tributary state (Almeida 1954: 133) - as a launching pad (Beckingham and Huntingford 1954: lviii-lix; Ludolphus, in Orent 1969: 59). Conversely, during the late eighteenth century, when the Kafa Empire was at its height, a Christianised Kafa king expanded its territory to the northeast to secure the main inter-regional trade route from "non-Christian influences". Nonetheless, the king failed in his ultimate objective to "unite Kafa within the nearest Christian state" (Lange 1982: 203; see also Orent 1970b: 277). These developments notwithstanding, all indications are that Kafa had for the most part created and sustained its own institutions and values as an independent kingdom, a polity ended with the drive for territorial expansion by Ethiopia's Emperor Menilik II (r. 1889 – 1913). Appendix 2.2.1B provides the context within which this took place.

#### 4.2.2 Kafa under the Ethiopian State

In 1897, following a well-organised campaign that necessitated the mobilisation of fighting forces mainly from the surrounding Oromo ethnic group, Kafa fell into the hands of Emperor Menilik's generals (Bahiru 1991: 65). The conquest not only entailed considerable loss of life but also resulted in the dispersal and enslavement of the indigenous population (Gwynn 1911: 132; Hudson 1929: 409; Perham 1969: 295).

Consequent upon the occupation the overall commander of the conquering forces (namely, *Ras Woldegiorgis*), who was also designated governor of Kafa in advance of the conquest, took charge of the territory (Bahiru 1991: 65). The new governor of Menilik's Kafa found it advisable to continue using the old kingdom's administrative apparatus including the *Mikrecho* (Huntingford 1955: 125; Lange 1982: 216) as well as the clan-based system of appointing sub-regional officials (Kochito 1979: 30). There are also indications that subsequent rulers of Kafa in the early days of the reign of Emperor Haileselassie I employed the services of the *Mikrecho* in the administration of justice and upkeep of royal property (Gruhl 1932: 264, 326). These developments had important implications for the system of resource tenure instituted in post-conquest Kafa (see Appendix 3).

It should, however, be pointed out that, during the first half of the last century the governors of Kafa, with few notable exceptions, ruled the region with an iron hand and with little interference from the central government. The often-cited instances of misrule included the unbearable tributes the new rulers imposed on the local population and the significant involvement of government officials in slave raids, thereby accentuating the depopulation process begun earlier (Athill 1920: 356; Gruhl 1932: 184). The Italians, during their occupation of Ethiopia, followed a "policy of ameliorating the condition of the indigenous populations as a bulwark against the Amhara and northern Galla [i.e. Oromo]" (Orent 1970a: 229). For instance, they ceded the governorship of Kafa to a member of the indigenous royal clan (Orent 1969: 117-118). During this period the local population had been relieved of the unbearable treatments it endured under successive Imperial Ethiopian government functionaries (Orent 1969: 133; Perham 1969: 362). The above developments also had a bearing on the form of resource tenure in place during the post-conquest period (Appendix 3).

The administrative re-organisation of the post WWII period sent the ancient kingdom of Kafa into political oblivion, as it was now relegated to the status of an *Awraja* (i.e. 'province') under a 'regional' administration that had its seat in Jimma town, a traditionally rival Oromo state to the northeast of ancient Kafa (Perham 1969: 346). The region bore the same name as the *Awraja* -



Kafa. It is, however, instructive to note that the administrative reforms enacted during this period envisaged a hierarchy of lower level government officials, which in the context of Kafa were occupied in large measure by members of the Kaffecho nobility (Orent 1969: 131). Such a unity of interest between Kaffecho notables and the ruling northerners had a role to play in the provision and administration of resource tenure in the region (see Appendix 3).

During the *Derg*, Kafa on the whole retained its *Awraja* status and continued to be administered by appointees of the central government. Following the removal of the *Derg* from power in 1991 Kafa (Kaffecho, as it was then called) assumed varying administrative forms and status. Finally, in January 1996 Kafa was merged with the territory of a numerically smaller but closely related ethnic group called the Shekacho to become Kaffecho-Shekacho (KSZ-DoPED 1998: vii). In terms of administrative hierarchy, Kafa-Sheka entered the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as one of the Zones of the SNNPRS.

In summary, the political history of Kafa has constantly been shaped by a multitude of demographic, trade, and military interactions it has had with its neighbouring kingdoms and distant polities. The functional autonomy of the region reached its lowest ebb with the strengthening of centripetal tendencies in the Ethiopian State under Emperor Haileselassie I. This policy of central control had been dealt a heavy blow in the current post-*Derg* era so much so that Kafa can, at least as a matter of constitutional right, claim a range of autonomous administrative powers. The political history sketched above is in the main meant to furnish the background against which the evolution of historical tenure in the region should be viewed (Appendix 3).

#### **4.3 Highland Kafa and its environs: socio-economic and agro-ecological features**

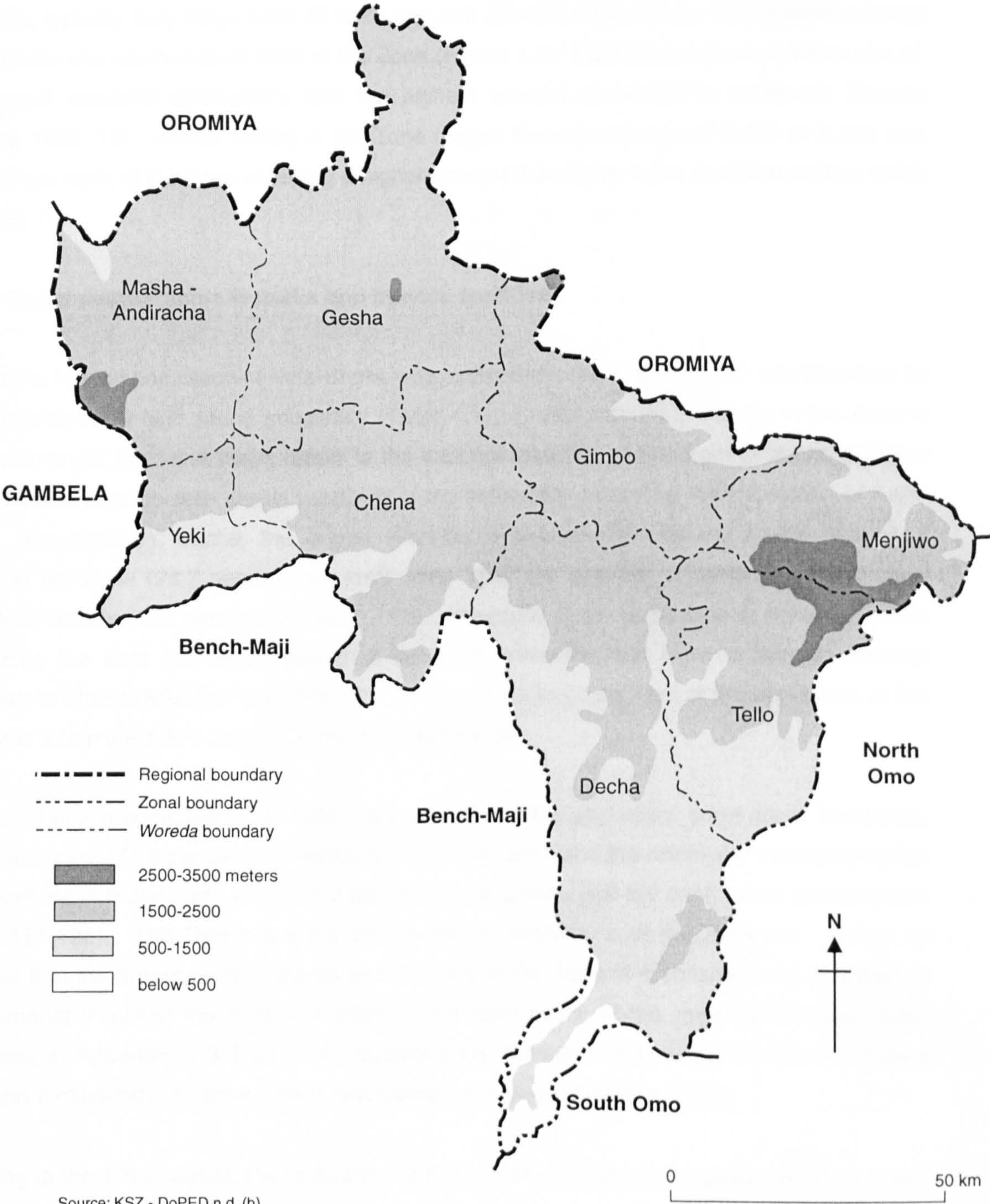
##### **4.3.1 Kafa-Sheka Zone: physical and socio-economic characteristics**

###### **4.3.1.1 Geographical features**

Kafa-Sheka covers an area of 13,289.2 km<sup>2</sup>, which is 12 per cent of the region (KSZ-DoPED 1998: 11). This makes the Zone the fourth largest administrative unit in the region. Kafa-Sheka Zone is organised into eight *Woredas*, six of which pertain to what was historically called Kafa and the remaining two (namely, Masha-Andiracha and Yeki), constitute the Sheka area (Figure 4.3). The Kafa portion constitutes 84 per cent of the total area of the Zone, while the Sheka part accounts for the remaining 16 per cent. (KSZ-DoPED 1998: 11).



Figure 4.3: Kafa-Sheka Zone: administrative divisions and elevation



Source: KSZ - DoPED n.d. (b)



The Zone is a highland region, with 80 per cent of the total area above 1,500 masl. In general, the highlands form an undulating to rolling plateau with slopes dominantly in the 10-30 per cent range (MoWR 1996: 11.1). Most of the mid- and high-altitude areas are found in the northwestern and eastern parts of the Zone (Figure 4.3). The lowlands, in contrast, are generally between 600 and 1500 meters elevation. On the whole slopes here are steeper than those in the highlands, typically they range from 15 to 45 per cent (MoWR 1996: 11.1). The lowlands occupy the southern and southwestern parts of the Zone (Figure 4.3). Kafa-Sheka Zone receives one of the longest seasonal distributions and the highest amount of rainfall in southwest Ethiopia (Sutcliffe 1992: 19). Annual rainfall in the Zone ranges from an average of 1,400 to 2,200 mm, the northern parts of the Zone receiving a higher amount than those in the southern section (KSZ-AC 1996: 1).

#### **4.3.1.2 Socio-demographic features and service facilities**

In 1998 the human population of Kafa-Sheka was estimated to be 779,659. It is characterised by a disproportionately high young population (Table 4.1). Crude population density in the Zone is 58.7 persons per km<sup>2</sup>, and this is closer to the national than that of the regional average (Table 4.1). There is considerable spatial variability in the settlement pattern of the population of Kafa-Sheka. For instance, Decha, the largest *Woreda*, is characterised by the lowest population density in the Zone (26.7 persons per km<sup>2</sup>) while Yeki, the smallest *Woreda*, has the highest population density (189 persons per km<sup>2</sup>). The proportion of the population in the six districts constituting the Kafa sub-region was 81.8 per cent, while the rest were in the two districts belonging to Sheka (KSZ-DoPED 1998: 33). Finally, close to 90 per cent of the population of the Zone lives within the 1,500 and 3,000 masl climatic zones.

In terms of ethnic composition, in 1994, 78.2 per cent of the population were either Kaffechos, Manjos included, (71.8 per cent) or Shekachos (6.4 per cent), and the remainder belonged mainly to the Amhara (6.9 per cent), Bench (5.2 per cent), and Oromo (4.9 per cent) ethnic groups (CSA 1996a: 127-128). The Bench are the southwestern neighbours of the Kaffecho. It can be surmised that the presence of Amharas and Oromos in the Zone is a consequence of a host of developments including the conquest process, the land policy of the Imperial Ethiopian state (discussed in Appendices 3.3 and 3.4), spontaneous migration of subsistence farmers (Wood 1982) and famine-induced government resettlement schemes (Alemneh 1990).

According to the 1994 census, the population of Kafa-Sheka identify themselves with three major religious groupings. Some 77.8 per cent were said to be followers of the Christian faith. Of these 87.8 per cent were adherents of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. On the other hand, 13.9 per



cent of the population were found to be followers of traditional religions, while the remaining 7.2 per cent were Moslems (KSZ-DoPED 1998: 31). The census data aside, traditional religion has been and still is an important part of the lives of the majority of the population in Kafa-Sheka (see Orent 1969: 10, 304-305; Van Halteren 1996: 19). In this regard, the *Alamo* institution is the most pertinent one. This is a spirit medium which people consult concerning their well-being and any form of infractions they face. The credibility of individual *Alamos* rises and falls with the times and their 'fortunes'. In general, however, since the fall of the *Derg* the *Alamo* institution has begun to play a more visible role in attending to the spiritual needs of its followers. In every locality one finds *Alamos* with varying numbers of subjects. The *Ibedegoda* (lit. Omnipotent Lord), who has his seat in a district capital some 50 km east of Bonga, is the chief *Alamo* in highland Kafa who, among other rituals, gives blessings to would-be *Alamos* (see Orent 1969: 306-309).

**Table 4.1**  
**Comparative socio-demographic indicators**

Variable	Spatial dimension	Value	Source of information
<b>Population characteristics</b>			
Population density/km <sup>2</sup>	Ethiopia	47.9	Befekadu and Berhanu 2000: 67
	SNNPRS	104.6	
	KSZ	58.7	KSZ-DoPED 1998: 33.
Dependency ratios (%): • Young (0-14 years) • Old (60+ years) • Total (Young + Old)	Ethiopia (rural)	90.4	CSA 1998a: 79
		9.7	
		100.2	
	KSZ (rural)	97.5	KSZ-DoPED 1998: 27
		12.6	
		110.1	
Sex composition (M: F)	Ethiopia (rural)	50.3: 49.7	CSA 1998a: 79
	SNNPRS (rural)	49.7: 50.3	CSA 1998a: 73
	KSZ (rural)	49.4: 50.6	KSZ-DoPED 1998: 18
Rural population (%)	Ethiopia (rural)	86.3	Befekadu and Berhanu 2000: 53
	SNNPRS (rural)	92.6	Befekadu and Berhanu 2000: 67-68
	KSZ (rural)	91.3	KSZ-DoPED 1998: 18
<b>Social service indicators</b>			
Literacy rate (%)	Ethiopia, 1996	23.0	Befekadu & Berhanu 2000: 115
	SNNPRS, 1994	21.1	CSA 1996b: 59
	KSZ, 1994	19.2	CSA 1996b: 81
Access to potable water (%)	Ethiopia, 1997	25.0	Befekadu & Berhanu 2000: 131
	SNNPRS, 1994	19.4	CSA 1996c: 61
	KSZ, 1996	12.5	KSZ-DoPED 1997: 15
Potential health service coverage (%)	Ethiopia, 1995	45.0	Befekadu and Berhanu 2000: 138
	KSZ, 1997	32.2	KSZ-DoPED 1997: 14

Consistent with the general picture, the bulk of the population of Kafa-Sheka is found in the rural areas (Table 4.1). The remaining Zonal urban population live in a total of 20 towns and rural centres designated as 'urban areas'. In 1994 Bonga town in highland Kafa and Tepi town in Yeki *Woreda* of lowland Sheka constituted about 40 per cent of the urban population of the Zone (CSA 1996a: 114-118). Tepi is considered to be the most important commercial town in the Zone. The

two towns and their surrounding hinterlands are the major beneficiaries of most of the modern infrastructure found in the Zone.

In 1997, banking and electricity service facilities were confined to Bonga and Tepi towns. In the same year, the two towns were the only beneficiaries of piped water supply in the Zone. Thus, in reality, the proportion of rural people with access to safe potable water is much lower than what the Zonal average portrays (Table 4.1). The *Woredas* to which Bonga and Tepi towns belong are among the four *Woredas* that are connected by all-weather road network in the Zone. The remaining four districts lie outside of the national road grid. Tepi town has also an airfield and is serviced by regular commercial air flights. The comparatively poor developmental record of the Zone is also mirrored in the undeveloped state of social service facilities. The Zone was found to have had one of the lowest rates of literacy in the country (Table 4.1). The picture on the health front is similarly below the national average (Table 4.1).

To conclude, the majority of the population in the Zone is fairly homogenous in terms of ethnic composition and earns its livelihood from the rural sector. In general, the Zone is characterised by an inadequate supply of social and technical infrastructure. The limited service facilities found in the Zone show considerable spatial bias in favour of the major administrative and commercial towns.

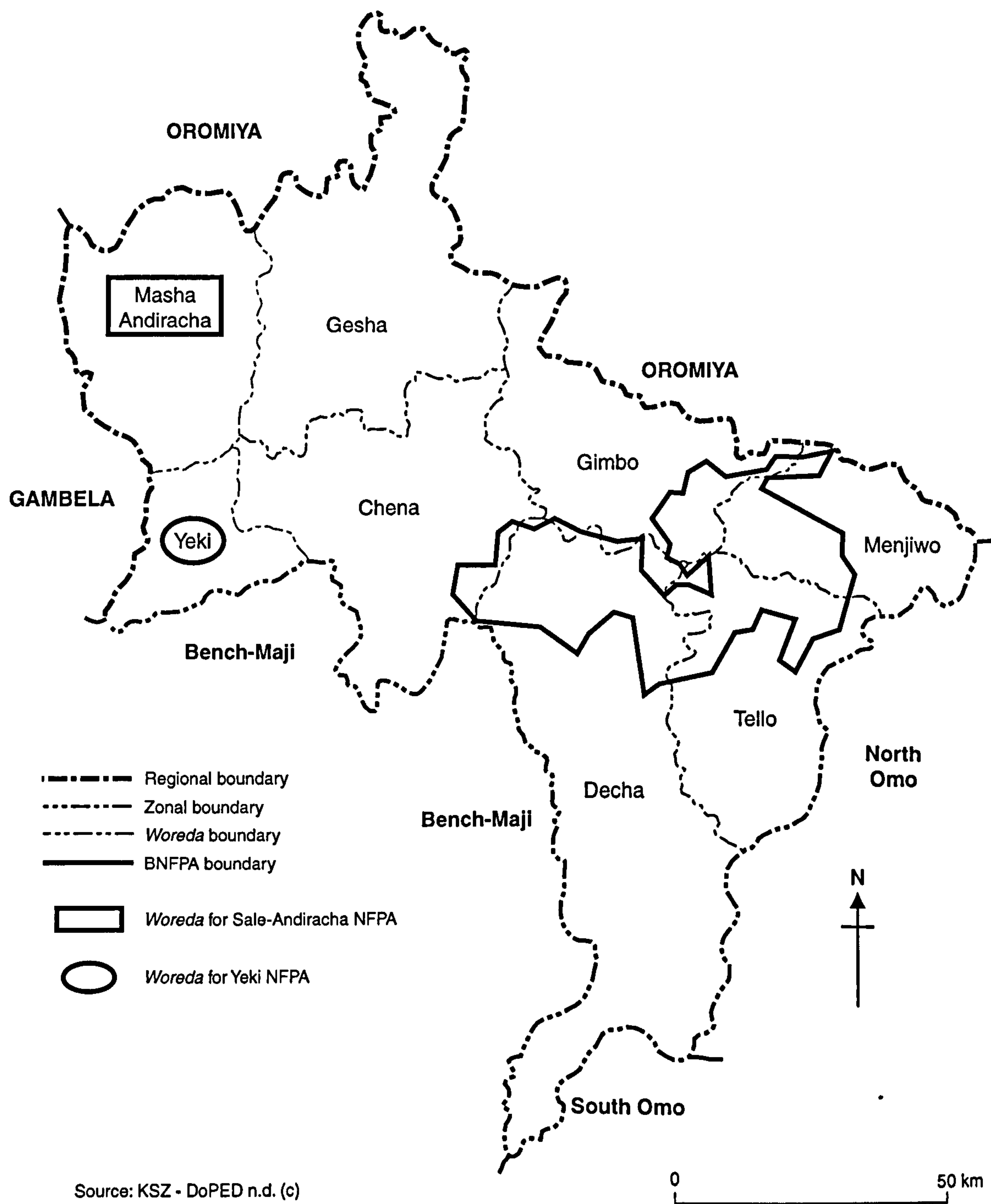
#### **4.3.2 An overview of the vegetation ecology of highland Kafa and its environs**

Kafa-Sheka is one of the most forested regions in Ethiopia, with some 29 per cent of the Zone under forest cover. This constitutes about 54 and 16.7 per cent of the natural high forest in SNNPRS and in the country respectively (EFAP 1994a: 24; WBISSP 1996a: Appendix 5, Table 2). Three of the country's National Forest Priority Areas (NFPAs), namely, Bonga, Sale-Andiracha, and Yeki, are located in the present Kafa-Sheka Zone (Figure 4.4). The Bonga NFPA, which straddles five *Woredas*, was the only forest demarcated as a state forest in Kafa-Sheka Zone (Mateos 1994: 25) and encompasses some of the present study areas. (Experiences with the demarcation of Bonga state forest are reported in Chapter Seven as part of the discussion on local level tenure establishment.)

Logan (1946) classified forest resources in highland Ethiopia as "Climatic Moist Woodland". Within this framework he identified "three principal formations" based on vegetation characteristics: tropical montane bamboo forest, tropical upper montane rain forest, and tropical high montane conifer forest (28). The forests of highland Kafa and its environs fall under the first two formations. According to Logan (1946), in high altitude and high rainfall areas of southwest



Figure 4.4: Approximate location of National Forest Priority Areas in Kafa-Sheka Zone



Source: KSZ - DoPED n.d. (c)

Ethiopia bamboo thicket dominates (36). In line with this, in the three contiguous areas of Kafa-Sheka that rise above 2,400 masl bamboo forests are estimated to cover a total of 66,100 hectares of land (WBISSP, in KSZ-DoPED 1997: 6). This represents the largest contiguous bamboo forest in the country. Tropical upper montane rain forests found in the mid-altitude zone including those in highland Kafa and its western most neighbours are said to have "the best developed stratification" (Friis *et al.* 1982: 17). Indeed, one of the most defining features of the forest at these locations is the existence of a rich mixture of species arranged into "three or more storeys" (Logan 1946: 28), a contention shared by more recent analysis (see Friis *et al.* 1982).

In highland Kafa, emergent trees (those 30 m or above) such as Muna (*Aningeria adolfi-friederici*) and medium sized trees (10 - 30m) including Elgon Olive (*Olea welwitschii*), *Schefflera abyssinica*, *Croton macrostachyus* and *Prunus africana* dominate the first two storeys (see Abayneh 1998: 31-32; Friis *et al.* 1982: 15, 17). The third storey consists of small trees (less than 10 m) such as *Millettia ferruginea* and coffee (*Coffea arabica*). Finally, the forest floor is said to be "rich in species" (Friis *et al.* 1982: 17) and comprises a host of endemic spices such as Ethiopian cardamom (*Aframomum korarima*) and long pepper (*Piper longum*) as well as epiphytes and several broad-leaved grasses (Friis *et al.* 1982: 16-18). Field level agricultural research has shown that, Ethiopian cardamom and long pepper require a 50-60 per cent shade level (Girma 1999). The Kafa region is an important genetic centre of coffee. In fact, several writers ascribe the original home of *Coffea arabica* to the forests of Kafa (see, for instance, Logan 1946: 33; Kieran 1969: 51). According to one report, scientists identified "the first plants with natural resistance to Coffee Berry Disease" from a forest location in highland Kafa (EWNHS 1996: 206). It is generally recognised that the above, naturally occurring, floristic composition of the forest at mid-altitude locations promotes a relatively closed nutrient cycle whereby soil minerals are stored in the biomass and transferred to elements of the system through a variety of biological processes (MoWR 1996; Tessema 1997).

Forests in highland Kafa are also reputed to have some avifaunal value. They accommodate at least 100 bird species, 14 of them are of a highland biome type (EWNHS 1996: 202, 206). In addition, the forests in Kafa provided sanctuaries to a wide range of other types of wild animals such as Colobus and Vervet Monkeys, Tree Squirrels, Lions, Antelopes, Buffalo, Elephant, Porcupine, Aardvark, and Wart Hog (EWNHS 1996: 206).

Historically, forests in Kafa had been regarded as resilient. Some early twentieth century traveller accounts contain graphic details of the astonishing speed with which the once cultivated lands reverted to forest as local people deserted their villages either forcibly (as in slave raids) or on their own accord - for fear of banditry attacks (Gruhl 1932: 267; Montandon 1912: 383). In short,



during the above period, the forest cover in Kafa waxed and waned depending on the conduciveness of the systems of local governance. McCann (1997) also alludes to these facts with reference to the recent vegetation history of one of Kafa's neighbours (150-154).

In recent years, however, farmland expansion and uncontrolled logging have resulted in such a progressive decline in the stock of forest resources that the loss appears to be irreversible. For instance, between 1971 and 1997 about half of the dense forests in southwest Ethiopia had been subjected to serious degradation, the impact around major urban settlements being more pronounced than in the hinterland (Reusing 1998: 30-32). This is not, however, to belittle the detrimental effects of forest clearance by the farming community. Indeed, in the six *Woredas* of Kafa-Sheka, where much of the forest was found "between the favourable elevations of 1,000 to 2,000 masl", the actual area of forest loss was reported to have exceeded significantly the theoretical estimate that was computed on the basis of local farmers' subsistence needs (WBISPP 1996b: 5-7). Furthermore, a recent micro-study in highland Kafa reported very low prevalence of some of the more valuable tree species and attributed this to their unsustainable exploitation for timber purposes (Abayneh 1998: 32).

In the forest ecology described above "much of the soil fertility is tied up in the top 20 or so centimetres" and the removal of the vegetation breaches the nutrient recycling process, thereby leading to "rapid declines in soil fertility" (MoWR 1996: 11.5). This will obviously have negative repercussions on the sustainability of agriculture in the region. In highland Kafa there have been some reforestation attempts through large-scale forest enrichment plantation schemes involving mainly exotic species. For instance, between 1982 and 1995 some 2000 hectares of the Bonga state forest area had been covered with artificial plantations. Exotic species such as Cypress (*Cuppressus* spp.), *Eucalyptus* spp., Silk oak (*Grevillea robusta*) and Patula pine (*Pinus patula*) account for at least 90 per cent of the plantation areas (BFCDP OF/1 1998).

#### **4.3.3 A profile of the agricultural production system in highland Kafa-Sheka**

Studies show that since the seventeenth century mixed farming had been an important feature of the economy of Kafa (see, for example, Orent 1978). Moreover, historical Kafa is noted for a multitude of forest-based activities (Appendix 4). No systematic studies address the commonalties and peculiarities of the current agricultural production system in highland Kafa-Sheka. However, the available fragmentary evidence shows that in large measure past patterns of agricultural production have persisted through to the present day. Archival documents consulted at local Departments of Agriculture show that mixed farming is an important activity practised by all highland farmers in Kafa-Sheka, including Manjos (see, for example, KSZ-DoA

1998a). Some estimates put the potential arable land of Kafa-Sheka at 55.6 per cent of the total area of the Zone (WBISPP 1996a: Table 1). In 1996, cultivated land constituted 43.1 per cent of the entire area (WBISPP 1996a: Table 2).

The major field crops grown in highland Kafa include maize, *teff*, barley, beans, field peas, and oil seeds. Livestock husbandry plays a complementary role in the local agricultural economy. Oxen are used for traction power, that is to say, preparation of land for planting field crops is undertaken using iron-tipped plough drawn by a pair of oxen. Threshing is often done using human labour, but in the case of *teff*, animal power is also used. Cows are kept mainly for milk and for herd growth. Small stock, including chicken, sheep and goats, are reared both for home use and for sale. Horses and mules are kept as pack animals and for carrying people. Both open browsing and tethering are used as forms of livestock grazing. As in the past, a range of root and horticultural crops are grown around the homestead using traditional hand tools such as the hoe. The crops include *enset*, which is the Ethiopian false banana (*Ensete ventricosum*), banana, taro, leafy vegetables and sugar cane. Of these, *enset*, a crop produced primarily for the large carbohydrate-rich food it supplies, is by far the most important. Some two thirds of rural households in Kafa-Sheka are reported to be *enset*-growing (KSZ-DoA 1998a). It is estimated that about 10 million people in southern Ethiopia depend on *enset* for food, feed, and fibre (Brandt *et al.* 1997).

Forest-based activities such as bee keeping, coffee production and spice collection are also important features of the production system in the Zone. There is a dearth of information on the relative significance of such activities in the rural household economy. However, some macro data can be used to show the importance of some of the above enterprises at sub-regional levels. For instance, according to a recent sample survey, a third of the honey produced in SNNPRS originates from Kafa-Sheka. This makes the Zone the second highest honey producing administrative unit in the region (CSA 1998b: 76). To put this in perspective, SNNPRS accounts for 31.1 per cent of total honey production in Ethiopia, thereby making it the most important honey-producing region in the country (CSA 1998b: 72). Ethiopia is said to account for a third of the total honey production in Africa (EFAP 1994a: 69).

Similar to the practice in other parts of southwest Ethiopia, in Kafa-Sheka farmers care for the naturally grown coffee found in the wild (so-called forest coffee) under shade trees. In addition, farmers inter-crop coffee seedlings with maize and vegetables around homesteads and establish what is known as garden coffee. At the same time, farmers ensure that different species of forest trees are in place to serve as shade for garden coffee (Tessema 1997). Close observers of the farming system of southwest Ethiopia also underline the significance of spices in the total basket



of agricultural produce in Kafa-Sheka (see, for instance, Tesfaye Shimber 1999). Ethiopian cardamom in particular is an important marketable item; its seeds are mixed with other spices to flavour sauces, coffee, tea and bread. The other important spice is long pepper, which is a self-supporting perennial shrub whose fruit is dried and used as spice to minimise the sharpness of hot chillies.

Modern advances in technology have little influenced agricultural production practices in the sub-region. For instance, it was only in the late 1980s that the sub-region started benefiting from agricultural extension services, which traditionally focused on the supply of high response inputs for field crop farming (KSZ-DoPED 1998). The history of agricultural extension in the country, however, dates back to the early 1960s (see Tesfaye Beshah 1999: 225). In 1998 the proportion of farmers in the Zone covered by the field crops component of the extension package programme was 21 per cent. Of late, however, attempts have been made to enhance the production of vegetables, spices, coffee, honey and livestock. These newly added packages have been extremely limited in their coverage and have been beset by critical problems such as unavailability of the required inputs (KSZ-DoA 1998a).

A closely related facet of agricultural extension is the facilitation of forest product marketing activities through collective action. As noted in Appendix 2.4.5D, this is the task of the Co-operative Offices. By the end of the 1999 fiscal year these agencies had helped organise and render technical assistance to a total of 45 farmers' multi-purpose co-operative societies. Only seven of these co-operatives were engaged in the marketing of NWFPs, notably coffee and honey (KSZ-CO 2000). Thus, all indications are that extension interventions in forest-based activities are still at an earlier stage and that they are yet to make an impact on either yield/productivity or increased income.

The agricultural production system of highland Kafa-Sheka outlined earlier fits into Westphal's (1975) '*enset*-based cultivation system' in general and his '*enset* co-staple' sub-system in particular. Kafa's production system also shares some characteristic features of the "grain-plough" and "horticulture-hoe" complexes, as described in Befekadu and Berhanu (2000: 149-150). However, none of the above four categories seems to have the flexibility to capture the range of forest-based goods produced in the farming system of highland Kafa-Sheka. At the other end of the spectrum, the Zone has attracted a number of State-operated and privately owned commercial farming activities. These included three State farms established/enlarged during the *Derg*, which have been variously engaged in food crops, coffee, and tea production. In addition, some thirty private farms have been established following the economic liberalisation measures taken by the post-1991 Ethiopian State. These developments provide the basis to

include, following Befekadu and Berhanu (2000), "commercial agriculture" in the characterisation of aspects of the current agricultural system in Kafa-Sheka. In short, the agricultural production system in the Zone shows a mixture of sedentary annual and perennial, field farming and forest-based gathering operations and is dotted by commercial agricultural activities.

#### 4.4 Organisational bases of forest conservation and use in Kafa-Sheka Zone

The foregoing discussions have centred on the demographic, ecological and farming system context within which people-forest interactions should be viewed. It is, however, recognised that information on the nature and operational modalities of organisations with forest-related functions helps highlight the larger operational environment within which forest resources have been and are likely to be harnessed and the supra-community significance that forests have. Organisational mandates in forestry take a variety of forms including forest tenure regulation, forest product utilisation, forest area conservation, and species preservation.

The research has identified a total of seven principal organisations having one or the other forest-related responsibilities. Some of these agencies are part of the local government system, and the rest are 'outsiders' and have varying degrees of functional autonomy, hence they are regarded as 'external' actors. Table 4.2 provides highlights of their activities as they relate to forest conservation and/or forest product utilisation in the Zone.

**Table 4.2**  
**Principal organisations involved in forest conservation and use in Kafa-Sheka**

Organisation	Responsibilities/ Objectives	Main forest-related activities
Local government departments		
Department of Agriculture (DoA)	Act as custodians of the forest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest protection/monitoring of illicit tree felling;</li> <li>• Wood disposal;</li> <li>• Plantation management</li> <li>• Collection of royalty fees.</li> </ul>
Department of Trade, Industry and Tourism (DoTIT)	Regulate forest product trade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue/renew NWFP trade licenses.</li> <li>• Collect license processing fees</li> </ul>
Department of Finance (DoF)	Determine and collect taxes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levy income tax that reflect forest-based operations.</li> </ul>
'External' actors		
FARM Africa	Initiate participatory forest management in Bonga forest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State forest re-demarcation;</li> <li>• Local capacity building.</li> </ul>
Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organisation (EARO)	Establish forest reserve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In-situ</i> organic coffee preservation</li> </ul>
Jimma Agricultural Research Centre (JARC)	Co-ordinate coffee and spices research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the coffee reserve</li> <li>• Undertake trials on spices</li> </ul>
Institute of Biodiversity Conservation and Research (IBCR)	Conserve plant genetic materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up botanical gardens for cultivating and conserving spices and other plants.</li> </ul>

Source: Appendix 5.1.



The principal organisations that have a direct interest in the forestry sector can broadly be classified into the two functional groups of forest conservation and forest product utilisation. The tasks of forest conservation in particular have been shared among a number of organisations, including the DoA and four other organisations (the 'external' actors). The DoA's involvement in forest conservation is confined mainly to the policing of forest areas and, in some cases to thinning out wood from forest plantations, and in the collection of royalty fees from spice and honey traders. As documented in Appendix 5.1.1A, the DoA is under-staffed and under-funded; hence, it has been unable to discharge even the above responsibilities let alone put in place a fresh approach to forest management. It is this inability that paved the way for the involvement of external actors in the forest management sphere.

The goal of FARM Africa's forest project has been to institutionalise participatory forest management in Bonga state forest. To date, the project has focused on re-demarcation of the Gimbo *Woreda* portion of the State forest and related policy advocacy activities. The research organisations, on the other hand, have been involved either in forest area preservation (EARO/JARC) or in species conservation (IBCR). Appendix 5.1.2 provides a summary of the activities of each of the above organisations. Suffice here to note that all of these agencies enjoy a high profile in the country's natural resource sector. Even federal agencies such as EARO and IBCR have effective local representation overseeing their activities. It is, therefore, highly conceivable that the hands-on experience that these agencies acquire in the forest areas of Kafa could have significant policy influence regarding the development of nature/forest conservation in the sub-region and possibly beyond.

The other point of concern relates to the interest that a range of government agencies have in the sphere of forest product utilisation. The attraction of the forest sector to the Department of Finance emanates partly from the sector's indirect contribution to government tax revenue. In particular, owing to the operation of the principle of income aggregation, farmers are also taxed on their forest-based gathering activities. The system of NWFP trade regulation, as overseen by the DoA and the DoTIT, has also contributed to the generation of local government finance. In recent years, royalty fees collected from spice traders alone amounted to some seven per cent of the Zonal DoA capital budget (Table 5B in Appendix 5.1.1). Moreover, the measures that the local government put in place to discourage illicit forest use have been devised in such a way that they also generated revenue for the local government. The same can be said of the DoA's silvicultural operations. Indeed, confiscated and thinned out wood amounted to nine percent of Zonal DoA's capital budget (Table 5B in Appendix 5.1.1).

It is recognised that the involvement of the local government in general and that of the Department of Agriculture in particular in both forest protection and forest revenue generation could introduce systemic conflict of interests. However, in the context of Kafa this seems not to have been the case at present, because all aspects of forest protection and utilisation operations have been plagued by a shortage of organisational resources.

#### **4.5 Summary**

The chapter furnished an overview of the socio-political history of Kafa with the purpose of providing background information on the twin factors of traditional social organisation and governance structures from which tenurial arrangements flow. It showed that Kafa had a turbulent history of warfare and of considerable population displacement and admixing that could have relevance for the shape which natural resource tenure systems have taken over the centuries. Given that tenurial relations are concretised in the course of natural resource use, the chapter also examined the ecological and farming system features of Kafa-Sheka. In particular, the Zone was shown to be a moderately populated highland region where the bulk of the population resides in rural settlements with few benefits from the modest social and technical infrastructure obtaining in the region.

The historically important mingling of the population aside, currently the majority of the people in Kafa consider themselves to be ethnic Kaffecho, thereby claiming a degree of indigenous descent. This notwithstanding, as a mark of Kafa's historical links with the northern Christian Kingdom, the majority of the population is reported to be followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. However, traditional religion has a place of pride among the Kaffecho. Nowhere is the co-existence of outside influences and quintessentially indigenous practices more apparent than in the farming system practised in the region. The chapter has shown that Kafa is noted for its espousal of oxen-plough agriculture which migrants from the north brought in as well as for the antiquity of multi-storey forest-based operations that its rich floral base supports. The chapter has however underlined that forest resources in the region have been under considerable pressure both from field farming activities as well as uncontrolled logging, a situation believed to undermine the sustainability of agriculture in the region. In part to counteract the heavy toll deforestation has taken in this part of Ethiopia, of late, a range of government and non-governmental organisations have been involved in forest protection and/or species preservation activities.



## **5. Research methods**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In light of the objectives of the research outlined earlier and the theoretical framework and national policy background discussed above, this chapter examines the methods of data collection and analysis employed to test empirically the objectives of the research. Section two presents issues pertaining to the overall methodological strategy adopted in the research. In Section three the choice of the six study localities is explained. Section four discusses the features of field methods used and the data collection activities undertaken in the research. The methods of data analysis used in the research are described in Section five, after which the chapter concludes by pointing out the salient features of the discussion.

### **5.2 The research strategy**

The research's principal aim of investigating forest uses and users required the adoption of a social science research strategy. Research strategies in the social sciences are commonly classified into five: experiments; surveys; archival analysis; histories; and case studies (Yin 1989:16). None of these strategies is mutually exclusive and, in practice, a combination of them is used, with one or two serving as the principal methodological guiding posts. There are several factors that should be taken into consideration in choosing the dominant research strategy. The major ones include whether the research mainly focuses on contemporary events; whether the investigator has any control over the events under study; and whether the research question is directed towards understanding processes, as opposed to quantifiable and predictable outcomes (Yin 1989:16-20).

As noted in Chapter One, the present research focuses on the collection, analysis and synthesis of empirical data about the current state of tenure and forest use from six selected localities or sub-*Kebeles* giving attention to the prevailing socio-economic differentiation among the study communities (see also Section 5.3 below). It should be recalled that the interest in examining historical tenure issues has been prompted partly by the desire to assess their influence on contemporary tenure realities. Seen from these perspectives the case study approach best characterises the present research. According to Hammersley (1992), the main distinguishing features of a case study approach relate to its confinement to investigating a "... *relatively small number of naturally occurring* (rather than researcher-created) cases (185, emphasis in the original). Paraphrasing Yin (1989), Robson (1993) defined the case study strategy as "... a

strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence" (52).

A closely related issue in any discussion on research strategies is choice of methods. In this connection, it is established that case studies are inherently multi-method and that "... the multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon" (Yin 1989: 97). Several researchers have underlined the enormous opportunities when different research methods are combined. These merits are both quantitative, i.e. gathering of more information, and qualitative, that is, collection of corroborated or triangulated data (see, for instance, Abbott and Guijt 1997; Leach and Kamangira 1997: 45; Robson 1993; Sieber 1991: 177). It is argued that the nature of the issues under study dictates the specific combination of methods to be applied. In both academic and action-oriented rural research it has become increasingly common to use purpose-specific combinations of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) type techniques with formal survey methods (see, for instance, Abbott 1996; Davis 1997; Schreckenberg 1995). PRA methods are not new inventions as such; they draw heavily on anthropological approaches to rural research, but are characterised by a strong emphasis on visualisation techniques and are anchored in a two-way sharing of ideas and experiences between professionals and local people (Chambers 1994: 959).

One of the major lessons learnt from experiences of mixing research methods and perspectives has been summarised thus: "Conventional methods are important for ensuring scientific rigour. Sample surveys ... provide planners and policy makers with scaled-up information that is easily interpreted. By contrast, participatory learning approaches provide local level information with which to interpret quantitative data and explain differences between findings at different sites" (Abbott and Guijt 1997: 28).

In line with the above, the research used a combination of field methods to generate primary data from the study areas. The major ones were questionnaire surveys; semi-structured interviews, including key informant and in-depth interviews; focus group discussions; archival searches and field observations. Appendix 6 describes the organisation of the fieldwork process, giving particular attention to the context within which the research was undertaken and the sequencing of the fieldwork activities. For the purpose of this section, it should be noted that the primary data on which the research is based were collected in two spells of fieldwork. The first covered the period between December 1997 and October 1998, a total of ten months. The second period entailed four months of field data collection, but as noted in Appendix 6, spanned the six months of August 1999 to January 2000.



### 5.3 The case study sub-*Kebeles* and justifications for their selection

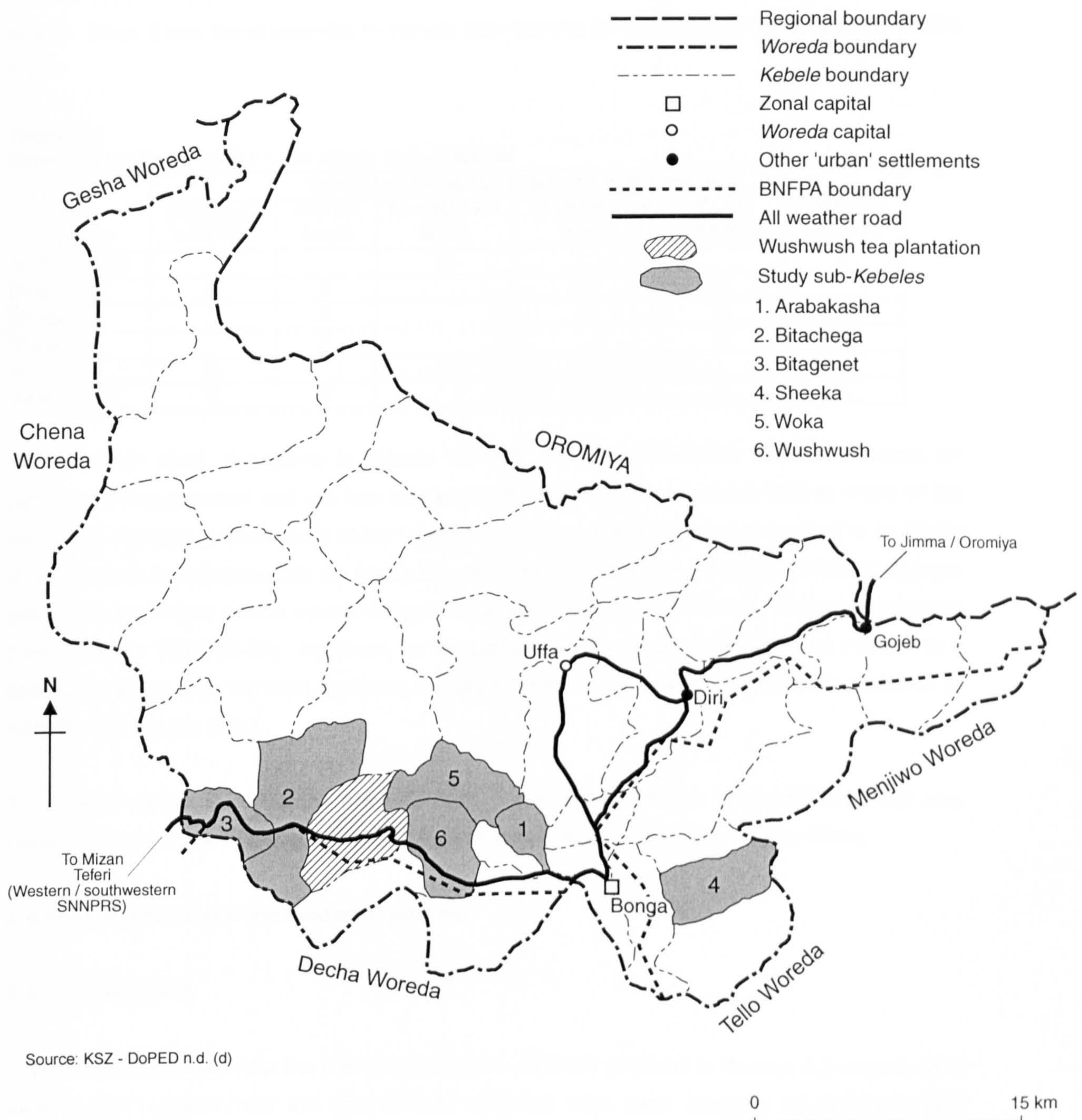
Six sub-*Kebeles* were chosen as the case study areas: Arabakasha, Bitachega, Bitagenet, Sheeka, Woka, and Wushwush (Figure 5.1). For about two decades prior to 1996 these sub-*Kebeles* had been independently constituted Peasant Associations. By early 1996, following the creation of the *Kebele* Administrative structure, the study sub-*Kebeles* were subsumed under four different *Kebele* Administrations, namely: Kayakella (for Arabakasha), Yeibito (for Bitachega and Bitagenet), Meligawa (for Sheeka), and Michiti (for Woka and Wushwush). Five of the case study areas are found at the southwestern most part of Gimbo *Woreda*, while the sixth sub-*Kebele*, Sheeka, is located at the southeastern tip of Gimbo *Woreda* and borders Bonga town (Figure 5.1). The altitude of the case study areas range from 1750 masl at Bitachega to 1970 masl at Sheeka.

The six sub-*Kebeles* are organised into a total of 44 villages, and the number of villages at each sub-*Kebele* ranges from just two in Woka to 10 in Bitachega, the remaining sub-*Kebeles* consisting of seven to nine villages each. With the exception of Sheeka, which is not accessible by motorable road, most villages in the remaining sub-*Kebeles* are located at an average of one hour's walk from the major road network that connects northern Ethiopia with the southwest. Bonga and Wushwush towns (the latter not to be confused with Wushwush sub-*Kebele*) are the two most important commercial centres that provide some of the case study communities with modern service facilities including flourmills, markets, secondary school education and modern health services. The significance of Wushwush town derives from its location in close proximity to the Wushwush Tea Development Enterprise.

Several factors have influenced the selection of the above sub-*Kebeles* for the present research. In particular, the desire to understand the influence of the State in the forest tenure scene dictated the choice of areas where direct state involvement in agricultural production and/or environmental management activities has been most pronounced. This has partly necessitated the selection of rural villages surrounding the Wushwush Tea Development Enterprise (WTDE), which is one of the largest tea estates in the country and an important state-owned enterprise in highland Kafa. As Figure 5.1 shows, Bitachega, Woka and Wushwush sub-*Kebeles* border the WTDE.

In the same vein, the need to understand the extent of influence of state forest demarcation on forest access experiences of farmers also demanded the selection of study sub-*Kebeles* in relation to their location vis-à-vis the Bonga National Forest Priority Area (BNFPA). One of the study areas (Sheeka) is entirely within this state forest, and three others (Bitachega, Bitagenet,

**Figure 5.1. Location of the case study sub-Kebeles in Gimbo Woreda**



Source: KSZ - DoPED n.d. (d)



and Wushwush) are partly inside it. While, on the other hand, the remaining two sub-*Kebeles* (Arabakasha and Woka) are wholly outside the state forest territory (Table 5.1). As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, the use of the main north-southwest road as the outward boundary of the BNFPAs in most parts of Gimbo resulted in a partial or entire exclusion of some of the case study sub-*Kebeles* from the BNFPAs (Figure 5.1). The policy of resettlement is identified as another facet of direct state involvement that has the potential to affect the rural resource tenure scene. Thus, it was found essential to include sub-*Kebeles* that also house settler groups (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1**  
**Selected features of the case study sub-*Kebeles***

Sub- <i>Kebeles</i>	Considerations for research site selection					
	Contiguity to WTDE	BNFPA areas	Non-BNFPA areas	Resettlement areas	Manjo presence	Proximity to town
Arabakasha			X			X
Bitachega	X	X		X	X	
Bitagenet		X		X	X	
Sheeka		X			X	X
Woka	X		X			
Wushwush	X	X		X	X	X

On the other hand, the desire to assess the effect of intra-community social cleavages on patterns of forest access and use has also prompted the research to ensure that as many of the study sub-*Kebeles* had members of the Manjo community. Manjos are perceived to be highly dependent on forest resources for livelihood. As noted in Section 4.2.1 (Chapter Four), Manjos are ethnic Kaffechos whose mother tongue is the same as other Kaffechos, which is *Kafinonoo* (Van Halteren 1996: 38-39). However, for the purpose of this research, Manjos are treated as a special category, and the term Kaffecho is used to refer to non-Manjo indigenous inhabitants of Kafa/the case study areas.

To a lesser extent consideration has also been given to the selection of sub-*Kebeles* that also have closer proximity to towns so as to assess possible urban influences on rural CPRs.

## **5.4 Field methods and the fieldwork process**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

This section discusses how the field data collection methods (outlined in Section 5.2 above) were used in the research and the type of data collected from each category of informants and respondents. The discussion sets the scene by providing a summary of how the chosen methods of data collection met the information needs of the research objectives identified in Chapter One.

Before looking into the specific features of the data collection process it is worthwhile providing operational definitions of two key concepts: 'household' and 'household head'. Following Foeken (1997) a household is defined as "... a group of people residing under one roof or under several roofs within a single compound, who are answerable to the same head and share a common source of food" (122). This, incidentally, is a definition commonly used in censuses and rural research undertakings in the developing world (Chant 1997: 5). The definition of household headship is replete with controversies, not least because the idea of "... a singular household head masks the complexity of household allocation systems" (Chant 1997: 7). In this research the concept is understood in the loose sense of household representation: s/he who stands out representing the household in all its dealings with the outside world is taken as a household head, and this is informed by practical observations from rural highland Ethiopia.

#### 5.4.2 Field methods in relation to research objectives

The research has adhered to the principle of method integration noted in Section 5.2 above. Table 5.2 summarises the specific field methods of data collection employed vis-à-vis each of the four field-oriented research objectives outlined in Chapter One (see Section 1.3, items 1-4).

**Table 5.2**  
**Theme-based classification of field methods used in the research**

Research themes/objectives	Principal field methods used
Historical tenure issues (Objective 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elders' interview</li> <li>• PA leaders' interview</li> <li>• Archival search</li> <li>• Questionnaire survey</li> </ul>
Current forest access mechanisms (Objective 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire survey</li> <li>• Group discussions</li> <li>• DA interviews</li> <li>• KA leaders' interviews</li> </ul>
Organisational aspects of forest tenure & use (Objective 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBO leaders' interview</li> <li>• Questionnaire survey</li> <li>• Archival search</li> </ul>
Forest production practices and livelihoods (Objective 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire survey</li> <li>• Income data record sheets</li> <li>• In-depth interviews</li> <li>• Traders' interviews</li> <li>• Interview with 'herbalists'</li> <li>• Field observations</li> </ul>

The nature of the research themes/objectives placed their own constraints on the kind of data collection method used. To start with, in a society where local events and life experiences are seldom recorded, but rather passed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth, an



understanding of historical aspects of tenure provision and enforcement at the local level (Objective 1, Table 5.2) necessitates interviewing those who took part in the events or those who have substantive information about them. Some of the issues discussed with these key informants have also been corroborated through studying tax records and court files kept by the families of some of the major stakeholders of the time. Moreover, general tenure-related experiences from older households of the sample have also been gathered by means of a questionnaire survey.

As regards information on the state of contemporary forest access (Objective 2) and its organisational bases (Objective 3), the study benefited from the questionnaire survey results. However, some of the social processes behind the issues have also been examined through organising group discussions with a range of categories of local people as well as through interviewing DAs and leaders of CBOs that have a wide variety of roles in tenure provision and/or administration.

Finally, information for the various issues surrounding Objective 4 was collected using a range of formal and informal field methods. Here again, the questionnaire survey proved useful particularly in generating the necessary quantitative data about forest-based activities including patterns of NTFP production/domestication and market participation and marketing channels. Furthermore, the data collected using fortnightly income data sheets was expected to provide a useful illustration about the relative importance of household income sources and a rough order of magnitude of the place forest product income occupies in the household exchange economy. Given the complexity of the livelihood system in place there is a limit to which the above quantitative sources of data could provide the full information requirements of the research themes under discussion. Hence, this data set had to be supplemented and, wherever feasible triangulated, by key informant and in-depth interviews as well as through field observations and informal discussions.

To conclude, the field methods employed have reinforced one another in obtaining sets of data that enabled the research to address its intended objectives.

#### **5.4.3 Questionnaires**

The research used two types of questionnaires: a general household questionnaire administered to randomly selected households and an income data record sheet administered to a non-probability sample.

#### 5.4.3.1 General household questionnaire

In order to obtain household-based data on the socio-economic, institutional and farming system aspects of the study areas the research used sample-based structured questionnaires. This is the major source of data used to test empirically the conceptual bases of the research. The questionnaire included basic demographic data on the household; household settlement background; occupation of household members; household assets and resources; agricultural production levels; forest items produced and marketed; market outlets used; experiences concerning access to land resources and forest/tree rights; NTFP management experiences; and the like (see Appendix 7, Section 7.1 for details). In what follows experiences in sample selection and questionnaire administration are described.

The researcher compared the list of household heads in each study sub-*Kebele* obtained from each KA office with that made available by *Idirs* – local socio-territorial burial organisations with wide ranging community management functions (see Section 6.5 of Chapter Six for details). Accordingly, the list was updated and the combined final version was used as a sample frame. As will be discussed in Chapter Six, in general there are marked differences in the economic status among households in the study communities. Hence, it was decided to use stratified sampling methods for selecting the sample. This necessitated stratifying the population from which the sample had been drawn along 'wealth' lines following the spirit of PRA. Such a procedure has been employed in similar research settings with favourable outcomes in terms of improving the representativeness of questionnaire responses (IIED 1995; Turton *et al.* 1997).

Based on the sample frame, at each of the study areas a panel of knowledgeable people was organised to categorise residents into, for the sake of uniformity, four 'wealth' categories. Some PRA surveys have shown that farmers in Ethiopia have a tendency to classify their respective communities into four wealth categories of 'rich', 'medium', 'poor' and 'very poor' (CFWCP 1994b). After the four strata had been established, a twenty five per cent sample was taken from each wealth stratum at each of the six study sub-*Kebeles* using the random number table. In this way, a total of 311 households were identified for the sample. Appendix 7.2 contains information on the wealth ranking criteria the local people adopted and the wealth ranking outcomes. An analysis of the sampling characteristics of the households chosen for the general household questionnaire is done as part of the discussion on socio-economic differentiation in the study communities (see Section 6.2.7, Chapter Six).

The task of administering the questionnaires rested on field assistants selected from the respective study sub-*Kebeles* who had earlier been given briefings on the purpose of the study



and the contents of the questionnaire. In order to facilitate communication between the researcher and the research assistants the questionnaires were prepared in *Amharic* language. (In the event that some of the respondents did not fully grasp the contents of the questionnaire research assistants were advised to explain matters in the vernacular.) The questions were tested rigorously for clarity and appropriateness of concepts on a pilot sample of 35 households in similar environments. The pilot helped in improving the content of some of the open-ended questions and ensured the inclusion of relevant choice categories in close ended ones. On the other hand, the presentation of the household questionnaire was very much in line with the requirements of the "visual questionnaire" (see IIED 1997), for in some cases respondents were asked to approximate proportions using piles of materials. In short, adequate attention was given to ensure that the questionnaire was both user-friendly and rich in content.

The general household questionnaires were administered during the first phase of field data collection and the majority were completed between March and May 1998. The researcher's presence in the study villages during the first phase of data collection facilitated close monitoring of progress in questionnaire administration. After the end of the first phase of data collection some gaps in the household-based sample data were identified. It was realised that, bridging these gaps would entail use of probe questions to the answers respondents had given to some of the issues in the general household questionnaire. It was also noted then that some of the broader issues concerning the missing household level information had been collected during the intervening period using qualitative methods. Hence, there was a basis for specifying categories in close-ended questions. Thus, during the second spell of field data collection it was possible to design and administer a 'focused questionnaire' (after Scoones 1998: 18) to different segments of the general household questionnaire respondents to address these issues, as noted below.

In the main, these re-interviewed respondents included people who had responded positively to 'inheritance' as a means of land access; those who had established households during the Imperial regime; and those who had reported NTFP domestication. As all of the questions constituting the 'focus questionnaire' were concerned with past experiences and relied on recall information, the timing of the questions did not have any major bearing on the kind of responses obtained. Therefore, the responses to the follow-up questions have been integrated into the general household questionnaire responses. The combined results of the two phases of the questionnaire survey were entered into SPSS for Windows release 8.0.

#### 5.4.3.2 Income data record sheets

The desirability of obtaining income data in empirical studies of this type has been made in Chapter Two (Section 2.2). Hence, in order to address adequately one of the themes of the research that is concerned with analysing the role of forest income in the household economy, information was collected on income generated from forest-based and other sedentary farming operations which rural households engage in. In this regard, the need to generate information from the different spectrum of the study communities covering the different cropping seasons necessitated the use of some form of longitudinal method of data collection. To this end, a fortnightly record sheet was administered to a sample of households over a 12 month period that spanned mid-March 1998 to mid-February 1999. The major variables included in these record sheets were type, source, volume and market value of forest products sold; household labour use in NTFP production; marketing channels of NTFPs used; types of non-NTFP items sold and level of cash income generated; and marketing channels in non-NTFP activities (see Appendix 8, Section 8.1 for details).

Logistical considerations dictated the selection of a non-probability sample of 40 households from the six study sub-*Kebeles*, giving more or less equal representation to each study area. The sample included six Kaffecho households from each study sub-*Kebele* (hence, a total of 36 Kaffechos) and a further one Manjo household from each of the four sub-*Kebeles* where Manjos lived (i.e. a total of 4 Manjos) (Table 5.3).

**Table 5. 3**  
**Distribution of respondents for the income data record sheet**

Sub-Kebele	Wealth rank (all male)				Female	Manjo	Total
	1	2	3	4			
Arabakasha	1	1	1	2	1	0	6
Bitachega	1	1	1	2	1	1	7
Bitagenet	1	1	1	2	1	1	7
Sheeka	1	1	1	2	1	1	7
Woka	1	1	1	2	1	0	6
Wushwush	1	1	1	2	1	1	7
Total	6	6	6	12	6	4	40

In an attempt to reflect the outcomes of the wealth ranking exercise, the Manjos selected for the income analysis belong to the 'poor' category. The treatment of Manjos as a special category in this sample was predicated on their perceived heavy dependence on forest production activities. The selection procedure of the sample from non-Manjo households took account of the following factors: wealth ranking results obtained earlier; extent of forest dependency of the different social groups; and the willingness and capacity of candidate households to take part in the data generation process.



The majority of households, including most female-headed households, were categorised as either 'poor' or 'very poor' (Appendix 7.2; Section 6.2.7, Chapter Six). The need to reflect these phenomena in the composition of the non-Manjo sample led to the inclusion of three male-headed and one female-headed households from the lowest wealth ranks and one male-headed household each from the remaining two highest wealth categories. It should be noted that, the only major social group left unrepresented in the above sample were the settlers, who are people from other parts of the country resettled in three of the case study sub-*Kebeles* following the 1984/85 famine (see Section 6.2.6, next chapter, for details). Initial discussion with local people identified that settlers were least dependent on forest-based gathering activities. In all cases, in order to facilitate data recording, priority was given to those co-operative households who had a literate member or those who would be willing to share their household information with a trained research assistant of their choice.

Cognisant of the above, every effort was made to ensure relevance in the questions asked and the quality of data generated. Draft record sheets were discussed with different groups of people in the study areas, and the revised sheets were tested and some amendments made on them before they took their final form. Throughout the fieldwork, good contacts were established with adult members of the sample households by scheduling meetings with them often on market days in market places, a setting in which most people in rural Ethiopia effect social interactions with the outside world. It is believed that the meetings had a positive effect on the quality and reliability of data provided in the record sheets. During much of the NTFP data collection period the writer was in the field, and hence was in a position to follow up the process. As with the household questionnaire, the data generated from this questionnaire were organised using SPSS for Windows release 8.0.

Whilst the purposive sampling procedure employed in the identification of the households chosen for the fortnightly income data sheet would preclude statistical generalisation, the approach followed in the present research is consistent with the general practice in the field of forest income assessment. In particular, several forest income studies, including some of those reported in Table 2.2 (Chapter Two), have relied on time series data from very small non-probability household samples (e.g., Gram 2001). The huge diversity of forest income sources that are often realised at different seasons of the year, each with varying income contributions to the myriad of forest villagers, has led researchers to settle for an in-depth study of the issues from manageable sample sizes. Put another way, the imperatives of collecting hard forest income data have precluded the use of a recall method, while research budget limitations have often

ruled out the extraction of the needed information from a larger, and more representative, sample size (Wollenberg 2000: 779).

#### **5.4.4 Semi-structured interviews**

##### **5.4.4.1 Background**

Interviews are considered an important means of collecting case study evidence, because most case studies are about human experiences and attitudes that need to be reported and interpreted as the actors see them (Marshall and Rosman 1995: 81; Yin 1989: 90). Depending on the organisation of the interview schedule, one can differentiate between *structured* and *semi-structured* interviews, the latter being the most frequently employed tool in most rural development research. A semi-structured interview is a checklist of questions formulated along thematic lines; hence, it allows the researcher the flexibility to pursue any pertinent issues in the course of the interviewing session (Kvale 1996: 124). The method is considered to be “the ‘core’” of participatory learning approaches, as it cuts across all other tools of analyses (Chambers 1994: 959). In case study research, interviews are often conducted either with an individual or with groups of people with similar experiences to share, and this is contingent on the specific objectives of the data collection method (Kvale 1996: 101).

In the present research two types of semi-structured interviews were conducted: key informant and in-depth interview.

##### **5.4.4.2 Key informant interviews**

The use of key informants is predicated upon the need to collect information expediently on an event, a situation or a value system that the informants shared with others in a more or less similar situation. Traditionally, anthropologists have used the key informant technique relying on a few ‘prominent’ informants in their studies of different cultures. Over the years, the method has seen applications in non-ethnographic research operations as well. Central to this has been a move towards what is termed “focused use of key informants” in which “... a large number of key informants are selected and interviewed within a restricted framework of questions with highly focused objectives” (Tremblay 1991: 99). In the present research key informant interviews were conducted with different categories of people. These categories ranged from farmers, to urban traders to government agricultural extension agents (known formally as development agents, DAs). Key informants were selected in such a way as to represent different roles and perspectives, and not necessarily on the basis of prominence.



In the course of interviewing key informants from among the farming communities local assistants were recruited on the basis of their integrity and reputation for good manners, as judged by local DAs and researcher's acquaintances. At each of the study sub-*Kebeles* orientation sessions for the selected field assistants were organised to ensure that they were adequately informed about the objectives of the research and the tasks expected of them. Field assistants introduced the informants and, whenever necessary, translated conversations from the vernacular to *Amharic* and vice versa. The following discussion focuses on the fieldwork experiences and the nature of data collected from interviews made with five categories of key informants. Appendix 9 contains the schedule of key informant sessions by category of informants together with a summary of the interview transcripts.

(a) Elders: Field data collection began with interviewing elders. It was anticipated that insights into the kind of specific issues worth pursuing in greater detail through other methods would be gained in this way. Prior to embarking on the fieldwork process, at each sub-*Kebele* preparatory discussions were held with the respective DAs and some community members with whom contact had already been made. The main issue was the selection of informants renowned for their knowledge of local history. On the whole the selection process was a straightforward matter, as this category of informants were well known to most villagers. At times the interviewees themselves identified possible additional informants whom they deemed knowledgeable of certain specific events that took place in the past. On the other hand, in at least two of the study sub-*Kebeles* (namely at Arabakasha and Woka), informants insisted on being interviewed in the presence of other elders who were to be interviewed, thus giving the undertaking a 'group interview' form.

In general, two to six elders were interviewed at each of the sub-*Kebeles*. This also includes individual interviews with senior members of the Manjo communities at each of the four sub-*Kebeles* where they lived. Moreover, an interview was conducted with an elder representing a settlers' group in one of the settlement sites found in the study areas (Table 5.4, next page). All of these interviews were conducted at informants' homesteads.

In order to facilitate recall the issues outlined in Table 5.4 were discussed using memorable historical/political landmarks, informants' personal benchmarks, including their transition into household headship, and local events. It is worth noting that the interview process was helped by a knowledge of the history and ethnography of the larger sub-region, as this contributed to putting the discussion in its proper context as well as in enticing informants to be forthcoming with their knowledge of the issues under deliberation. With regard to Manjo elders, however, this was not enough, as confidence could not be won so easily in at least two of the cases. Thus, it was

necessary to refer to aspects of previous interviews made with Manjo elders in other localities before obtaining site-specific experiences of these Manjos.

**Table 5.4**  
**Overview of elders' interviews**

Informant category	Sub-Kebele	Number of informants	Main discussion issues
Kaffecho	All six sub-Kebeles.	19	Local settlement history; history of resource tenure; local governance systems; forest use and management experiences; workings of CBOs.
Manjo	Bitachega, Bitagenet, Sheeka and Wushwush.	4	
Settler	Bitagenet	1	Forest access rights; forest use experiences; and agricultural activities.

Use of knowledge about the history of governance systems and resource tenure in northern Ethiopia provided a prelude for queries of similar themes in all the study sites. In the opinions of some of the informants such an approach helped create an atmosphere of mutual learning. All in all, the above is believed to have gone a long way in counteracting the problems of "memory drift" and "systematic distortion" which are known to plague the generation of retrospective data (see Bernard *et al.* 1984: 508).

This being so, contrary to the cautious attitude social researchers are advised to take concerning note taking in field interviews, in most cases informants were keen on seeing the researcher taking notes while the discussions were underway. The more informants saw their opinions transcribed in the researcher's field notes the higher was the motivation of most of the informants to share their respective experiences.

(b) Leaders of community-based organisations (CBOs): This category consists of separate interviews made with leaders of formal and informal organisations functioning in the study sub-Kebeles. With the sole exception of one informal organisation mentioned below, interviews were held with groups of the management bodies of the organisations concerned. As regards formal organisations, interviews were carried out with leaders of Peasant Associations (PAs) and Kebele Administration (KA) structures at all the research sites. In addition, interviews were held with the leadership of a multi-purpose co-operative society that encompassed two of the study areas. With reference to informal organisations, in the course of the fieldwork it was possible to identify two entities whose scope of operation had some relevance to the thrust of the research. These are *Idirs* and *Alamos* (Table 5.5).

At each of the study areas a minimum of two executive members of PAs and KAs were present during the interview process. Some of the PA leaders were also interviewed as elders; however,



no role conflict was detected partly because the issues presented in either of the cases took place in different time periods.

**Table 5.5**  
**Overview of CBO leaders' interviews**

CBOs	Sub-Kebele	Number of informants	Major discussion issues
PA	All six sub-Kebeles	7	Land reform implementation experiences and implementation of villagisation and resettlement policies.
KA	All six sub-Kebeles	6	Land distribution experiences; land transaction issues; current involvement in tenure enforcement and forest management, relationship with <i>Idirs</i> .
Co-operative society	Bitachega and Bitagenet	1	Membership, organisational set up and NTFP-related activities of the society.
Idir	All six sub-Kebeles	9	Organisational history; membership; functions; roles in forest tenure; relationships with KAs; and perceptions on future roles.
Alamo	Arabakasha and Sheeka	2	Roles in forest tenure provision and protection

On the other hand, at each of the sub-Kebeles, groups of leaders from an average of two separate *Idirs* were interviewed. Some of the *Idir* leaders also doubled as elder interviewees. Whilst this could potentially cause a problem, as will be shown in Chapter Eight, it is not unusual for *Idirs* to involve village elders in their community-wide deliberations. In these interview sessions, experiences of working with CBOs in other parts of the country were shared. This in part was a consequence of the direct requests some of the interviewees regarding the existence of similar organisations elsewhere. Finally, *Alamos* were interviewed individually.

(c) Herbalists: These are traditional healers who most villagers patronise particularly during non-emergency situations. The operation of herbalists is shrouded with secrecy; thus, special efforts were made to interview them through their kinsmen and close acquaintances. Even so, to facilitate these interviews the checklists only included broader issues of the medicinal importance of NTFPs as herbalists' see it and the access rights herbalists have to their plant medicinal sources. At each sub-Kebele one to two herbalists were interviewed. These interviews were conducted during the second phase of the fieldwork, that is, after some general information was obtained through field observations and interviewing other key informants.

(d) NTFP traders: Interviews were carried out with two categories of NTFP traders, namely itinerant traders, that is traders who moved among forest villages and periodic markets buying and selling NTFPs, and licensed traders (Table 5.6). The latter are traders registered with the local bureaux of agriculture and trade who have a license to engage in the marketing of spices,

coffee, and honey. As a rule, these traders reside in market towns near to forest villages. As shown in the next chapter, the pertinent market towns for selecting licensed NTFP traders were Bonga and Wushwush. A greater number of NTFP traders lived in Bonga than at Wushwush, and this was taken into account in the selection of informants. Acquaintances in the study areas, including people in the business community and in the local government trade and agriculture bureaux, were used to identify the selection of key informant traders. Indeed, most of the interviewees were reputed for their good knowledge of the sources of supply and the business environment.

**Table 5.6**  
**Overview of traders' interviews**

Informant category	Sub-Kebele/town	Number of informants	Main discussion issues
Itinerant traders	Five sub-Kebeles (none from Arabakasha)	13	Farmers' marketing practices; marketing channels; and trade links with licensed traders.
Licensed traders	Wushwush and Bonga towns	3	Seasonality of NTFP supply and prices; extent of farmers' market participation; destination of marketed NTFPs; marketing costs and profit margins.

These interviews were held towards the end of the second phase of field data collection, that is, after the basic background qualitative information had been obtained from other sources.

(e) Development Agents (DAs): Interviews were held with four DAs responsible for agricultural extension activities in the study areas. Whilst Arabakasha and Sheeka were served by two different DAs together with other adjoining localities, one DA each covered Bitachega and Bitagenet separately from Woka and Wushwush. The grassroots position the DAs occupy in the long chain of agricultural programme implementation, their closeness to and identification with the forest villagers, and the informal day-to-day contacts they effect with the farming community necessitated their inclusion as key informants. The principal issues discussed with them included the type of agricultural development programmes they are involved in; participation of local communities in agricultural extension activities; their own perception of roles in local level forest management; and their assessment of the efficacy of CBOs as resource management bodies.

#### **5.4.4.3 In-depth interviews with household heads**

These refer to the interviews held with forty households heads to whom the fortnightly income data record sheets (discussed in Section 5.4.3.2 above) had been administered (see Appendix 10 for a profile of these households). The interviews were conducted during the second phase of the



field data collection process. The major objective of these interviews was to understand the context in which these households earn their agricultural income. The information has also been used to elucidate certain general features of the system of forest tenure and use in the study communities. The following are the major issues on which the interviews focused: assets and resources; management experiences of NTFPs; the practice of borrowing/lending against NTFPs; experiences with forest tenure and its enforcement; levels of involvement in mixed farming and non-farm employment; organisation of household labour in agricultural activities; and household expenditure patterns.

#### **5.4.5 Focus group discussions**

##### **5.4.5.1 Introduction**

In general, this method of data collection helps to generate data on a topic determined by the researcher through the interaction of a purposefully formed small group of people, often ranging from 6 to 10 people (Marshall and Rossman 1995: 84; Morgan 1997: 34). It was realised that "... an important goal of the focus group process is to get a sense of the diversity of experience and perception, rather than to get a representative sample *per se*" (Fowler 1995: 107). Accordingly, in the present research, focus group discussions were undertaken with four different categories of people in the study communities, each of whom, as a group, was known to share broadly similar forest tenure experiences. These groups were: young household heads (defined below); women; Manjos; and settlers. Group discussion participants were selected through acquaintances in/around the different study localities as well as through Development Agents working in the respective areas. Some of the discussions were held mid-way into the first phase of fieldwork and the rest during the second phase of field data collection. Appendix 11 contains the schedule of group discussion sessions by type of focus group together with a summary of the proceedings.

All the discussion sessions were moderated by the researcher who introduced the topics for discussion. Field assistants took part as co-moderators and served, whenever necessary, as translators. Moreover, the presence of field assistants as co-moderators (themselves insiders) served as a check against any misinformation that might possibly be supplied in the discussion. In addition, field assistants contributed to a more informed progress of the discussions, because they occasionally rephrased the issues put forward for discussion and provided insights into the topics under deliberation. The experiences in this regard are broadly in line with the positive contributions which insider-assistants' are reported to have made to "data quality" in other field settings (see Baker and Hinton 1999: 91).

#### 5.4.5.2 Young household heads

Participants in this group of informants were male heads of households established after a freeze in general rural land allocation had been proclaimed in 1990 (see Appendix 2.3.2B). The mean age of the sample household group established during the post-*Derg* period was 33.8 years, as against 49.4 for the remaining households ( $t = -10.138$ ,  $p < 0000$ ). This section of the society was singled out as a focus of group discussion because, as noted in Appendix 2.3.2B, institutional restrictions in access to land resources were expected to have a bearing on the terms and conditions of forest access. In the course of the two phases of field data collection four discussion sessions were held with this type of group in the three different sub-*Kebeles* of Bitachega, Sheeka, and Wushwush. In all cases an attempt was made to reflect community heterogeneities in the composition of the groups formed. In each group, five to seven individuals participated and the discussions lasted an average of two hours.

The discussions centred on experiences of obtaining access to forestland, trees and other forest products; the role of formal and informal organisations in resource tenure; forest use conflicts and their settlement; participants' concerns and expectations regarding forest tenure and use; NTFP production practices and constraints; wood processing and sale practices; and non-farm employment options. In two of the three sub-*Kebeles*, namely at Sheeka and Wushwush, a sketch resource map that the participants drew on the ground facilitated the group discussion on the spatial dimensions of common forest resource use.

In the course of the meetings it transpired that some of the issues presented for discussion, notably *details* of experiences concerning local timber use and NTFP conflict settlement, were too sensitive for some of the focus group members to be able to participate in actively. Under such circumstances, continuing the discussion of these specific issues was understood to produce covered up information. Thus, it was decided to drop these issues from the discussion and pursue them with the pertinent individuals at some other time, a matter discussed under Section 5.4.7 below. More generally, the above experience points to the untenability of extracting sensitive information from group discussions (*cf.* Chambers 1997: 448). Concurring with Pottier and Orone's (1995) field experiences in Uganda, it is clear that focus group discussions are "... public activities during which certain aspects of everyday life must be hidden from the outside world.... Public discussion does not move beyond the ground rules, the safe discourse, the official model. It is therefore no more than a first step in learning about actual practices" (41).



At any rate, the data generated using the above discussion forums not only contributed directly to some of the information requirements of the research but was also used as a basis for some of the informal discussions the researcher had with KA leaders.

#### **5.4.5.3 Women**

Organising group discussions with women was predicated, as discussed in Chapter Two, on the understanding that systems of resource tenure in agrarian societies have important implications for women's access to and control over forest resources. This being so, in the course of the two field seasons it was only possible to organise three group meetings with women, and these in only two sub-*Kebeles*, those of Sheeka and Wushwush. Getting women into a group discussion was, even under the best circumstances, a difficult task. In any case, the above focus group composition reflected age, marital status, wealth and social group differences observed in the communities. The heterogeneity of the grouping did not pose any management problem as such. Instead, it created a very good opportunity for participants to learn from one another's experiences.

The discussion themes included marriage patterns; polygamy; the effects of divorce and widowhood on forest access; cultural aspects of inheritance; women's control over household forest benefits in stable marriages; the gender division of labour in crop farming and NTFP production; and types, uses, sources and seasonality of NTFPs. On the average these discussions lasted one-and-half hours. The information obtained from the discussions contributed to understanding the gender dimensions of forest tenure in the study areas. Furthermore, the discussion outcomes helped in preparing the 'focused questionnaire' (described in Section 5.4.3.1 above).

#### **5.4.5.4 Manjos**

Given the reported heavy dependence of Manjos on the use of forest resources, it was necessary to obtain triangulated information on this section of the study communities through focus group discussions. Here the discussions were held with two groups in two sub-*Kebeles* - one with a male group (at Wushwush) and another with an all-female group (at Bitachega). For some practical reasons (see Appendix 6.1) these discussions were held during the second phase of primary data collection. The main issues of discussion with the two groups were basically the same. These included polygamous marriage; groups involvement in mixed farming as well as forest-based gathering activities; the dependence of Manjos on wood trade; and production-

oriented relationships between Manjos and non-Manjos. The duration of the discussions ranged from about forty-five minutes (with women) to one-and-half hours (with men).

#### **5.4.5.5 Settlers**

As will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, in the mid-1980s three of the case study areas accommodated a varying number of settlers from the central and northern parts of the country. As this was expected to have its own impact on the system of resource tenure within the host communities it was considered necessary to corroborate the questionnaire data through holding group discussions with the settlers and obtaining their version of the reality.

Discussions were held with two groups of settlers in two sub-*Kebeles* (namely, at Bitachega and Wushwush). As regards information from the remaining third settler group (which is at Bitagenet sub-*Kebele*), it was considered that the information obtained from a key informant (discussed in Section 5.4.4.2 (a) above) was sufficient. The group discussions were held mid-way into the first phase of data collection and lasted an average of one hour with each group. The issues discussed included past and present access rights to forest resources in their settlement villages; forest use experiences; existence/roles of group-wide organisations; experiences with mixed farming; and interactions of the group with the host communities.

#### **5.4.6 Archival search**

Archival searches for dossiers and official correspondence were made at the relevant federal, Zonal, and *Woreda* levels of Ethiopian government offices and in FARM Africa's Bonga Forest Conservation and Development Project office. At the level of the study communities access was also gained to files at the *Kebele* Administration offices and to the personal files of individuals.

Archival searches at the federal level included visits made to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). The information collected here dealt with state forest demarcation issues around the present case study areas. The sub-regional level of government, where archival searches were made, refers to the Kafa-Sheka Zone Departments of Agriculture, Co-operatives, and Trade and Industry. Consultation of files and documents at the Department of Agriculture helped to take cognisance of community forest use issues, problems of forest management the department faced and the operational modalities it employed to address them. This was followed by informal discussions with senior forestry and agronomy personnel working in the Department about the attention accorded to issues of natural resource management. Similarly, at the Co-operatives Office, documents dealing with co-operatives and NTFP marketing were consulted. On the other hand,



support was solicited in obtaining archival information from the Zonal Department of Trade and Industry concerning mainly NTFP trade regulations and licensing arrangements.

Visits were also made to two *Woreda* Agricultural Offices operating in and around the case study areas. In these Offices, documents and correspondence dealing with the following were consulted: law enforcement aspects of forest conservation; government efforts at promoting NTFPs; staff and resources, and the general context within which local government handled forestry at the grass roots level. Here, too, informal discussions held with key natural resource staff helped to clarify some of the issues identified in the course of the archival search. Access was also gained to the archives of the Bonga forestry project. Here the main interest was to obtain information about the involvement of the project in re-demarcation of state forest areas and related institutional development activities.

Archival information obtained from KA offices pertained to tenure dispute settlement and land transaction issues. Finally, personal files of a prominent landowner who had a stake in the forest resources of some of the study areas were consulted and this helped in triangulating information gained on aspects of forest tenure provision, administration and enforcement in the Imperial era.

#### **5.4.7 Field observations and informal discussions**

In order to enhance an understanding of the physical realities of local forest utilisation processes guided field observations were made. These focused on NTFP collection and domestication sites; communal forest areas, including culturally revered ones; firewood depots and charcoal burning areas; and periodic market places where NTFPs are traded. In the course of the field observations informal, but purposive, discussions were held with research assistants and people who knew about the specific issues of interest. For instance, discussions were carried out with household members about the extent of their involvement in NTFP domestication; with people involved in wood fuel sale about their trades; and with NTFP marketers about the range of NTFPs traded and current prices. Informal discussions concerning forest use and tenure enforcement issues were also held with some individuals who withheld information on the same matter at focus group discussions.

On the other hand, association with the FARM Africa's Bonga Forest Conservation and Development Project that operated in collaboration with the local government in the study areas enabled the writer to make close observations of the realities of government decisions affecting the forestry sector. At the same time, there were also opportunities to observe, first hand, community-state interactions in resource management endeavours. It should, however, be noted

that in the early days of the research period the writer's association with the Project had its own negative impact particularly with respect to establishing trust with some key community members (see Appendix 6.1 for details).

### **5.5 Methods of data analysis**

The research used a combination of data analysis methods. These were determined by the nature of the data sets generated. In examining historical aspects of local forest tenure a standard historical data analysis method was employed whereby the qualitative information was interpreted and enriched by reference to the wider governmental tenure policies and law enforcement experiences discussed in Appendix 2.3. The analysis of data pertaining to institutional processes governing the contemporary state of forest access followed an ethnographic perspective, in that it took account of the views of key informants and organisational experiences of CBOs in charge of forest tenure administration.

Issues pertaining to forest tenure establishment, forest-based operations and livelihoods were analysed with the help of a tabular presentation of the pertinent survey data, while qualitative information sources were used to amplify the points under deliberation. Some of the data gathered to analyse mechanisms of forest access, forest production practices and household income issues were amenable to the use of a range of descriptive statistical tools including the arithmetic mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation, thereby establishing useful points of reference for the discussions. Moreover, in order to assess the extent of replicability of some of the patterns of behaviour identified in the data, a variety of parametric (e.g. t-statistic and F-test) and non-parametric (e.g. chi square) statistical tests were run, 0.05 being the chosen minimum significance level. In certain cases where the issues under deliberation were best illustrated through exploring the extent of strength of association between variables, correlation coefficients were estimated.

Some aspects of the questionnaire data also lent themselves to quantitative analysis using more rigorous techniques such as Regression and Discriminant Analysis. Data on aspects of household agricultural characteristics are one such example. As noted in Section 2.5.3.2, forest dependency is characterised by marked inter-household differences, and these are often reported with reference to key household characteristics such as wealth. In order to understand the shared features of the different groups of households in the local forest production system the relevant questionnaire data (e.g. those on share cropping, open access forest use, forest tree ownership, and NWFP marketing behaviour) have been analysed using Discriminant Analysis.



Discriminant Analysis is one of the menu of tools used in classification analysis in which the dependent variable is qualitative or categorical in character. For instance, in a share cropping arrangement, households participate either as 'share tenants' or as a 'share renters'. In rural household research Discriminant Analysis helps to ascertain the extent to which households belonging to each of the pertinent dichotomous groups reflect statistically verifiable common features vis-à-vis a carefully chosen set of independent (also called predictor or grouping) variables such as yield of food grains, land and livestock ownership. After outlining the range of objectives that Discriminant Analysis can address, Hair *et al.* (1998) regarded the method as "either a type of profile analysis or an analytical predictive technique" (256). "As a profile analysis, Discriminant Analysis provides an objective assessment of differences between groups on a set of independent variables" (Hair *et al.* 1998: 256). Profile analysis has been applied gainfully in other empirical contexts dealing with NTFP use in the developing world (see, for instance, Wickramasinghe *et al.* 1996).

At the other end of the spectrum is regression analysis, which is best suited for analysing data specified in metric measurements. "The objective of regression analysis is to predict a single dependent variable from the knowledge of one or more independent variables.... When the problem involves two or more independent variables, it is termed multiple regression" (Hair *et al.* 1998: 149). The applications of these techniques in the context of the research will be described in the relevant sections of Chapters Nine and Ten.

## **5.6 Summary**

This chapter began by identifying the relevance of the case study strategy for the tasks set out in the research objectives and underlined the importance of integrating formal and informal methods of data collection. Accordingly, the research highlighted its use of a combination of field methods including questionnaire surveys, interviews, group discussions, field observations, and archival search. Whilst the questionnaire method remained the principal source of data for all but one of the research objectives, qualitative information gathered using informal methods was reported to have been of immense importance in addressing, among other issues, processes of forest tenure establishment, the organisational basis of tenure enforcement, and people's motivation in forest-based gathering activities. In a similar vein, depending on the nature of the themes under consideration the research also used a combination of data analysis methods including historical/ethnographic and statistical techniques.

The next chapter discusses the physical and socio-economic background from which the different sets of field data have been collected.

## 6. The case study sites

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines some of the socio-economic characteristics of the sample household groups as well as the natural resource and rural production context within which forest-based activities are undertaken in the case study areas. The discussion proceeds as follows. Some of the more pertinent demographic characteristics of the sample households, including population size, spatial distribution, age distribution, educational characteristics, and marital status, as well as socio-economic features of the household groups, including ethnicity and wealth differentiation, are presented first. Then, the natural environment and its local significance are outlined with special emphasis on forest resources. In Section 6.4 the salient features of the production context within which farming is pursued is examined. Section 6.5 describes the functions of local cultural organisations, giving particular attention to the organisation and management of *Idirs*. Section 6.6 provides a summary of the issues discussed.

### 6.2 Aspects of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of household groups

#### 6.2.1 Population size and spatial distribution of households

Information pieced together from the records of village *Idirs* and *Kebele* Administration files shows that in 1998 there were a total of 1250 households in the six case study areas (Table 6.1). Using the average household size computed from the survey data (which is 6.2 persons) the corresponding total population of the study areas was estimated to be 7750.

**Table 6.1**  
**Sub-Kebele distribution of households in the case study areas**

Sub-Kebele	Female-headed	Male-headed				Grand total	
		Manjo	Kaffecho	Settler	Total	HHs	Per cent
Arabakasha	10	0	102	0	102	112	9.0
Bitachega	8	36	226	31	293	301	24.1
Bitagenet	19	11	118	39	168	187	15.0
Sheeka	45	48	223	0	271	316	25.3
Woka	8	0	103	0	103	111	8.9
Wushwush	23	19	166	15	200	223	17.8
Total	113	114	938	85	1137	1250	100.0
Per cent	9	9	75	7	100		

Source: Records of KAs and village *Idirs*, 1998.

Clearly, the bulk of households in the case study areas were male-headed and ethnic Kaffecho, while the remaining were either female-headed (9 per cent), Manjo (9 per cent), or settler (7 per



cent) households. The proportion of female-headed households in the research sites is fairly comparable to what obtains in rural SNNPRS, which is 10.6 per cent (CSA 1996a).

As Table 6.1 shows there is an uneven distribution of population and household groups across the case study sub-*Kebeles*. The existence of settlers in some of the sub-*Kebeles* in varying numbers has been a political action over which local people had no say at all. While, on the other hand, a chi square analysis has shown a statistically significant difference in the distribution of female-headed and Manjo households in the case study sub-*Kebeles* (respectively,  $X^2 = 23.29$ ;  $P < 0.001$  and  $X^2 = 7.87$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). An assessment of the expected values of the chi square analysis has shown that a greater number of female-headed and Manjo household groups reside in Sheeka sub-*Kebele* than its share of households would suggest (Appendix 12, Section 12.1). In general, informants ascribe this to the particular circumstances facilitating in-migration towards this sub-*Kebele*. With regards to female-headed households, the principal factor relates to the importance of Sheeka as a hub of traditional religious practices, while its proximity to Bonga town was regarded as an important pull factor for Manjos (Details are provided in Appendix 7.5).

### 6.2.2 Labour force participation

In the case study areas children under 15 constitute 48.6 per cent of the population (Table 6.2). As could be inferred from the total dependency ratio, every economically active person in the case study areas supports an average 1.13 other persons in the rural production system, which is higher than those estimated for rural Kafa-Sheka and the country as a whole (*cf.* Table 4.1 in Section 4.3.1.2). This is largely a consequence of the preponderance of the under 15 age category. A chi square test has shown that, compared to the pattern observed in rural Kafa-Sheka, this dominance has some degree of statistical significance ( $X^2 = 3.86$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

**Table 6.2**  
Dependency ratios among the sample households

Age group	Total	Per cent
Child (0-14)	936	48.6
Working age (15-59)	903	46.9
Elderly (60+)	86	4.5
Total	1925	100
Young dependency ratio	1.03	
Old dependency ratio	0.10	
Total dependency ratio	1.13	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99 and KSZ-DoPED 1998: 26

As will be shown later in this chapter, the bulk of the population derives its livelihood from subsistence agriculture. Hence, the dominance of the young in the age structure of the case study sites is indicative of the considerable pressure that natural resources are likely to face in the coming decades. On the other hand, the sex ratio in the case study areas, which is found to

be 49.2 : 50.8, is fairly similar to those reported for rural Kafa-Sheka and rural areas of the Regional State (cf. Table 4.1 in Chapter Four).

### 6.2.3 Educational characteristics of sample households

Another observation that the survey data affords relates to educational characteristics of the population in the case study areas.

**Table 6.3**  
Educational status in the case study areas and in Gimbo Woreda

Description	Study areas <sup>1</sup> (sample population)	Gimbo (rural) <sup>2</sup>	Statistical test
Unschooling	913	39924	$X^2 = 20.74$ , $P < 0.001$
Literate	479	16167	
• Primary	366	9747	
• Secondary	113	2917	
• Non-regular	NA	3503	
Literacy rate (per cent)	34.4	28.8	

Source: <sup>1</sup> Questionnaire survey, 1998/99; <sup>2</sup> (CSA 1996a: 28).

In the context of Ethiopia the population aged seven and above is the relevant age group for the determination of literacy rates. In the case study areas over a third of the pertinent population has received some form of schooling, and this is considerably above the literacy rate reported for rural areas of Gimbo Woreda, which is statistically significant. The literacy rate in the case study localities is also higher than the Zonal, Regional State and countrywide averages (cf. Table 4.1). An assessment of the causes for the observed wide discrepancy in schooling is beyond the scope of the present study. Suffice here to note that all the six sub-*Kebeles* have in their vicinity primary schools that had been established under the *Derg*. The proximity of all of the research sites to major town centres must also have facilitated access to secondary level education. At any rate, the existence of a relatively sizeable pool of literate population in the case study areas is an important community resource that could be seized upon for development purposes.

### 6.2.4 Marital status of sample households

One facet of household characteristics that is of some relevance to the research themes relates to marital status, which Table 6.4 summarises.

From Table 6.4 a number of observations can be made. To start with, at the time of the survey there were several widowed household heads, all of whom were women. Absence of widowed male household heads could, by and large, be a result of men's greater inclination to remarry upon death of their wives or their tendency to look for helpers in the extended family network, and in the process relinquish their household headship. Similar household headship patterns have



also been reported for a number of countries in the developing world and have been interpreted as a case of "greater male dependence on the social base created by households with adult women" (Chant 1997: 23).

**Table 6.4**  
**Marital status of sample household heads in the case study areas**

Household Category	Marital status						Grand total
	Single	Widowed	Divorced	Married			
				Monogamy	Polygamy	Total	
Female	0	23	5	0	0	0	28
Male	8	0	4	230	41	271	283
Manjo	0	0	0	17	12	29	29
Non-Manjo	8	0	4	213	29	242	254
Total	8	23	9	230 (84.9%)	41 (15.1%)	271 100%)	311

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

The majority of the heads of female-headed households are widows (Table 6.4), and this is consistent with the findings of the census information in SNNPRS (CSA 1996a). The preponderance of widowed women household heads could be a reflection of the often-observed large age differences in age at the time of marriage. Also, widowhood could, to a degree, be a result of the untimely death of men consequent upon their conscription into the country's armed forces. In any case, the preponderance of widowed women household heads indicates that the weight of a partner's death tends to be felt more by women than by men. Radical feminist literature considers lone motherhood as a blessing in disguise, an opportunity for women to "escape patriarchy" (Chant 1997: 40); however, as noted below, in the realities of rural Kafa widowed women view such a family set up as more of a bane than a boon.

In an agricultural system where male (husband's) labour is of crucial economic importance (see Section 6.4.2 below) it is highly conceivable that female-headed households would have to exert extra effort to get farm work completed on time. In female-headed households adult male members were found to have been fewer in number (an average of 0.6 persons) than in male-headed households, which is 1.1 persons ( $t = 4.118$ ,  $P < 0.000$ ). Similar results were also obtained with regard to the total number of people in the working age group across the two categories of households. The issue of household labour constraints among female-headed households is deepened further by the relatively old age of the breadwinners themselves. In general the mean age of female household heads (53.3 years) is greater than male household heads (42.6 years), and this is statistically significant ( $t = 5.413$ ,  $P < 0.000$ ). It should be appreciated that the status of being a widow does not always entitle women to an automatic household headship. In cases where there are sons or other male relatives, headship is entrusted to a male member, not to surviving wives. This explains the existence of unmarried

men heading a few households in the case study areas (Table 6.4). All in all, the above observations are of crucial importance for understanding the gender dimensions of forest access in rural Kafa, a matter discussed in Chapter Eight.

Another issue of interest relates to the practice of polygamy, which in effect is a case of polygyny (Table 6.4). Overall, 15.1 per cent of adult males in marriage relationships had two or more wives. The extent of polygyny among the Manjos (41.4 per cent) appears to be far higher than among the non-Manjo Kaffechos (12.0 per cent); however, a chi square test could not be run to validate this observation, because the expected values were found to be less than the minimum requirement (see Ebdon 1985: 67). Manjo key informants attribute this practice to the desire to have many children (Appendix 9.2.2A). Chapter Eight highlights the relevance of polygyny in access to land resources across the different household categories.

### 6.2.5 Manjos

There is a dearth of information regarding the number of Manjos in the Zone and their distribution across the different *Woredas* and *Kebeles*. However, in many parts of the Zone Manjos occupy their own distinct villages, away from those of the Kaffecho (Gezahegn Petros, personal communication). Such a pattern of settlement is clearly borne out in the four of the case study areas where Manjos live. From interviews with Kaffecho and Manjo elders it was evident that at Bitachega, Bitagenet, and Wushwush Manjos villages have had a long history (Appendices 9.2.1E and 9.2.2A). The Manjo village at Wushwush (called Matapa) is particularly noted for its antiquity. It was learnt from elderly informants that during the era of the Kafa kings the main caravan route that traversed the southwestern part of the Ethiopia region passed through Matapa and the village served as an important *Kella* (i.e., toll post) for the kingdom. The proximity of Manjo villages to such strategic locations was in keeping with the social division of labour that relegated the Manjos as watchmen of the realm (see Appendix 3.2). At Sheeka, on the other hand, historically Manjos did not have a well-defined residential place in the locality; instead they occupied forest edges that local landowners allotted them (Appendix 9.2.1E). In this regard, Nicolas (1976), who did field work in Kafa in the early 1970s, observed that Manjos at Barita, the closest Manjo village to Bonga town in present day Sheeka sub-*Kebele*, were few in number and that the village itself was "of a recent origin" (49).

From field observations and interactions with informants it was abundantly clear that Manjos are looked down upon by the wider Kaffecho society. Most Kaffechos do not buy agricultural products from Manjos for use in their households. Manjos rely by and large on institutional customers such as local liquor shops for some of their marketable produce (notably honey).



However, Manjo skills, particularly in bee keeping, are a widely recognised phenomenon and this makes Manjo the most sought after partners in bee keeping. Manjos, too, are proud of their expertise in apiculture (Appendix 11.4.1).

In terms of community management, no Manjo in the study sub-*Kebeles* has been elected to positions in the KA office. This is in contrast to the situation under the *Derg*, where, in places like Wushwush, Manjos were made to assume positions in the then PA executive body. According to local political authorities, Manjo denigration has been recognised as a lacuna that bodes ill for the maintenance of social justice and the upholding of minority rights. Thus, of late the Zonal Administrative Council has embarked on a system of affirmative action in favour of Manjos. These include facilitating the enrolment of Manjo youth in special boarding schools that the Regional State organised for underrepresented sections of the general population and ensuring the assignment of Manjos in to positions of authority at *Woreda* level administration (Tesfaye W/Mikael, personal communication). While these measures are yet to benefit Manjos in the study areas, they are likely to send a positive signal towards elevating the position of Manjos in society. It is also recognised that the above measures are likely to take a long time before they bear fruit in terms of altering the societal mindset towards Manjos.

#### 6.2.6 Settlers

As noted in Section 6.2.1 a varying number of settlers are found in three of the study sub-*Kebeles*. In all cases, settlers have their own distinct villages, which, nevertheless, are contiguous to villages that the indigenous people occupy. Table 6.5 contains the number of settlers by host PA and their related characteristics at the time of resettlement.

**Table 6.5**  
**Breakdown of settlers by host communities**

Host PA	Period of Resettlement	Households			Ethnicity	Religion
		Female	Male	Total		
Bitachega	1985	5	36	41	Amhara (28); Tigray (13)	EOC <sup>1</sup>
Bitagenet	1987	4	42	46	Kambata	EOC; Catholic
Wushwush	1985	2	19	21	Amhara	Moslem
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>108</b>		

Source: Interviews with former PA officials and settler informants.

<sup>1</sup> EOC = Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

While settlers at Bitachega originated from the northern province of Wollo (in present day Amhara Regional State) and the present Tigray Regional State, those at Wushwush were exclusively from Wollo. Both regions, however, are characterised by the grain-plough farming system. On the other hand, all the settlers at Bitagenet were from the Kambata province of central Ethiopia (in

present day SNNPRS), which belongs to the horticulture-hoe farming system complex. These groups of settlers had been moved to the Bitagenet area two years after the other settlers were placed at Bitachega and Wushwush because of, reportedly, an “outbreak of livestock disease” in their original resettlement location, in a neighbouring rural district within highland Kafa (Appendix 9.2.3). The above differences in the socio-cultural characteristics of settlers' vis-à-vis the host communities and the temporal differences in household establishment in the case study areas have had influences on the forms of forest access that have evolved in the relevant sub-*Kebeles*. Details are discussed in Chapter Seven.

### 6.2.7 Socio-economic differentiation among the study communities

Another issue of interest concerning the population in the case study areas pertains to the extent of inter-household socio-economic differentiation, because such an understanding provides a basis for assessing the social processes affecting resource access. The results of the community wealth ranking exercises could be gainfully employed in this regard. Key informants used a range of economic and social criteria to categorise communities in the study areas into four wealth groups. These criteria included agricultural resource endowments (including oxen/livestock ownership and forest access status of households), household labour availability, the health status of households, household participation in forest farming and other socially looked down upon forest-based activities such as woodfuel sale (Appendix 7.2). In this way, slightly above a quarter of the total population have been categorised either as ‘wealthy’ (rank I) or ‘self sufficient’ (rank II) and the majority as either ‘poor’ (rank III) or ‘very poor’ (rank IV) (Appendix 7.2). The sample households used in the Questionnaire survey also reflect this general classification (Table 6.6).

**Table 6.6**  
**Sample breakdown by household headship and wealth rank**

Household headship	Wealth rank								Grand Total	
	I	II	Sub-total ('Rich')		III	IV	Sub-total ('Poor')			
			HHs	%			HHs	%		
Female headed households	0	1	1	3.6	4	23	27	86.4	28	100
Manjo (male HHs)	0	4	4	13.8	11	14	25	86.2	29	100
Kaffecho (male HHs)	26	47	73	31.5	75	84	159	68.5	232	100
Settlers (male HHs)	3	2	5	22.7	11	6	17	77.3	22	100
Grand total	29	54	83	26.7	101	127	228	73.3	311	100
X <sup>2</sup>	12.5, P < 0.01									

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

As Table 6.6 shows, there is an observable difference in the wealth status of the different sample groups, which is statistically significant. (Compliance with the minimum values of expected frequencies in chi square analysis (see Ebdon 1985: 71) could only be achieved through



amalgamating the four wealth categories into two groups.) Whilst male-headed Kaffecho households constitute the greatest proportion of the top two wealth ranks, the majority of female-headed households and Manjos have been categorised into the lowest wealth ranks.

On the other hand, an understanding of community socio-economic differentiation along 'age' lines provides important pointers for the study of inter-generational aspects of access to forest resources. 'Household establishment period' has been used as a proxy for 'age' and the results of the wealth ranking exercise have been presented vis-à-vis four bench mark periods for household establishment in the case study areas (Table 6.7). Under the *Derg* farmers in the case study areas have had varying institutional experiences in land resource allocation; hence, in this and subsequent analysis households established during the *Derg* have been split in to two. To this end, the year 1980 has been taken as the dividing time, because after the first five or so post-land reform years the PA had considerably disengaged itself from allocating land resources (see also Section 7.3.2, Chapter Seven).

**Table 6.7**  
**Sample breakdown by household establishment period and wealth rank**

Household establishment Period <sup>1</sup>	Wealth rank								Total	
	I	II	Sub-total ('Rich')		III	IV	Sub-total ('Poor')			
			HHs	Per cent			HHs	Per cent	HHs	Per cent
Pre-Derg	17	20	37	54.4	17	14	31	45.6	68	100
Derg I	4	8	12	32.4	8	17	25	67.6	37	100
Derg II	6	17	23	25.6	34	33	67	74.4	90	100
Post-Derg	2	9	11	9.5	42	63	105	90.5	116	100
Total	29	54	83	26.7	101	127	228	73.3	311	100
X <sup>2</sup>	57.04, P < 0.001									

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> *Pre-Derg* = before 1975; *Derg I* = 1975 – 1979; *Derg II* = 1980 – 1990; and *Post-Derg* = 1991 – 1997.

Evidently, the wealth status of sample households shows a changing pattern of distribution across the different periods of household establishment. Whilst households formed prior to 1980 are characterised by the highest relative concentration of 'richer' households, most of those established in the post 1980 (*Derg II*) period in general, and the post-*Derg* era in particular, fall into the lowest two wealth ranks. This difference was found to be statistically significant. To the extent that resource access variables have been factored into the determination of wealth ranks, the above finding underlines the need to examine the institutional processes affecting access and the mechanisms such households employ to take part in the local forest economy, issues discussed in Chapters Seven/Eight and Nine respectively.

### **6.2.8 Summary**

The foregoing discussion established the preponderance of the young in the demographic scene of the case study areas and underlined its implications for future demand for land resources. It also examined the educational characteristics and noted the opportunities that a relatively literate community could have in development efforts. Moreover, the discussion brought to light a couple of elements that characterise the different household categories around which some of the research themes are organised. The discussion on marital status not only provided background demographic information about rural households but also allowed exploration of labour endowments across the different household categories, the findings of which will be shown to be relevant for the discussion on forest production practices (Chapter Nine). The discussion on Manjos has shown that, in the main, they were found to have been integral parts of the history and ethnography of the sub-*Kebeles* in which they currently live. The information on the ethno-cultural background of settlers has its own significance in terms of assessing settlers' acceptance by, and integration into, the indigenous community, issues taken up in connection with examining the forest access experiences of settlers (Chapter Seven). Finally, the discussion underlined the existence of observable differences in the 'wealth' status of households along gender, ethnicity and 'age' lines, an observation believed to strengthen the assessment of the forest access experiences of farmers from a pluralistic perspective.

## **6.3 The natural environment and its local socio-economic significance**

In what follows the forms of natural capital and their socio-economic significance in the study communities will be described giving particular attention to forest resources.

### **6.3.1 Water resources**

Similar to other parts of highland Kafa the study areas are generally well watered. Informants identified at least seven small rivers that either cross or originate in the study sites. While none of the rivers is used for irrigation, river water is used for a variety of domestic purposes. Meteorological data collected at Wushwush weather station between 1993 and 1996 gave a mean annual rainfall of 1558mm and, during the above period, rain fell for an average of 210 days a year (KSZ-DoPED 1998: 4). This notwithstanding, farmers customarily consider the months of May-August as the main rainy season, and February-April as the period of the short rains.

Wetland bodies are found in all of the study sub-*Kebeles* and form an important agricultural resource. In areas such as Bitachega, Bitagenet and Woka the wetlands cut across *Kebele*



administrative boundaries. Farmers use the reeds that grow in wetlands for roof thatching purposes. During the dry season wetlands are used as livestock grazing areas as well. Wetland drainage and cultivation are rare.

### 6.3.2 Soils

There is a dearth of information on the soil characteristics of the study sites or adjoining areas. According to studies undertaken at a larger spatial scale, soils in and around the research sites are reported to be of a 'lustric nito sol' type, which are red and brown clays (MoWR 1996). Farmers' characterisation of their soil resources is also based on colour. At two of the western most sub-*Kebeles* (namely, Bitachega and Bitagenet) farmers stated that the bulk of the land is endowed with *Chele showo*, or red soil. At the northern most locality of Sheeka, on the other hand, three different soil types are recognised: red soil, *Adi showo* (lit.: black soil), and *Boroo* (lit.: reddish-brown). In the remaining three study sub-*Kebeles*, which are located in between the above two areas, the dominant soil types are red and reddish-brown.

Given the high rainfall regime characterising the study areas, it is highly conceivable that soils here could be "deeply leached" like those in other parts of highland Kafa. Thus, once the topsoil is removed or the nutrient recycling process is interfered with, crop yields are likely to decline substantially. High amounts and intensities of rainfall also cause soil erosion, thereby accentuating the soil degradation and production loss processes. This is in part why the larger area to which the case study sites belong is regarded as "poorly adapted to annual crops, especially grain crops" (MoWR 1996: 11.5-11.6).

### 6.3.3 The forest resource base and its socio-economic significance

There are no forest inventories that would otherwise help in ascertaining the extent of forest cover and the species composition of forest resources in the case study areas. An indication of tree cover in the case study areas could be gleaned from Abayneh's (1998) work. This is a micro study on natural forest regeneration around two of the study sub-*Kebeles* - Bitagenet and Bitachega. According to this source *Olea hochstetteri*, *Vepris dainellii*, *Millettia ferruginea*, *Schefflera abyssinica*, and *Olea welwitschii* (Elgon Olive, after Wolde Michael 1987: 206) were the most abundant tree species in the forest. In fact, the first three types of trees accounted for "40 per cent of the total number of stems ( $\geq 2$  cms diameter at breast height [1.4m]) in the forest" (Abayneh 1998: 32). Furthermore, the last two tree species of the above five constituted a third of the mean basal area in the forest. At the same time, Abayneh found out that the regeneration particularly of *Cordia africana* (Sudan Teak, after Wolde Michael 1987: 224) and *Millettia*

*ferruginea*, two species of wider local economic importance, has been significantly constrained by their unsustainable use (32).

From field observations as well as from interactions with grass roots agricultural personnel and local informants it is clear that the lower storey of forest areas in each of the sub-*Kebeles* are endowed with coffee, Ethiopian cardamom, long pepper, fern trees, buckthorn, and a variety of locally useful shrubs. District agricultural personnel pointed out that wild coffee is particularly abundant in the forest areas of Arabakasha and Woka and some of the adjoining sub-*Kebeles*. On the other hand, government extension agents and local informants report the sighting of wild animals said to exist in other parts of highland Kafa (see Section 4.3.2).

Forest resources in the case study areas, as indeed in other parts of highland Kafa, are of crucial significance to rural people's socio-cultural lives and their production system. As noted in connection with the operation of the *Alamo* institution, traditional religion has a place of pride in the spiritual world of most Kaffecho farmers. In this context, the forest is an important place for practising *Dejo* - a thanksgiving ceremony observed each year after the major food grain harvests (see Appendix 11.2.1 for details). The forest ecosystem is also an important ecological niche in terms of direct provisioning of subsistence goods as well as in supporting a wide range of agricultural production activities and wood-based enterprises. As regards the former, the forest ecosystem is a valued source of wild foods and plant medicines (see Appendices 9.8, 11.2.2, 11.3.3 and 11.3.4 for details). The forest environment also provides items needed for the maintenance of personal hygiene and related domestic uses. Finally, forests in the case study areas are endowed with ornamental and aromatic herbs that have locally valued perfumery roles and are important ingredients of a number of religious and ritual ceremonies.

The forest environment supports rural agricultural production activities in diverse ways. To start with, forests in the study localities are endowed with tree species that have several high level branches that are ideal for hanging the cylindrical log beehives. The most popular ones include *Polyscias ferruginea*, Elgon Olive, and *Schefflera abyssinica*. Some of these tree species (especially *Polyscias ferruginea*) are regarded as suitable for the preparation of beehives as well. Moreover, the forest environment plays a critical role in the sustenance of plant-based forest farming. In particular, forests provide shade for a variety of non-wood forest products that thrive best when protected from frost and direct sunlight. Plants under this category include coffee and wild spices. The livelihood significance of forest-based gathering activities across the different household categories has been evaluated empirically and results discussed in Chapter Ten.



On the other hand, the forest ecosystem supplies mixed farming activities with a range of support. Tree resources (e.g. stems and branches of Elgon Olive) provide farmers with the needed materials to prepare farm tools and implements such as axe handles, hoes, *enset* cutters, yokes, beams and related ploughing accessories. Farmers also use some forest tree products (e.g. *Croton macrostachys* and *Schefflera abyssinica*) to maintain soil fertility. Moreover, during the dry season, when there is little feed for livestock to browse around, farmers feed their animals with branches of such forest trees as *Dracaena steudneri*. In the same vein, parts of tree species (e.g. bark of *Schefflera abyssinica*) are fed to lactating cows, as these are believed to enhance milk yield. The forest also supplies materials for construction of granaries and crop protection shelters.

There are no sawmills in the case study areas; hence, modern wood processing is an unknown practice. However, local people, using traditional implements and working procedures, extract timber, produce planks and a variety of household furniture and kitchen utensils both for household consumption and for sale. The most common woodcrafts include barrels, wooden ducts, bowls, benches, stools, coffee pot rests, coffee roasting pans, coffee pounders and pestles. The most preferred trees for the production of wooden utensils include Sudan Teak and *Ficus ovata* (for wooden ducts and pastels) and *Aningeria adolfi-friederici* and *Schefflera abyssinica* (for stools and bowls). In addition, coffee cups, mats, bags and the like are produced from some of the softer wood species.

## **6.4 The rural production context**

### **6.4.1 Introduction**

From the different categories of informants and field observations it is clear that farming has been the mainstay of the local livelihood system. Non-farm employment, i.e., local employment other than subsistence agricultural activities, is limited. The few income earning opportunities that this sector creates are by and large because of casual labour opportunities at the Wushwush Tea Development Enterprise, and even this is confined to sub-*Kebeles* adjoining the Tea Estate (see Appendix 7.6 for details). In what follows, first, farming practices characterising the case study areas are outlined and then the distribution of key agricultural resources across the different farm household categories is examined.

#### 6.4.2 An outline of mixed farming practices

The variety of crops grown in highland Kafa are also produced in the case study areas using similar instruments of labour (see Section 4.3.3). The production of fruits and vegetables is a side activity undertaken in the course of food grain farming and/or *enset* cultivation. On the other hand, most forest plants are collected from the wild, and comparatively little effort is exerted in their harvesting. The production of food grains in general and the preparation of fields destined for cereal cultivation in particular is regarded as the most labour-demanding undertaking. This is attributed to the land extensification option farmers often adopt to maintain or augment crop yields. Although land preparation takes place in the drier months when labour requirements are least (Appendix 9.11.1), the process often necessitates the involvement not only of adult household labour but also kinsmen and friends from within the localities concerned. Traditional work parties are the most common forms through which access to outside labour is sought. Two such forms of labour co-operation are widely used in the case study areas: *dadoo* and *deboo*. While the former is a type of reciprocal exchange of labour, the latter is a voluntary assistance scheme.

In the case of cereal crops, ploughing - an activity undertaken by men - is a critical aspect of the land preparation process, which, as will be shown below, is constrained by a shortage of oxen. In part to resolve this problem farmers use a range of oxen sharing arrangements that are settled mainly through payment in kind. Development Agents consider that the favourable climatic condition of the area encourages weed growth, a problem exacerbated by poor land preparation activities. This in turn negatively impacts on land productivity. As Appendix 9.11.1 shows, planting/sowing of most food grains is undertaken during the early parts of the main rainy season, the main exception being maize that is grown during the short rainy season as well. Broadcasting is the principal manner in which farmers sow field crops. With regards to product harvesting qualitative information sources indicate that it is an activity that entails the direct involvement of all adult household members. The major exceptions are harvesting of *teff* and barley, where, as a matter of custom, only men take part directly.

Until very recently, advances in technology rarely supported the agricultural operations of farmers. During the *Derg* there were two isolated cases where farmers in the case study areas benefited from extension-oriented services. The first related to the provision of improved coffee seeds and related extension advice from the now defunct Ministry of Coffee and Tea Development, from which 'coffee rich' localities in Gimbo *Woreda* benefited. The second pertained to the implementation of a "Honey Production Project" headquartered at Bitagenet sub-*Kebele* and whose operations were regarded as unsatisfactory (Appendix 9.11.2).



It is only since the mid-1990s, following the country's adoption of PADETES, that comprehensive extension intervention in the case study areas has been undertaken. The extent of farmer involvement in the extension programme is reported to have shown a steady increase over the years. However, the extension programme shows a marked activity bias. In particular, the number of farming households participating in the uptake of fertiliser and high response seeds for food grain production has been far higher than those taking part in extension interventions aimed at improving apiculture or coffee production (see Appendix 9.11.3). This was essentially a reflection of the uneven degree of importance accorded to the different farm enterprises in the extension programme. From field observations and interactions with local Agricultural Department personnel it was abundantly clear that the whole machinery of extension is geared towards tasks related to enhancing cereal crops yields, and in many cases unsavoury mechanisms had been used to enlist farmers' acceptance of the scheme (Appendix 9.11.3). For that matter, the provision of coffee seeds on a credit basis was made possible largely through the support provided by an aid agency working in the *Woreda*. In short, activities that could have directly supported forest-based activities were of limited coverage in the case study areas.

Another facet of agricultural extension relates to the support given to product marketing, which does not however come under the purview of the current extension programme. Farmers' experience with outside-support in product marketing is limited to the organisation of 'Yeibito farmers' multi-purpose co-operative society'. This entity embraces farmers from Bitachega and Bitagenet sub-*Kebeles* and was established in mid 1997 in accordance with the provisions of the post-*Derg* Co-operatives Proclamation. The Society has been involved in marketing of food grains and NWFPs (see Appendix 9.7). While this is a useful beginning it has not altered the traditional form of product marketing, which is an atomised decision individual farmers make regarding their marketing schedule and choice of clients. Farmers in the case study areas make use of some eight periodic market places found in and around their respective villages as exchange outlets for their produce. Most of these market places are weekly ones, the exceptions being the Bonga market (thrice weekly) and the market at Wushwush urban settlement (twice weekly). Almost all of the eight market places that farmers patronise have had a long history of establishment and are particularly noted for facilitating exchange of forest goods.

#### **6.4.3 Agricultural resource endowments of farm households**

From the foregoing it can be inferred that land and livestock are the most critical means of production in mixed farming operations. It should be noted at the outset that, given the critical importance of oxen in mixed farming activities it was thought necessary to examine the extent of

the oxen endowment of farmers separately from other livestock resources (see Tables 6.8 and 6.9).

**Table 6.8**  
**Access to key agricultural resources in the case study areas**

Resource	Land size <sup>1</sup> /livestock numbers <sup>2</sup>					Total	Mean	One sample test		
	0	1 – 8	9 – 16	17 – 24	24+			Test value	t	Sign.
Farmland										
Households	24	129	101	53	4	311	10.1	4.08	15.88	0.000
Per cent	7.7	41.5	32.5	17.0	1.3	100				
All Livestock										
Households	0	0.1 – 1	1.1 – 2	2.1 – 3	3+	311	1.8	0.44	11.7	0.000
Per cent	17.0	20.6	27.0	18.6	16.7	100				
Oxen ownership										
	0	0.5 – 1	>1 – 2	>2 – 3	3+					
Households	89	149	60	10	3	311	0.95	NI <sup>3</sup>		
Per cent	28.6	47.9	19.3	3.2	1.0	100				

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> Land (*Timad*; 1 *timad* = 0.25 ha.). <sup>2</sup> 'All livestock' (includes oxen and is specified in Tropical Livestock Units, TLU). One horse = 0.8 TLU; 1 cattle = 0.7 TLU = 1 mule/ ass = 0.5 TLU; 1 sheep/goat = 0.1 (Jahnke 1982: 10). <sup>3</sup> Oxen only = in numbers. <sup>3</sup> No information.

It is evident from Table 6.8 that the distribution of agricultural resources among the sample households is highly uneven. With regards to farmland, the majority of households had holdings in excess of two hectares (50.8 per cent). For a significant minority, however, their land size varied between 0.25 ha to two hectares (41.5 per cent). The modal land holding size is 2.25 hectares, and this characterises about a fifth of the sample households. Mean land holdings in the case study areas (which is 10.1 *timads* or 2.53 ha) is well above and significantly different from the national average of 4.08 *timads* or 1.02 hectares (CSA 1998a: 99). This is indicative of the relatively low level of population density in the research areas and is a reflection of the extensive nature of field crop farming.

The inter-household pattern of livestock ownership also shows a high degree of variability. Almost half the sample households own between 0.1 (i.e. one sheep/goat) and two livestock units. Even so, mean livestock ownership was significantly higher than the average for the Regional State, which in 1997 was 0.44 TLU (CSA 1998a: 72, 96). At any rate, with close to 30 per cent of the sample households devoid of any direct access to oxen power, shortage of oxen must be an important factor constraining the production of food grains in the case study communities.

Given the interest of the research in understanding resource endowments across household groups, a further data analysis was carried out to see the distributional pattern of farm holdings and livestock ownership along gender and ethnicity lines (Table 6.9).



**Table 6.9**  
**Ownership of agricultural resources by household category**

Household category	Mean values of:			Households with no direct access to:					
				All livestock		Oxen		Land	
	All livestock	Oxen	Land	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%
Female-headed	0.99	0.52	7.58	9	32.1	12	42.9	5}	17.9
Manjo	0.71	0.57	8.48	10	34.5	14	48.3	5}	17.2
Kaffeche-Male	1.79	0.99	10.65	32	13.8	59	25.4	14}	6.0
Settlers	3.81	1.42	9.71	2	9.1	4	18.2	0}	0
Statistical test <sup>1</sup>	F = 13.570, P = 0.000.	F = 7.09, P = 0.000.	F = 2.368, P > 0.05.	X <sup>2</sup> = 13.85, P < 0.005.		X <sup>2</sup> = 10.1, P < 0.05.		X <sup>2</sup> = 10.8, P < 0.005.	

Source: Computed from Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> One way analysis of variance was used to test each of the mean values of agricultural resources vis-à-vis all household categories.

Evidently, both female-headed households and Manjos own, on the average, the fewest number of livestock. The results of analysis of variance support the observed marked variation in livestock ownership (oxen inclusive) between the four household categories. The third column in the above table also contains an important part of the explanation for this state of affairs. Clearly, the proportion of female-headed and Manjo households who are devoid of any livestock resources is substantially higher than the other two household groups. As the chi square tests corroborate, the numbers of these household groups who are resource poor was significantly higher than their share in the total number of households would suggest.

Although female-headed households and Manjos had on the average less farmland than the remaining groups, the inter-group differences in mean land holdings were not statistically significant. This being so, Table 6.9 indicates the prevalence of a statistically significant number of landless female-headed and Manjo households. These findings point to the existence of considerable intra-group inequity in land holdings among these two household categories. The social processes responsible for this will be explored in Chapter Eight where informal aspects of land access are examined. On the other hand, settler households appear to have fared better than the rest in terms of livestock ownership. Whilst, these groups had a lower mean value of land holdings than the Kaffeche, none of them is landless. Again the factors behind this state of affairs are clarified as part of the discussion on institutional aspects of access to land resources (Chapter Seven).

## 6.5 Local community organisation: the *Idir* system in perspective

So far, the discussion has focused in part on the material bases of rural production in the case study areas. Even the deliberations on the socio-demographic features of the research

communities were presented giving emphasis to either the social variables characterising specific household groups or the implications of the demographic characteristics for production and productivity. It is, however, recognised that a fuller understanding of the rural socio-economic set up necessitates an examination of the cultural and organisational resources with which villagers' are endowed, for the latter are important indicators of the community management aspects of rural life. The following presentation attempts to fill this gap.

In the case study areas, as indeed in most parts of rural highland Ethiopia, the village is the most crucial socio-spatial unit. In the case study areas, each village houses varying number of households. Most commonly, however, a Kaffecho village consists of 25 to 35 households, while the size of Manjo villages considerably varies between just 6 households in Bitagenet to about 27 in Sheeka. Village settlements in the case study areas are composed of closely-knit households, who often claim common clan origin and familial background. Thus, traces of pre-1974 settlement patterns are very much in evidence today. In fact, it was this sense of village identity that local people were denied during *Derg's* villagisation drive and which has been reversed in the post-*Derg* period. Presently, the single most important community organisation that binds together every village is the *Idir*. This organisation has a relatively long history in the study communities. Elderly informants recounted the presence of village-based *Idirs* during the reign of Emperor Haileselassie I, a fact observed in other parts of highland Kafa as well (Orent 1969: 126). The following discussion draws heavily on the *Idir* leader interviews conducted during the first phase of data collection (Appendix 9.5).

The central function of *Idirs* in the case study areas has always been to comfort bereaved families and assist the sick with timely agricultural operations such as ploughing and weeding. In the case study areas every Kaffecho village has its own *Idir* and membership is open to village residents only. Typically an *Idir* in this setting constitutes 30 to 45 households. Manjos have their own *Idirs*, and in sub-*Kebeles* where there are contiguous Manjo villages, *Idir* membership transcends settlement/administrative boundaries. Settlers who originated from the northern provinces established their own *Idirs*, while those coming from the more culturally similar locations of central Ethiopia were integrated into a village *Idir* that the Kaffecho had instituted. On the other hand, at every village married women have their own small *Idirs* whose functions are confined to comforting the bereaved.

In short, all households in the case study areas are *Idir* members of one form or another. Exceptions to this are newly established households who will be granted a grace period of one year before they are eligible for and required to join village-wide *Idirs*. As in all other community-wide affairs, the household head represents the unit in the activities of the major *Idirs*.



*Idirs* have purpose-made organisational structures and are run by popularly elected executive bodies consisting of four to seven members. Office tenure is not fixed; in some villages fresh elections are made to replace ineffective office holders. Most *Idirs* meet once a month to collect fixed monetary contributions from their members and to consider possible cases of conflict. In some *Idirs*, households considered destitute are exempted from the monthly contributions. *Idirs* have written bylaws that deal mainly with the duties and responsibilities of members concerning attendance of meetings and payment of periodic contributions. It is worth noting that, local people make a distinction between *Idirs* on the basis of the managerial capabilities of their office holders and look up to some local *Idirs* that they think are better organised than theirs.

The function of *Idirs* during the *Derg* was confined largely to bereavement related activities, and most other community-wide affairs were overseen by the PA structure. In the early days of the post-*Derg* period, however, villagers in the case study areas started reconstituting *Idirs* as an effective local level organisational force. The revival of the *Idir* as a community structure in the post-*Derg* period was a direct consequence of and a reaction against the bad rapport the PA had with the ordinary farmer. It should be underlined that, this predated the amalgamation of PAs into larger rural *Kebele* Administration bodies and was in a way a reflection of a feeling of relative autonomy that villagers had immediately after the change in political order.

The establishment of the KA structure over a wider spatial domain has, albeit unwittingly, strengthened the profile of village *Idirs*. In particular, enlargement of the KA's area not only created an institutional void at the village level that needed to be filled but also enhanced the opportunities for small scale organisational action outside the framework of direct state control. Thus, of late, villagers have broadened *Idir* mandates to include quasi-legal activities such as adjudicating over marriage disputes, land-related conflicts, and other cases of property administration. As will be shown in Chapter Eight, *Idirs* do not function in a political vacuum and there is a two-way traffic between the workings of *Idirs* and of the KA system.

The above is, therefore, the context within which the role of the *Idir* system in tenure enforcement and village-wide collective action should be evaluated.

## 6.6 A summing up

The chapter examined the physical and socio-economic landscape within which rural production and community management activities are undertaken in the case study areas. It was established that the case study areas are fairly accessible and that, due partly to their proximity to

major towns, the level of literacy is higher than the average for the Zone/Woreda. The bulk of the population of the case study areas are ethnic Kaffechos (Manjos included), with settlers from the north accounting for a very small proportion. The study areas have also experienced a limited degree of in-migration. The chapter has also noted the existence of few households headed by women and this was by and large a consequence of widowhood. Community wealth ranking experiences emphasised the existence of statistically significant differences in the 'wealth' status of households, where 'wealth' is understood to embrace a range of criteria that centre around the quantity and quality of agricultural resource endowments of households.

As regards agricultural resource endowments and farming practices the discussion established farming as the major employer of the population. In this regard, the chapter provided an account of the diverse ways in which the forest ecosystem supplements and complements mixed farming activities in the case study areas. It has also been shown that agricultural extension interventions are recent phenomena and that they have limited coverage both in terms of beneficiaries involved and the range of farm enterprises the packages address. The pluralistic perspective from which forest tenure and use issues were examined and recognition of the relationship between household capabilities and environmental entitlements prompted the discussion to explore the distribution of some of the key agricultural resources including farmland and oxen across the different household categories. In this regard, it was observed that Manjos and female-headed households fared less well than other groups and that female-headed households were also noted to have been labour short. This in a way provided a confirmation of aspects of the wealth ranking criteria that key informants employed for the selection of sample households in the questionnaire survey.

Finally, given that a co-operative ethos and experiences affect the outcome of forest management issues, the discussion also gave attention to the sphere of community management. In this connection, village level organisations such as the *Idir* were noted to play a progressively significant role particularly during the current post-*Derg* period. The persistence of *Idirs* owes very much to a combination of historical precedence, kinship, and settlement factors. While, on the other hand, the recent ascendancy of *Idirs* as important cultural organisations has been ascribed to a perception of local organisational freedom following changes in the political order as well as the village level organisational void that the establishment of the KA structure created.

All in all, the themes discussed in this chapter are believed to introduce with the necessary socio-economic, ecological and farming system background against which the next four data analysis chapters can be understood.



## **7. State tenure in land resources and influences on local forest access: with particular reference to developments in the post-land reform period**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The main aim of this chapter is to analyse state-community interactions in the provision and administration of forest access in the post-1975 period. In particular, the chapter examines the operation of officially sanctioned forest tenure provisions and some of the *Derg's* rural policies and land management strategies that had a direct bearing on the redefinition of forest access rights in the case study areas. The rest of the chapter is organised as follows. Section two outlines the historical evolution the natural resource tenure system in highland Kafa. Section three addresses forest access mechanisms in the post land reform period of the *Derg* giving particular attention to the official tenure provision mechanisms. Sections four to seven describe the effect of some of the more pertinent land management policies of the *Derg* on local forest access. These include, respectively, the establishment of state farms, demarcation of state forests, villagisation, and resettlement. Section eight discusses post-*Derg* developments and influences on local forest use rights. Section nine takes stock of inter-temporal variations in the household forest access situation and provides explanations for the observed trends. Section ten investigates the current state of tenure administration and forest governance initiatives at the local level. The last section identifies the main issues for further deliberation in Chapter Eleven.

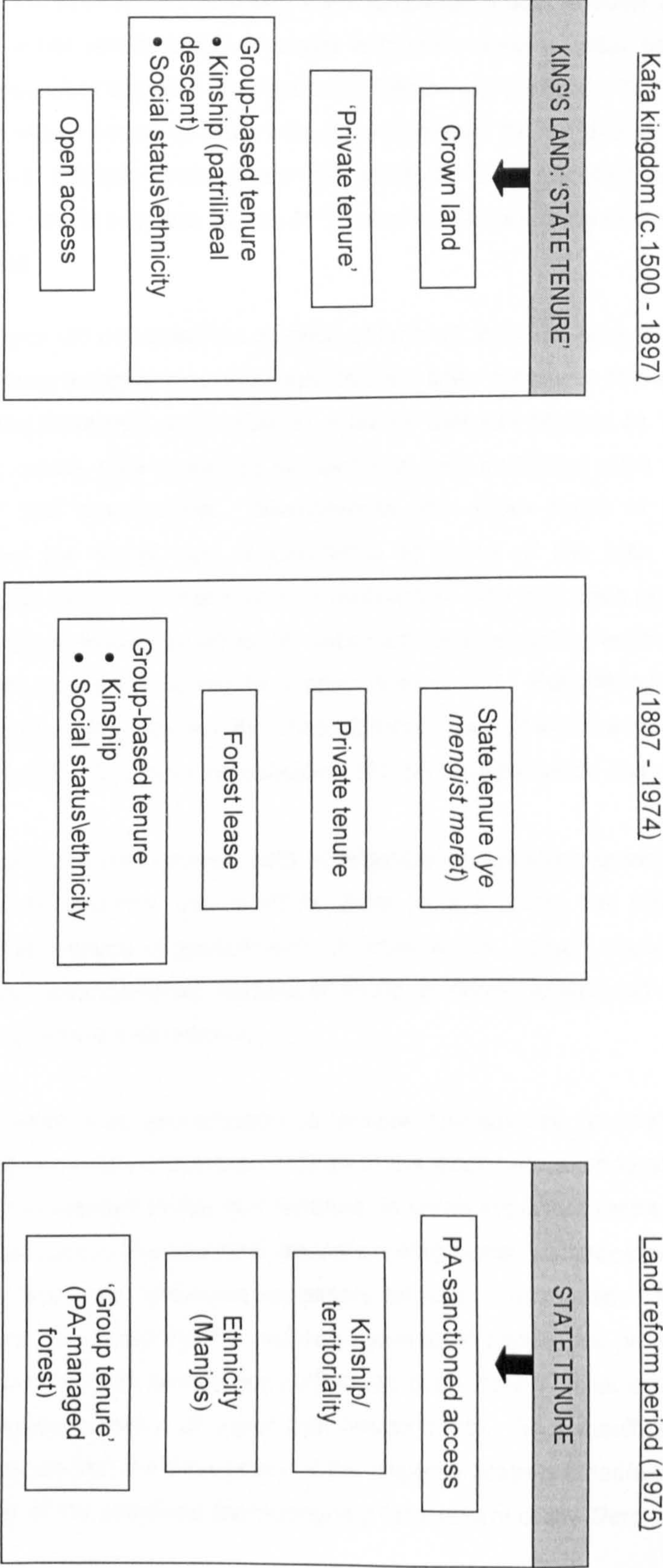
### **7.2 The antecedent situation**

The historical evolution of property rights in land and access to forest resources in highland Kafa is detailed in Appendix 3. The following is a summary of the main issues.

Historical Kafa was characterised by the co-existence of elements of what could *loosely* be regarded as state, group, private, and open access property rights regimes in land resources (see also Figure 7.1). At any rate, the terms and conditions of access to and control over land resources were far from egalitarian. Indeed, kinship, social division of labour and religion were the major factors behind the observed inequalities in intra- community land holding and land use rights. Within this rights framework, forest goods played important roles for settling taxes and meeting periodic exactions.

The incorporation of Kafa into the Ethiopian Empire and the subsequent land policies of the Imperial regime have upset the indigenous tenurial establishment through the impetus it gave to the emerging system of private property in land resources. Although these policies could have

Figure 7.1: The historical evolution of forest access channels in Kafa (up to 1975)





the potential to accommodate the land resource needs of the majority, the then prevailing local power structures as well as the poor record of policy communication thwarted such prospects. Consequently, the benefits of the above policy changes accrued mainly to local people with wealth and influence and to outsiders who had the necessary Palace connections. The advent of external stakeholders in the tenure scene of Kafa was spurred mainly by the desire to extract some of the more commercially valuable forest goods with which the region is endowed. Thus, as in the pre-conquest period, 'forest interests' began to fashion the relationships of the ordinary farmers with the external world.

As the changes in official tenure did not entail the eviction of farmers from the land, the age-old practice of claiming access along territorial and patrilineal descent lines continued throughout the Imperial period. Moreover, the traditional social division of labour that saw Manjos as 'people of the forest domain' persisted; hence, they continued to discharge their traditional roles under the guardianship of local upper clan descendants. Nevertheless, the above forms of traditional access fall short of meeting the forest tree requirements of some of the less endowed households, thereby limiting the range of forest-friendly activities that they had been pursuing for generations. In this regard, forest lease served as an important local adaptive response to the production constraints created by the official tenure system (Figure 7.1). Put differently, within the limits set by the new property rights regimes, the above informal form of forest access proved to be the best option for the average farmer in the utilisation of local environmental resources.

The multitude of forest tenure forms that evolved both in historical and post-conquest Kafa and the associated intra-community resource use conflicts were settled within the hierarchy of community structures and local systems of government. In other words, despite changes in the tenorial structure of forest use arrangements, traditional forms of administration left their own indelible mark on the system of tenure enforcement.

The 1975 agrarian reform, which was promulgated to ensure fundamental tenorial changes across the board, was also implemented within the confines of the local cultural understanding of the pronouncements and hence resulted in the maintenance, in some important respects, of the *status quo* (Figure 7.1). Ambiguities in the new land law concerning forest resources also played their part in this regard and created the loopholes necessary for local interpretation of the legal provisions. One such instance was when the PA authority gave local people the prerogative to continue using forests in accordance with familial ties and village conventions - local systems with notable in-built operational biases in favour of upper clan descendants. As a result, aspects of the social and tenorial inequalities that the land policy of the Imperial State created/exacerbated withstood the legislative power of the otherwise thoroughgoing land reform of the *Derg*.

It is noteworthy that the involvement of the PA office in forest allocation at the time of the 1975 land reform was confined only to places where the dissolution of private tenure had been confronted with contending local claimants. This limited involvement notwithstanding, the PA was the only credible entity in the countryside that could enforce the forest use rights of individual farmers from possible free-riders. This was a direct result of the monolithic rural organisational structure that the political system permitted. Consequently, the PA sought to meet the administrative costs it was bound to incur as a law and order enforcement organisation through sanctioning for itself a right of access to some of the more productive forest areas in its jurisdiction. Here, too, the main driving force behind such a practice were local notions of feasibility and authority.

It is evident from Figure 7.1 that, despite the radical aspirations of the laws that put in place private land ownership and the subsequent one of land nationalisation, some important attributes of the traditional tenure system appear to have persevered and shaped the way the new forms of tenure operated. These developments marked the consolidation of a mixed tenure system that is said to characterise the resource tenure landscape in colonial and post-colonial Africa (see Section 2.4.1). It will, therefore, be interesting to assess the tenacity of such tenure-related conceptions and institutions as customary access, kinship, local level tenure enforcement and the like in light of current realities.

A closely related recurrent theme that the historical analysis of tenure in Kafa has identified relates to the wide gap between land policy formulation and implementation and the role of community power structures in influencing policy outcomes at the local level. Again, it will be interesting to explore whether such discrepancies permeated the workings of policies affecting the natural resource sector in the ensuing historical epochs that the research examines and to draw out possible implications for policy analysis and development.

### **7.3 Access to land resources during the post-land reform period of the *Derg*: the role of the PA system in perspective**

#### **7.3.1 Background**

The general thrust of the analysis here remains one of examining the way in which state and community interacted in matters of land tenure during the *Derg* (1975 – 1990). Given that the PA office was the major instrument of the land reform decree and the delegated authority to administer land, the discussion in this section centres on the extent of involvement of the PA in land resource allocation during the above period.



It should be appreciated here that during the *Derg* a formal recognition of a given household by the relevant PA through, for example, PA membership or membership of the youth association was a precondition for any right of access to land resources in that particular PA. Moreover, PA-recognised access to farmland was often considered an essential local prerequisite to make requests for forest holdings from PAs and/or to establish use rights in village forests. Thus, an understanding of the forms of access to agricultural land is believed to shed some light on the overall framework through which forest use rights were exercised.

### 7.3.2 Agricultural land allocation during the *Derg*

From interviews with former PA leaders it was learnt that the PA officers had not made any general land reallocation since the land reform decree except for some occasional readjustments (Appendix 9.3.3). In the Ethiopian rural scene such stability is rare to come by; but, it is by no means unique as one finds similar cases in other regions of the country as well (see Dessalegn 1985). Furthermore, the same informants maintained that most of the land reapportionment measures were undertaken during the first couple of post-land reform years. This excludes the involvement of PAs in the allocation of land as part of resettlement and villagisation drives that took place in the mid- to-late 1980s.

Table 7.1 presents the mechanisms by which households established during the 16 post-land reform years obtained access to agricultural land. Given the varying extent of involvement of the PA system in land allocation over the years, the table shows the access mechanisms used by households established during the first five post-land reform years separately from those established in the 1980s. Table 7.1 excludes the experiences of 'settlers' and households established at the time of villagisation with land allocation, for the *Derg* settlement policies inevitably required PAs to undertake farmland allocation.

**Table 7.1**  
**Mechanisms of access to agricultural land in the case study areas, 1975-1990**

Mechanisms	1975 – 1979		1980 - 1990		Total (1975-1990)	
	HHs <sup>1</sup>	Per cent	HHs	Per cent	HHs	Per cent
Formal tenure: <i>Kebele</i> PA	20	54.1	15	27.3	35	38.0
Informal access	15	40.5	37	67.3	52	56.5
Family allocation ( <i>Wejoo</i> )	9	24.3	17	30.9	26	28.3
Inheritance	6	16.2	9	16.4	15	16.3
Share-cropping ( <i>Gogoo</i> )	0	0.0	11	20.0	11	11.9
X <sup>2</sup>	7.15, P < 0.01					
Others	2	5.4	3	5.5	5	5.4
Total	37	100	55	100	92	100

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> HHs = Number of households.

As could be deduced from Table 7.1, the PA office had been the major channel of farmland allocation during the *Derg*. In this regard, the PA was more instrumental during the first five post-land reform years than during the next 11 years. This was reportedly because most vacant or unused land had been redistributed to those who applied for agricultural land in the earlier years, thereby leaving little such lands for distribution in the ensuing decades. Thus, use of informal access arrangements filled the resulting institutional void regarding land allocation. In particular, in the 1980s the mechanism of sharecropping as a fully-fledged form of access to land re-appeared, thereby signifying the return of real landlessness to rural Kafa. It should be noted that, sharecropping designated an employment relationship between the landowner and the landless partner – an arrangement disallowed by the land reform decree. This is a typical example of the precedence of local realities over a stricter interpretation of statutory laws.

As will be discussed below, the legal and practical framework within which land rights were addressed and sustained during the *Derg* had a resonance on the forest tenurial environment at the local level, an issue discussed in the subsequent sub-sections.

### 7.3.3 An overview of forest access mechanisms during the *Derg*

In the course of the second spell of the fieldwork, heads of households established during the *Derg* were asked to identify what they considered to be their major means of access to forest resources in the early days of the household cycle. Table 7.2 summarises the results, and focuses on the experiences of the indigenous population. In order to aid comparison, the pertinent information for households established during the first five post-land reform years are separately presented from those established in the 1980s.

**Table 7.2**  
**Mechanisms of access to forest resources during the *Derg*, 1975-1990**

Access mechanisms	Household establishment period					
	1975 – 1979		1980 – 1990		Total (1975 – 1990)	
	HHs	Per cent	HHs	Per cent	HHs	Per cent
PA provisions	16	43.2	16	23.1	32	30.2
PA allocated holdings in village forests	8	21.6	11	15.9	19	17.9
Trees in PA allocated farming fields	8	21.6	5	7.2	13	12.3
Informal mechanisms	18	48.7	44	63.8	62	58.5
X <sup>2</sup>	3.22, P > 0.05					
No access	3	8.1	9	13.0	12	11.3
Grand total	37	100	69	100	106	100

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.



Under the *Derg*, the PA system played a limited role in the distribution of forest/tree resources, and, unlike in the case of agricultural land, the involvement of the PAs in forest allocation did not show any significant difference across the two bench mark periods either (Table 7.2). Conversely, the bulk of households accessed forest resources through *informal* mechanisms. In this regard informal mechanisms consist of customary channels, family-centred mechanisms and production-based arrangements. The discussion on the specific forms and dynamics of these channels is deferred to the next two chapters.

Within the context of PA allocation, the study distinguishes between tree holdings found around farming fields and holdings in locally valued forest blocks, which, for want of a better term, are regarded as *village forests*. The former, it should be emphasised, were largely incidental to the distribution process of agricultural land. It is, therefore, believed that an institutional assessment of forest allocation stands to gain more from investigating the workings of the PA system in its dealings with village forests. This is the subject of the next sub-section.

#### 7.3.4 The PA system and indigenous people's access to village forest resources

Table 7.3 compares involvement of the PA in village forest redistribution during the first five post-land reform years against the situation in the 1980s.

**Table 7.3**  
**Extent of forest holding requests made to PAs in the case study areas, 1975-1990**

Period	Households			Successful applicants		
	Applicants	Total	Per	Households	As per cent of	
	(1)	(2)	cent		(1)	(2)
<i>Derg</i> I (1975 – 1979)	11	37	29.7	8	72.7	21.6
<i>Derg</i> II (1980 – 1990)	13	69	18.8	11	84.6	15.9
Total	24	106	22.6	19	79.2	17.9

Source: Appendix 7.7

During the *Derg*, not only was the PA system an insignificant provider of forest holdings but also its role here was much more limited than in the allocation of agricultural land (*cf.* Table 7.1 above), and the result is statistically significant ( $X^2 = 10.24$ ,  $P < 0.005$ ). It should, however, be realised that village forest allocation showed considerable inter-PA variability. In particular, about 70 per cent of applicant households and close to 80 per cent of the successful applicants were from the two forest-coffee rich PAs of Arabakasha and Woka (Appendix 7.7). This is far higher than the two PAs' share of indigenous households in both periods would indicate ( $X^2 = 50.70$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) and shows the role of the PA in forest allocation where its commercial returns were high.

It can be surmised that the preponderance of applicants for forest holdings at Arabakasha and Woka was in keeping with the major forest allocation role that the PA office in these localities

played at the time of land reform. Information gathered through interviewing PA officials of Arabakasha and Woka throws some light on the way the PA office handled the allocation of village forests (Appendix 9.3.3). Specifically, in the couple of years after the land reform most of the newly formed households at the above two PAs regarded formal access to forest holdings as a precondition for paying annual agricultural income taxes. The PA office, which had also been entrusted to collect land-related taxes by the then tax law (Dessalegn 1985), considered this a legitimate request and responded favourably to the demands of the households concerned. Often applicants were required to identify under-utilised forest patches near to their respective villages of residence and report the site to the PA office for consideration. It is also worth noting that the PA offices in these two localities used their prerogative of forest allocation to lure some youngsters to accept leadership positions in the newly formed local youth associations. Furthermore, at least at Woka, the PA office made sure that the families of some militia men who were conscripted from these areas were properly looked after by allocating them additional coffee holdings from those believed to have more than their just share of such forests.

Clearly, there is a physical limit to a forest holding that the PA office could distribute if the resource was to generate sufficient quantity of forest goods for the households concerned. This seemed to have been appreciated in the early 1980s by the PA office, as applicants for forest holdings were required to specify the type of forest holding they would be able to manage. From interviews with former PA officials at Woka it was learnt that, in the early to mid-1980s the PA executive committee accommodated the growing demand for forest holdings through apportioning individuals' use rights from a given forest. This represented a break from past practices of allocating a forestland territory. Hence some households were made to use only the upper storey for hanging beehives while others were given only the right to collect coffee beans from the storey below. The writer came across a near-complete list of individuals who were affected by the above arrangement at Woka PA. Thus, between 1983 and 1988 the PA office allocated product-specific forest use rights to a total of at least 19 households (including female-headed ones) in forest blocks that used to be exclusively controlled by three people (Table 9B in Appendix 9.3.3).

In the remaining PAs different sets of experiences were observed. One set of experience was informed by PA officials' narrower understanding of the forest proclamation of 1980 that instituted PA managed forests, so-called *Kebele* forests (see Appendix 2.3.4B). In particular, at Bitachega and Bitagenet the newly elected officials disallowed private control of tracts of forest patches and confined the use rights of the respective claimants to only those individual forest trees on which they mounted beehives (Appendix 9.3.3). At the same time the PA made no provision regarding the utilisation of the various products found in these forests, for such issues were understood by



the then PA officials to be beyond their mandates. This state-of-affairs created the necessary conditions for the emergence of an open access situation to the ground floor of the forest in which spices and flavourings thrived. From interviews with PA officials at one of these two localities it transpired that they made no distinction between a *Kebele* forest - which were their village forests as per the 1980 forest proclamation (Appendix 2.3.4B) - and a state forest. Any forest outside the purview of individuals' private holdings was considered by the PA to fall under the direct administration of the government (Appendix 9.3.3).

In some of the case study areas, such as Sheeka, where former PA officials showed indifference to village forest allocation, newly elected PA officials, who were younger and more politicised than their predecessors, made some attempts at instituting formal tenure (Appendix 9.3.2). But this was soon thwarted by a conundrum of claims of locally recognisable use rights of the available forests. This being so, there are indications that those who had no direct access to village forests had always been desirous of requesting the PA to involve itself in forest reallocation. As may be gathered from Appendix 7.8, well over a third of the households established in the 1980s cited 'absence of suitable vacant forests to report to the PA' as the main factor that discouraged them from requesting the PA to engage itself in forest provision. Similarly to agricultural land, by the 1980s, all forest trees had well entrenched individual users.

Finally, with the establishment of state-directed youth and women's associations in the late 1970s and early 1980s there ensued a proliferation of institutional forest tenure holders in rural areas. Thus, some of the forest coffee lands which the PA confiscated and brought under its direct control had to be transferred to these grassroots organisations, the task of managing the crop being shouldered by their respective members. In some localities, the PA granted portions of individually managed forest coffee land to the respective neighbourhood youth associations (Appendix 9.3.2).

### **7.3.5 Forest tenure administration during the *Derg***

Consistent with the powers entrusted to PAs (see Appendix 2.3.2A), disputes arising from enforcement of tree tenure and forest holdings came within the purview of PA-wide judicial tribunals. It was learnt from PA officials that even in localities where the PA never involved itself in forest tenure provision it exercised its authority to settle forest use related disputes (Appendix 9.3.2). Informants thought this was partly because the PA office had the needed governmental backing in seeing through its decisions. Furthermore, the organisation of PAs in relatively small geographical areas had the potential to enhance the efficacy of the system in shouldering its responsibilities for law enforcement.

Judicial tribunals often based their forest/tree tenure rulings on popular notions of customary rights of access. In other words, judicial tribunals were able to exclude free-riders by invoking established use rights. Even so, elderly informants questioned the impartiality of the PA as a conflict management institution allegedly because of its politicised status and the fact that it was riddled with corrupt practices (Appendix 9.2.1F), points reiterated by several observers as well (see Clapham 1988: 159; Dessalegn 1985: 80). This notwithstanding, the PA was said to have played proactive roles in pre-empting possible forest use conflicts. A good case in point is Sheeka, where the PA declared the beginning of the harvest period for honey such that any one who was seen moving about village forests prior to the specified date with the necessary honey harvesting materials would be considered a suspect (Appendix 9.2.1F).

On the other hand, community-based organisations such as *Idirs* had been confined to organising funeral arrangements; hence, contrary to the case during the pre-revolution period, they were never involved in dispute arbitration of any sort. In some limited respects the PA office mobilised villagers for public works programmes through their respective *Idirs* (Appendix 9.5). Finally, the *Alamo* institution was highly despised among the *Derg's* political functionaries and, individuals practising the ritual were prosecuted (Appendix 9.6), with all the implications for their invisibility as tenure administrators.

#### **7.4 State farms and peasant forest holdings: the case of Wushwush Tea Estate**

The discussion of government policies in Appendix 2.3.2B also brought to light the fact that the land reform proclamation had by the same stroke nationalised large-scale private farms and plantations. As regards the case study areas, the impact of state farms on peasant forest holdings was mirrored through the nationalisation of the Wushwush Tea Estate. At the time of its nationalisation in 1975, the plantation was estimated to have only 11 hectares under tea. According to one government document, expansion of the tea plantation took place during the decade following the land reform. Thus, by 1984 the Wushwush Tea Estate had 500 hectares under tea, and this constituted 56 per cent of the total tea hectareage in the country (PMGSE 1984: 44). In the early 1990s Wushwush Tea Estate was reported to have had 1,000 hectares under plantation (EVDSA 1993).

Local informants maintained that the plantation expanded largely at the expense of the forest holdings of individual peasants (Appendix 9.2.1G). In the context of the case study areas, residents of Woka and Wushwush PAs were worst affected by the expansion of the tea plantation. Thus, in 1988/89 the farmland and forest holdings of some 14 households from two



villages of Woka PA were cleared to make way for the tea plantation and most of the owners were absorbed as daily labourers there. With the exception of one person, who consistently argued his case at higher levels of local government, none of the remaining households were given replacement land. Similarly, at Wushwush PA, the plantation engulfed the PA allocated forest holdings of nine households who resided in one of the less forested villages of the PA. The scarcity of forests at Wushwush PA meant that the above households had to abandon any worthwhile forest-based activity.

There is also another dimension to the impact that the development of the tea estate had on peasant forest holdings. This had to do with the unrestricted share the Estate had from some of the products of nearby forests, more particularly those at Bitachega PA. It was learnt that most of the wood requirements of the tea nurseries of the Estate were met from the forests found within Bitachega PA. Moreover, practically all the climbers used to prepare baskets for plucking green tea leaves were extracted from the surrounding peasant forest holdings (Appendix 11.2.5).

To conclude, during the *Derg* any effort to expand the scale of operation of state farms was encouraged actively. The commonest way employed in this respect was through clearing forests. As shown in relation to the Wushwush Tea Estate, such moves, however, impinged on the rights and livelihoods of rural dwellers in general and forest villagers in particular. On the other hand, given that all land resources were under the direct ownership of the State, the issue of compensation for land resources taken over by a state enterprise, such as the Wushwush Tea Estate, was in no way entertained by those in authority.

### **7.5 Demarcation of the 'Bonga Natural Forest' as a state forest**

Another feature of *Derg's* rural land management policy that had a direct bearing on peasant forest holdings was the demarcation of state forests, which in the context of the case study areas is related to the establishment of the Bonga NFPA.

As documented in Appendix 5.3 the forest demarcation process was never consultative, let alone participatory and, as a result, led to the delineation of a geographical space that had little regard to the socio-economic organisation of forest villagers. In both Gimbo *Woreda* and in the case study areas demarcation ended up dissecting contiguous villages and their corresponding forest domains into BNFPAs and non-BNFPAs territories (Figure 5.1). Seven villages in four of the case study PAs, identified as 'BNFPA areas' in Table 5.1 (see Section 5.3), were incorporated into the BNFPA. Altogether, a quarter of the households in the case study areas resided and farmed within the BNFPA territory (see Appendix 5.3.2 for details).

The process of state forest demarcation was concluded by the signing of a memorandum of understanding between PA office holders and government natural resource personnel, which has the effect of prohibiting all agricultural activities inside the BNFPAs (Appendix 5.3.1). Yet, from PA official interviews at Wushwush and Bitagenet, the land that came under BNFPAs had been allocated as forest holdings to individual households by the respective PAs following the land reform decree (Appendix 9.3.2). In practice, however, the demarcation of BNFPAs did not deter local farmers in the case study areas from using these forest areas the way they saw fit. PA office holders of the time at Wushwush reflected that trees used as inter-PA boundary markers were cut down and any trace of them were removed clandestinely (Appendix 9.2.1G).

Equally, archival sources at the sub-regional MoA system showed that the local forest service was more concerned with 'enrichment plantation' activities within parts of BNFPAs around Bonga town than following up the outcomes of the demarcation process further afield (KSZ-DoA OF 1996 - 1999). It is worth noting that the Department of Agriculture deployed forest guards to protect these plantation areas, thereby reinforcing a local perception that associated state forests with plantations only. Nevertheless, some PA officials did, from time to time, make reference to the designation of local forests as state forests to circumscribe what they considered unlawful uses of the natural forest in BNFPAs. Besides, archival documents at local MoA offices contain many more court cases dealing with 'state forest destruction' than possible similar wrong doings in non-BNFA areas (KSZ-DoA OF 1996 - 1999).

As noted in Section 5.3 Arabakasha and Woka were unaffected by the forest demarcation exercise. It should be recalled that these are the two localities that attracted significant forest-based activities during the pre-land reform period. This suggests that inclusion of land into BNFPAs was not necessarily based on abundance of forest cover, and local people saw a good deal of arbitrariness in the delineation of the BNFA boundary. As one informal survey showed, forest villagers also resented the differential treatment that any two neighbouring villagers were subjected to only because their forest holding fell on the BNFA side. A Manjo resident in one of the BNFA villages summed up the thinking of many others concerning the unsettling effect the demarcation process had: "a rabbit that sleeps under *Millettia ferruginea* tree wakes up every time the seeds of the tree cracks" (Yihenew and Gezahegn 1997: 4).

Finally, it should be pointed out that restrictions on the land use rights of BNFA dwellers as per the memorandum of understanding mentioned earlier in this section were only a temporary measure. As the demarcation report made clear, the conviction of the MoA concerning those farmers who were already within the BNFA was to resettle them elsewhere as part of the



villagisation programme which was in the offing at the time (Zerihun 1986: 7). In fact, in some isolated cases the process of forest demarcation served as an additional justification for the dislocation of farmers from their local milieu (see Yihenew and Gezahegn 1997).

To conclude, the above underlines the existence of yet another external influence on the forest holdings of peasants in highland Kafa in general and in the case study areas in particular. In this case, government-imposed reality on the local population took the form of state forest establishment. The above discussion pointed out that the process of forest demarcation in highland Kafa did not consider local views and forest use rights and was essentially an attempt at forest development through use of a policing approach.

## **7.6 Villagisation**

In the study areas villagisation was put into operation in 1986/87. Here, relatively flat lands and open fields were used to construct new villages, which, in most cases, were located near to major highways. An important issue here is the extent to which the villagisation drive and the location of the newly built villages impinged on forest access rights of individual farmers.

From field observations and interviews it was understood that villagisation entailed substantial increases in the distance between the new homes and forest farming fields (Appendix 9.2.1G). At Bitachega PA, for instance, the new villages were located, on the average, an hour and half away by foot from five of the seven most populated village settlements that constituted the PA. At Wushwush PA the new villages were located so close to the adjoining urban settlement that following de-villagisation the plots have been incorporated into the territory of the growing town of Wushwush. In both cases, proximity to motorable roads appears to be an overriding motive behind the selection of the new village sites, a practice observed in other parts of the country as well (see Tesfaye 1995: 117-118).

It is, however, interesting to note that in all four of the case study areas where Manjos lived they were required to construct their villages further away from the other groups which incidentally meant occupation of the forest domain (Appendix 9.2.1G). Consequently, in the words of an elderly informant from Sheeka, the Manjos suddenly became the most sought after share partners in the use of forest resources. This was because, consequent upon villagisation, most people had been forced to look for trees/forest patches near to their homesteads so that they could more effectively meet their forest-goods requirements. This resulted in competition in the use of nearby forests. In most cases, the PA confiscated parts of the official and/or customary

forest holdings of individual farmers located closer to the new villages and distributed these forest patches to what were considered neediest of the households villagised (Appendix 9.2.1G).

Farmers who had forest holdings around former (and now-abandoned) villages not only retained their use rights but also continued to undertake some forest-based gathering there. However, the longer journey time which travelling to and from forest holdings entailed and the resultant difficulty of effecting day-to-day management of forest-based operations were said to have led to reduced household production of coffee, spices and honey. Local people remember villagisation as a period of very low commercial forest farming activity (Appendices 9.2.1G and 9.3.4).

To conclude, in countries like Ethiopia farmers live in a scattered manner partly because their most vital land resources are scattered in space (Lorgen 1999: 14). In the case study areas, the pre-villagisation settlement patterns were instrumental in enabling farmers to have timely access to their forest patches. This was at least the basis on which the PA allocated forest holdings to individual farmers near to their respective villages. Villagisation disturbed the scattered, but perhaps more efficient, pattern of forest holdings. In particular, villagisation entailed spatial fragmentation of place of work (i.e. forest holdings) and place of residence. This spatial separation resulted in risk, inconvenience and strong disincentives in the production of forest goods.

## **7.7 Resettlement**

The other major set of interventions that affected forest access rights in the case study areas were the settlement schemes implemented in Bitachega, Bitagenet and Wushwush PAs. The three settlement sites portray varying experiences in terms of settlers' forest access rights and the impact these had on tenurial rights of the indigenous communities. As regards the sites established in 1985 (namely, those at Bitachega and Wushwush PAs - see Section 6.2.6), the settlement programme had a negative effect on the forest holdings of the host communities, the scale of the impact being more pronounced at Wushwush than at Bitachega settlement sites. By contrast, as explained below, resettlement at Bitagenet site did not have any major influence on the dynamics of local forest tenure as such.

At both Wushwush and Bitachega, settlers were given, reportedly, "vast forest areas" on which to hang beehives, collect coffee and spices as well as meet their construction needs and home energy requirements (Appendix 11.6). At Wushwush the forest allocated to the settlers had been an important source of livelihood for some seven households living in the nearby village. In keeping with the draconian conditions of the entire scheme, local users of the forest were forced



to remove the hives they had already set up and were instructed to abandon all their claims to use of the forest which now changed hands to the settlers. The host communities had resented this and the settlers were seen in a negative light. The religious and cultural differences between the host communities and the settlers did not help in mitigating the situation (Appendices 9.2.1G and 9.3.4).

The situation at Bitachega PA was slightly different. Here, the site chosen for resettlement had been owned by a Kaffecho *Gacheukiro* who succeeded in retaining much of it as his rightful holdings in the post-land reform period as well. At the time of resettlement, however, the person had left the area and there were only a couple of farmers who had mounted beehives in the adjacent forests. Similar to the experience in Wushwush, these farmers were prevented from using the surrounding forests that were allocated to the settlers (Appendices 9.2.1G and 11.6).

Finally, with regard to settlers at Bitagenet PA, all indications are that by 1987 the resettlement programme had run out of steam; hence, these newly moved settlers did not attract the same political attention as the earlier ones. For instance, settlers at Bitagenet were not provided with any forest patch upon arrival. In fact, it was learnt from the settlers' group that the request they made to Bitagenet PA concerning forest allocation had been turned down on the grounds of unavailability of vacant forests for the purpose (Appendix 9.2.3) - a matter acknowledged by the then PA officials as well (Appendix 9.3.4).

All in all, it has been shown that the resettlement scheme, which started out to save lives elsewhere, ended up infringing the livelihood basis of the host communities through curtailing the forest access rights of individual farmers.

## **7.8 Post-Derg developments and influences on local forest use rights**

### **7.8.1 A profile of access to land resources by post-Derg households**

This section examines the ways in which households established in the case study areas between 1991 and 1997 secured access to land resources. In addition, the experiences of these groups highlights the post-Derg dynamics in access to land resources. Here too, forest access is discussed along with acquisition of agricultural land, since forest access rights are always intertwined with the social processes that determine agricultural holdings (Table 7.4).

**Table 7.4****Mechanisms of access to land resources by post-*Derg* households**

Access mechanisms	Agricultural land		Forest/tree resources	
	Households	Per cent	Households	Per cent
Formal mechanisms	15	13.0	8	6.9
Provisions by KPSC/KA	9	7.8	3	2.6
"Lease"	6	5.2	5	4.3
Informal mechanisms	95	81.9	80	69.0
Others (Mixed)	6	5.2	0	0
Sub-total	116	100	88	75.9
X <sup>2</sup>	0.719, P > 0.05			
No (recognised) access	0	0	28	24.1
Total	116	100	116	100

Source: Questionnaire surveys 1998/99.

Clearly, the majority of households established in the 1990s relied on informal mechanisms of access to land resources, and there was no statistically significant difference in terms of the importance of these non-state mechanisms across the two resource categories (Table 7.4). The specific features of informal access mechanisms and the social processes underpinning them will be discussed in Chapters Eight and Nine. As regards formal access mechanisms, one observes a new category called "lease". On the other hand, despite the general policy of KPSC/KA disengagement from land resource allocation in the post-*Derg* era, Table 7.4 reports some involvement of these CBOs. In the next sub-section an attempt is made to explain the workings of formal forest access mechanisms in the post-*Derg* period.

From Table 7.4 it is evident that all households had access to agricultural land of some form, whereas forest access was limited to three-quarters of the households concerned. This should not come as a surprise because residence in rural areas of highland Kafa is always associated with involvement in crop farming, while forest-based gathering has all along been as much a necessity for some as an option for others. In other words, household establishment in rural highland Kafa is preceded by establishment of a home of one's own and at least a backyard plot, but not necessarily a forest holding. A discussion on the identity of households who had no access to forest resources and some of the factors responsible for this situation is deferred to Section 7.8.4.

### 7.8.2 Activities of *Kebele* authorities in land resource allocation

The involvement of the new '*Kebele* authorities' (i.e., KPSCs and KAs) in land resource allocation dates back to early 1992 when the new post-*Derg* Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE, 1991-1995) disbanded the country's defence forces. As most of these ex-servicemen had rural agricultural origins the TGE saw to it that they obtained agricultural land and complementary farming equipment in their respective localities. Accordingly, in all the study localities KPSCs



allocated farming plots to all eligible ex-servicemen who made requests for the same. Consistent with the age-old practice of topping up agricultural land with forest holdings, in all the case study sub-*Kebeles* coffee holdings of the PA office and its satellite mass organisations were distributed to all/neediest returnee soldiers as their group domain (Appendix 9.4.1).

The above groups of local people were the major, but by no means the only, beneficiaries of land allocation by the KPSC/KA. For instance, there are cases where the KPSC seized the opportunity to cede some former PA-held coffee areas to individuals who claimed ancestral use rights to the same. Furthermore, both KPSCs as well as KAs allocated agricultural land and forest holdings to some politically active young household heads. These entities also used their perceived reinstated authority of land allocation to attract people such as clergymen who were deemed to provide essential community services (Appendix 9.4.1).

### 7.8.3 Land use right transfer through 'lease'

One of the modifications that the *Derg* made in early 1990 to the land reform decree and which gained endorsement by the subsequent government was the contracting of farmland (Appendix 2.4.1A). In the context of the study localities this policy served as a cover to effect the sale of land resources, a phenomenon observed in other parts of the country as well (see, for example, Dessalegn 1994a) (Table 7.5).

**Table 7.5**  
**Profile of contract arrangements in land resources, 1992-1998**

Village	Type of land 'leased'	'Lease' duration	Identity of the new holders	Current land use
1.	Forest coffee	Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local farmers</li> <li>Urban resident</li> </ul>	Coffee
2.	Village plots/ farmland	10 -20 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers close to location of land</li> </ul>	Food crops and honey
3.	Agricultural Land area	20 -60 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local farmers</li> <li>"Outsider" farmers</li> <li>Urban residents</li> </ul>	Food crops and honey
4.	Agricultural land area	Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local farmers</li> <li>"Outsider" farmers</li> <li>Local non-farmer</li> </ul>	Food crop and coffee
5	Village plots	Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban residents</li> </ul>	Housing and garden coffee
	Agricultural land area	Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban residents</li> </ul>	Woodlot/ crops
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local/outsider farmers</li> </ul>	Food crops, honey, and coffee
	Forest holdings	Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local farmers close to forest</li> </ul>	Honey, coffee and wood for market

Source: Field interviews with DAs and KA leaders, 1998.

In most instances 'lease' was used euphemistically to characterise the diverse forms of land sale transactions. From key informant interviews it was learnt that acquisition of arable land was the primary focus of land 'lease', and that such domains were often found in and around residential quarters where tree density is rather thin. Even so, forest holdings were not immune to land 'lease' (Table 7.5) (The confidentiality of information sources in this regard necessitated a withholding of the identity of the key informants and the location of the villages in question.)

From Table 7.5 it is clear that farmland can be 'leased' together with the surrounding trees and/or coffee bushes. In fact, it was learnt that the closer a farmland is to a well-wooded area the higher was its value. Table 7.5 also contains instances of contracting out village forest holdings. With reference to village no. 1, the forest holding under consideration is the one that had been given to groups of ex-servicemen. The resulting transaction enabled urban residents to claim a stake in the forest resources of the area. On the other hand, 'lessors' from the farming communities were found to have been those residing nearer to the exchanged land resources. The involvement of urban residents in land transaction was not confined to forest coffee areas only. Farmers near major highways 'leased' part of their land to urban residents so that the latter could grow coffee seedlings and fast growing trees such as *Eucalyptus spp.* as permanent woodlots. The land that changed hands in these ways included forest edges and marshy areas found adjacent to farmland.

In most of the study sub-*Kebeles* 'lessees' succeeded in getting the land resources registered with the KA in their own name. In land transactions effected among individuals of close familial or any other social ties there seemed to be little interest in legalising the deal. Archival sources accessed from one KA showed a good deal of overt and covert ways in which land transaction were reported to the KA when title transfer was sought. Some presented the case in terms of an inheritance arrangement, others wrapped it up as sale of a dwelling house that might be found on the plot, still others as a case of a land grant and the remaining few portrayed it in terms of a share-cropping arrangement involving woodlot establishment. In some cases people specified the arrangement in terms of 'lease' and underlined its transient nature by specifying the duration of the 'lease'.

#### **7.8.4 The rising trend in household's lack of forest access: a look at some causal factors**

The post-*Derg* period showed a marked increase, over the situation under the *Derg*, in the proportion of households with no institutionally recognised access to forest resources (*cf.* Table 7.2 and Table 7.4). The result is also statistically significant ( $X^2 = 4.78$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). In the opinion of key informants and focus group discussion participants the major explanations for the



disproportionately high number of post-*Derg* established households with no access to forest resources could be found in two factors that rose to prominence in the period under discussion. These relate to (a) households' preferences to engage more in non-farm jobs than in establishing access to forest resources/involvement in forest-based gathering (Appendix 11.2.5); and (b) in-migration of households to the study areas making some of them ineligible to claim forest use rights (Appendices 9.2.1E and 9.2.2A). It is believed that, a closer examination of the first factor above will throw some light on the changing state of forest access in the face of gainful non-farm employment opportunities. While, on the other hand, an understanding of the factors that prompted people to move about rural areas is considered necessary in assessing the institutional bases of forest tenure provision and enforcement at village level.

With reference to the option of paid non-farm employment vis-à-vis forest access establishment, important insights have been gained through group discussions with the youth at Bitachega sub-*Kebele*, the locality accounting for the highest number of non-farm employment (see Appendix 7.6). It was learnt that focus group members and their peers in and around Bitachega have increasingly been attracted to work at the Tea Estate, and this has contributed to a progressive decline of interest in forest-based activities. This was especially so with regard to the more labour demanding task of honey production. Consequently, it was learnt that the youth have had little motivation to secure forest access of some kind and/or enforce previous holdings in ways that would ensure continuous forest use. As an instance of the latter, some young household heads were said to have lost use rights to forest trees on which they or their parents used to mount beehives and that this had contributed to a creeping of open access situation in the use of village forests. The factors accounting for the above trend revolved around the improved educational status of the youth (Section 6.2.3) and the allied desire of doing better in life, an ambition reinforced by availability of non-farm employment at the nearby Tea Estate.

As regards the role of 'in-migration', one notes social group-specific motives. Most non-Manjo in-migrant households were fully-fledged farmers who decided to settle in some of the study localities because of the imperatives of the traditional belief system they follow. Some of these, as noted in Section 6.2.1, were female-headed households. By and large, these newcomers relied on land resources that the *Alamos* granted them in return for unspecified labour services that they render to the benefactor. The land grant in most cases was restricted to a farming plot. Younger migrant households often diversified their income sources through entering sharecropping arrangements in food crops with other local farmers as well as in forest-based activities. The rest had to be content with the occasional handouts they received from and the food crops they produced around the homestead of the *Alamos* (Appendix 9.6).

Instances of *Alamo* in-migration have also been noted in some of the case study localities and this was rationalised as a response to a “divine calling” in place of a deceased kinsman or as a homecoming after a relatively obscure existence in other places during the *Derg* (Appendix 9.6). In a similar development, in the early days of the post-*Derg* period the KPSC at Sheeka presided over a PA-wide meeting that voted in favour of returning the coffee forest that the PA confiscated from the *Ibedegoda* (the chief *Alamo* – see Section 4.3.1.2) to his heir who lived in a neighbouring district (Appendix 9.4.1). These developments not only attracted yet more *Alamo* followers from other places but also strengthened the profile of the *Alamo* institution, a matter discussed in connection with informal CBOs and tenure administration (see Section 8.6.3 below).

The motive behind the Manjo in-migration was largely economic, and this pertains to the prospect of their involvement in share cropping (see Appendix 7.5). According to both Kaffecho and Manjo key informants, the newcomers are sharecropping partners in name only, as Manjo involvement is limited to the lowly status job of clearing farmland and protecting field crops from vermin attack (Appendix 9.2.1E). As a result, Manjo in-migrants did not have any institutionally recognised access to forest resources. Local people consider the migrant Manjos as little more than servants to their patrons, and, in any case, do not regard them as fully-fledged households. Use of migrant Manjos for initial forest clearance is not an isolated case; rather it is symptomatic of general trends in highland Kafa. For instance, archival documents accessed from a neighbouring rural district - Decha Woreda - is replete with cases of extensive forest clearance by Manjos contracted by well-to-do local farmers (Decha DoA OF 1996 - 1999). Often, their services are required for the first two or so years of land colonisation, after which they will be free to go round to other forested areas to continue with what the society thinks they are good at: forest clearance (Appendix 9.12.2). As will be discussed in Chapter Nine the particularly low social status that these groups came to be associated with is at the root of their dependence on unsustainable forms of forest use.

## **7.9 An overview of inter-temporal changes in the state of household forest access**

### **7.9.1 Introduction**

This section compares the status of households' forest access at the time of household formation in the case study areas against the situation at the time of fieldwork (1999). It is believed that such an undertaking will help to examine the extent of temporal stability of the state of household access to forest resources and is valuable in identifying the direction and magnitude of changes in access mechanisms across the two periods in the household demographic cycle. The analysis is presented in three parts. In order to effect meaningful comparison, the first part relates only to



the experiences of households established before the *Derg*, for they had been subjected to entirely different institutional arrangements from those formed in subsequent years and hence would make comparison impractical. The second part discusses the experiences of households established during and after the *Derg* as one set, for the framework of local forest access has not changed fundamentally since 1975. The third part summarises the findings of the inter-temporal analysis.

### 7.9.2 The case of households established in the Imperial era

Table 7.6 compares the major forest access mechanisms that households established before the *Derg* relied on at their earliest phase with the situation as at 1999 ('the current situation').

**Table 7.6**  
**Inter-temporal changes in forest access among households established before the *Derg***

Access mechanisms	Household formation	Current situation
Claim of ownership	5	NA
Customary access	8	17
PA allocated village forest	NA	23
PA allocated farm trees	NA	11
Inheritance	11	11
Family grant ( <i>Wejoo</i> )	3	2
Lease	13	0
Sharecropping ( <i>Gogoo</i> )	19	0
No access	9	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>68</b>

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

One of the most observable temporal changes relate to the fact that the households under study do not any longer access forest resources through lease or sharecropping arrangements. Instead, due largely to the PA mechanism, these groups of households have secured institutionally recognised direct forest access over which they have effective control, an important virtue of the land reform decree. Further data analysis has shown that, the few households who reported to have no forest access as at 1999 were found to have been either those who left forest trees to which they had customary access because of lack of a supporter or those who have always engaged in food crop farming only.

### 7.9.3 The case of post-1975 households

Table 7.7 provides comparative data regarding the major forest access means by which post-1975 households undertook their respective forest-based activities.

**Table 7.7****Inter-temporal changes in forest access among households established after 1975**

Access mechanisms	Household formation	Current situation	Inter-temporal changes (HH formation ► current situation)								Total <sup>1</sup>
			I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Customary access (I)	53	52	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	53
PA allocated village forest (II)	31	18	0	18	3	1	0	0	1	8	31
PA allocated farm trees (III)	15	20	0	0	14	0	0	1	0	0	15
Inheritance (IV)	28	34	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	2	28
Family grant ( <i>Wejoo</i> ) (V)	15	17	0	0	0	1	13	0	1	0	15
Lease (VI)	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5
Sharecropping ( <i>Gogoo</i> ) (VII)	46	36	0	0	3	6	4	0	33	0	46
No access (VIII)	50	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	49	50
Total	243	243	Total – current situation								
			52	18	20	34	17	6	36	60	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> Total for 'household formation'.

Table 7.7 indicates that most of the access mechanisms had similar orders of magnitudes over the two periods in which comparison is sought. In fact a Spearman's correlation coefficient ( $r_s$ ) gives a high value of 0.899, at 0.01 significance level. However, there are some variations that Table 7.7 also shows. The second part of the table in particular portrays the inter-temporal changes in the importance of the different access mechanisms across the two selected periods in the evolution of the household. The highlighted values that lie along the diagonal indicate the number of households whose main means of forest access has remained unchanged over the two periods. With reference to share cropping, for instance, 33 of the 46 households who started off as sharecroppers continued to rely on it as their major forest access means through to the present day. For the remaining 13 households, PA allocated farm trees (three households), inheritance (six households), and *Wejoo* (four households) have over the years become principal forest access means. The continued reliance of a good number of households on share cropping and *Wejoo* indicates the relative stability of these institutions.

Of particular relevance to the present discussion is the decline in the number of households whose major forest farming domains had originally been PA allocated village forests. This phenomenon was also responsible for the bulk of the inter-temporal rise in the number of households with no forest access. The main reason for the decline in the number of households relying on PA allocated village forests was the reclamation of settlers' forests by the host community members. It is to be recalled that in two of the three case study sub-*Kebeles* where resettlement had been undertaken settlers had been given preferential treatment in the use of village forests (Section 7.7). With the downfall of the *Derg*, indigenous community members who claimed to have had historical rights to the forest allocated to settlers challenged the latter's continued monopolistic use. This ranged from complete exclusion of settlers from having any



access to forest benefits (Wushwush) to a lukewarm one of letting them mount beehives on trees where no Kaffecho had any use claims (Bitachega) (Appendix 11.6). It should be realised that, the post-*Derg* transition was a period of political uncertainties and was marked by varying degree of lawlessness in the countryside (see Dessalegn 1994c: 267).

The animosity between settlers and the host communities at Wushwush was a consequence of the particularly ruthless way in which the latter were expropriated of their forest holdings at the time of resettlement (Section 7.7). Moreover, scarcity of forest resources at Wushwush in general and lack of alternatives at the disposal of those whose forest holdings had been allocated to the settlers in particular were cited as additional explanations for the way in which the indigenous community members at Wushwush behaved. Informants also underline the significance of a lack of cultural ties between the two groups arising from religious differences that could otherwise have soothed the relationship (Appendices 9.2.1G and 9.3.4).

Finally, in both sub-*Kebeles* where settlers' forests had been reclaimed by the indigenous community members the undertaking had been spurred by the de-villagisation process which was unfolding at the time. In particular, no sooner than the *Derg* fell almost all villagisation plots were deserted in favour of the old forms of scattered settlements, thereby prompting the claimants of the settlers' forests to re-establish their traditional use rights (Appendices 9.3.4 and 11.6). From the perspective of local forest management, both the reclamation of settlers' forests and de-villagisation have allowed for the evolution of a settlement pattern recast along forest tenure lines.

The other point of interest is the condition of households relying on customary forest access mechanisms. Although the numbers corresponding to this mechanism only show very little movement across the two time periods, qualitative information gathered through informal methods point to important developments in local people's experiences with customary forest access. In particular, it was learnt that in 1993 the Wushwush Tea Estate had encroached into forests adjacent to Bitachega sub-*Kebele*, thereby forcing a total of 19 households here to look for suitable trees for mounting bee hives in common forest areas away from their respective places of residence. Local informants resent the process of Estate expansion as it had allegedly entailed destruction of perennial crops and over 150 beehives. The enterprise paid compensation to only one of the victims who had lived in the area for a relatively long period (Appendix 11.2.5).

The above is not an isolated case. Forest destruction by the Tea Estate has been a subject of frequent correspondence between the (then) natural resource conservation office and a number of government departments (KSZ-DoA OF 1996 - 1999). According to the estimate provided by

the (then) Zonal natural resource conservation office, between 1995 and mid 1996 alone about 2,140m<sup>3</sup> of timber has been extracted from the forest by the expansion of the Wushwush Tea Plantation (see FARM Africa 1996: 5). By 1999, the Estate had 1249 hectares under tea.

The problem of forest encroachment by modern sector establishments is not limited to state enterprises either, as the budding private sector is also fast becoming a source of threat to village forests. In the context of the case study areas Appendix 9.4.2 documents the possible detrimental effects of private investment ventures on peasant forest holdings. In general, there is a tendency to consider farmers' forest holdings as vacant landscapes suitable for private investment and that KA officials are under considerable pressure to label them as such. This should also be seen against the background that the fate of former *Kebele* forests is a grey area that the forest law of the post-*Derg* period left unaddressed. From the perspective of local farmers, however, the notion of "peasant holdings" includes both farmland areas and tree resources in village forests. Such a perception is also reinforced by the fact that the amount of annual agricultural income taxes that farmers in highland Kafa pay also takes into account an estimate of the level of 'forest goods' a household is known to harvest (see Section 4.4 and Appendix 5.1.1C). This, of course, is in line with the principle of income aggregation discussed in 4.4.1.2. In short, there seems to be a discrepancy in the way land administrative bodies and those in charge of tax administration conceive peasant land holdings.

The detrimental effects of private agricultural investment on the forest holdings of peasants appear not to be restricted few localities, but rather is symptomatic of general trends in highland Kafa (Appendix 9.12.1) and beyond. Drawing case materials from southwest Ethiopia, Demil (1999) alluded to the undue infringement private investment has had on local forest access rights and the negative effect that this is bound to have on the natural environment. He attributed this state of affairs mainly to lack of co-ordination among relevant government departments and to overzealous local authorities eager to be seen attracting private investment to their areas.

An assessment of the pros and cons of private investment in forested regions is beyond the scope of this research. The objective here has been to point out the state of flux in which forest tenure finds itself due to private investment initiatives and to highlight the extent to which local perceptions and interpretations of government intents and policies could contribute to this instability.



## 7.10 Tenure enforcement by the local government system and forest governance initiatives

### 7.10.1 The role of the KA office in tenure enforcement

#### 7.10.1.1 KA-community interactions in the management of resource tenure conflicts

Information on the subject matter of the present discussion was obtained from two complementary sources. First, documents containing cases of land-related disputes were sifted from *Kebele* Social Court files in three KAs that pertained to four of the case study areas: Arabakasha, Sheeka, Woka and Wushwush sub-*Kebeles*. The insights obtained were then enriched through discussions with KA executive committee members in the above areas, as noted in the respective sections below.

In general, there were fewer cases of resource tenure conflicts over which the KA judiciary adjudicated than had originally been thought. In the opinion of some of the KA functionaries this was a reflection of the general tendency of local people to observe operational tenure rules. This, however, has to be weighed against the reservation of some elderly informants who underlined the disincentive people faced in taking cases to *Kebele* Social Courts and the rising trend of settling disputes at the village level. This was attributed to two main factors. The first one relates to the perceived delays in the delivery of justice in the KA system on account of the need to meet the requirements of due process of law. The second one pertains to the reported inconvenience that the organisation of KAs at larger spatial scales created for forest villagers (Appendix 9.2.1F).

Table 7.8 presents the commonest cases of tenure conflicts that KA judiciary organs adjudicated over in the mid- to late 1990s.

**Table 7.8**  
**Examples of natural resource tenure conflicts adjudicated by KA judiciary organs**

No.	Cases	Proceedings
1.	Trespassing PA allocated coffee forest boundary.	KA ruled in favour of the <i>status quo ante</i> .
2.	Sharecropping partner establishing holding right over forest coffee areas.	Same as in above.
3.	Disputes over enforcement of land lease arrangements.	KA upheld provisions in the lease agreement.
4.	Trespassing farmland boundary.	KA ruled in favour of the <i>status quo ante</i> .

Source: *Kebele* Social Court office files (KSC OF 1996 - 1999).

Table 7.8 is self explanatory in terms of the specific cases that the KA system has been involved in. It is, however, necessary to point out that in all the above category of cases the PA office had

been involved in the provision of tenurial rights to the resources under dispute. Thus, this particular history of tenure provision had a bearing on taking the cases to the *Kebele* Social Court. This same factor has also influenced the way the KA adjudicated over most of the issues.

Specifically, the KA judiciary bodies justified their ruling in favour of the *status quo ante* on the grounds of the absence of any new government law that would allow boundary adjustments and/or title transfer. Interestingly, the KA had also upheld provisions in lease agreements presented to it by the contending parties (item 3 in above table). Land lease, it is to be recalled, is an euphemism for land sale, and the latter goes contrary to the letter and spirit of the present land laws, which the *Kebele* Social Court is supposed to enforce.

The above sets of decisions are not necessarily incompatible. Both were anchored in the desire of the KA authorities to maintain the established social order at the local level, however contradictory they may be with the corresponding formal laws. It was learnt that KA authorities often strive to keep a delicate balance between exercising their formal authorities and maintenance of accepted social norms such as trust and good neighbourhood (Appendix 9.4.2).

#### **7.10.1.2 KA-court interactions**

At times, disputes arising from transgression of land/forest holdings develop into full-blown inter-household animosity, thereby prompting the *Kebele* Social Court to refer such cases to higher echelons in the local government system. Furthermore, in the event that people of unruly social behaviour were implicated in forest use infringements, the KA was quick in referring the case to the Police or to the relevant district court for the necessary action (Appendix 9.4.2). The formal court system considers forest use intrusions as criminal cases and deals with them in accordance with the 1994 forest proclamation (Appendix 2.4.4B) and penal code provisions (Appendix 2.4.1C).

From time to time KA officials also refer cases of forest clearance and commercial wood processing activities to the government/regular court system. As will be shown in Chapter Nine, in the case study areas wood processing is a fairly widespread activity and is undertaken clandestinely. However, the identity of individuals involved in the trade is well known by the KA authorities. Nevertheless, both archival documents and discussions with some KA officials confirmed that these people are rarely taken to court (Appendix 9.4.2). As noted in Appendix 5.1.1A, the KA, in collaboration with government extension agents, seizes illegally felled trees and processed wood products, but never has any control over their disposal, thereby reducing the possible organisational incentive that this could have provided in enforcing forest laws. The types



of tree felling cases that the KA referred to the formal courts were those done in the open and which were likely to attract the attention of political authorities. For instance, in some of the case study sub-*Kebeles* and adjacent localities Manjos were singled out as the major culprits in village forest destruction and were subsequently handed down varying levels of penalties (KSZ-DoA OF 1996 - 1999).

In sum, the KA authorities discharge a visible intra-community tenure enforcement and dispute settlement function. While, on the other hand, local political variables come in to play in respect of enforcement of state tenure in forest areas managed virtually as *laissez-faire* resources.

#### 7.10.2 Enforcement of statutory forest laws in the regular court system

It will be recalled that the enforcement of statutory forest laws in the government instituted courts is specified in the forest proclamation that stipulated a penalty ceiling of Birr 5000 or two years imprisonment or both (see Appendix 2.4.4B). Archival documents consulted at Gimbo *Woreda* Agricultural Office show that the penalties concerning infliction of damage to forests varied depending on the degree of perceived severity of the offences committed. A summary of penalties that the *Woreda* court handed down to four types of offences relating to forest destruction in recent years is presented in Table 7.9.

**Table 7.9**  
**Court proceedings of forest destruction cases in Gimbo *Woreda*, 1997-1999**

Type of offence	Penalty		Culprits and/or accomplices
	Minimum	Maximum	
Forest clearance for farming	Birr 50.00	Birr 800.00	Local farmers
Hoarding of lumber	Birr 80.00	8 months imprisonment	Carpenters; Teachers; Students
Transporting of lumber	Birr 30.00	Birr 200.00	Truckers
Setting of forest fire	6 months imprisonment	1 year imprisonment	Farmers

Source: Gimbo *Woreda* Agricultural Office files (Gimbo DoA OF/1 1998 - 1999).

None of the above offences attracted the maximum penalty stipulated in the forest proclamation. The issue of penalties handed down to culprits of forest destruction has been a frequent subject of correspondence between the Zonal Administrative Council and the Zonal Department of Agriculture on the one hand and the Zonal Justice Department on the other. In general, local Administrative Councils and Departments of Agriculture believe that the court system does not give timely decisions on cases presented to it for forest damage. Moreover, they accuse courts of leniency in the sentencing of culprits. In short, the local government were of the view that the

law has not been made to discharge either its punitive or deterrent functions in respect of its application to the forestry sector (KSZ-DoA OF 1996 - 1999).

Legal experts do not accept the above charges, and this point of view was gathered from the writer's participation in a 1998 workshop deliberation on the problems of forest law enforcement in Kafa-Sheka. In the opinion of senior members of the Zonal Justice Department, most cases involving forest damage lacked credible evidence on which courts would normally base their decisions, and the need to follow the requirements of due process of investigation inevitably resulted in delays. As regards the type and level of penalties they hand down to the culprits, they argue that the penalty ceiling laid down by the forest proclamation would deter them from passing any harsher judgements as this would make forest destruction charges a higher category of criminal offences. These legal officers also maintained that there are no detailed penalty regimes for forest destruction offences. Consequently, they had to balance the sentences they hand down to those accused of illicit tree felling with the judgements they pass on those charged for other criminal offences.

In short, the above indicates the fact that from the perspective of the local Departments of Agriculture even the policing approach they follow with regard to protecting forests has not been backed by effective law enforcement.

### **7.10.3 Experiences with community involvement in forest protection/governance**

#### **7.10.3.1 Introduction**

As has been noted in a number of instances, there has been no systematic forest management strategy in place anywhere in highland Kafa. The case study communities are not exceptions to this. In the late 1990s, however, two interrelated initiatives were launched to direct forest protection and management through involving local communities, which are discussed below.

#### **7.10.3.2 The forest re-demarcation initiative**

This is an initiative FARM Africa took through its Bonga Forest Conservation and Development Project, BFCDP (see Section 4.4 and Appendix 5.1.2A). At the time of Project start up in late 1996, owing largely to the dismantling of most boundary markers (see Section 7.5 above) there was a very limited local knowledge of the extent of the BNFP boundary on the ground. Furthermore, in some areas the state forest territory had been converted into permanent agriculture. Therefore, the Project assigned top priority to a re-demarcation of the forest territory. This had won acceptance at the different tiers of government in the Zone who agreed to assign a



team of technical experts to take part in boundary re-demarcation (BFCDP OF/2 1999). The Project in turn facilitated the election of community representatives for the re-demarcation exercise. To this effect, the Project recommended involvement of elders and *Idir* leaders in the demarcation task force, for they were believed to represent the best interests of the larger community. In addition, the Project underlined the need to represent every interest group in the taskforce and suggested inclusion of women and Manjo representatives in the exercise (BFCDP OF/2 1999).

Between late 1997 and early 1998 the project initiated re-demarcation of external state forest boundaries in 5 *Kebeles* of Gimbo district (BFCDP OF/2 1999). Once the re-demarcation exercise had been completed the project spearheaded the development of what are regarded as local forest use bylaws. These provisions recognise traditional non-destructive use rights of the local population but disallow commercial wood harvesting (BFCDP 1998).

The major point of reference for the re-demarcation exercise was the spatial dimension of the original BNFPAs, whose demarcation, as noted in Section 7.5, had its own fundamental flaws. Re-demarcation was undertaken with the view to ensuring spatial contiguity of the state forest territory. Thus, as in the past, the re-demarcation exercise paid little attention to the similarity of use rights enjoyed by the communities adjoining the BNFPAs territory and the equity issues that would arise in the enforcement of the newly instituted tenure regulations in the re-demarcated sector of the forest. Moreover, the message that this would send to neighbouring non-BNFPAs areas in terms of their insulation from forest use restrictions that BNFPAs users' face seemed not to have been thought through.

It is to be recalled from the discussion in Section 7.5 that the state had never established its presence in the natural forest areas of BNFPAs. Hence, for local people the forest was state forest in name only. Thus, none of them made much distinction along tenurial lines between village forests within and outside the BNFPAs. Therefore, the average farmer resented the re-demarcation exercise, as s/he suspected hidden motives with regard to the use of the surrounding forests by those in authority. In fact, in Bitagenet sub-*Kebele* the re-demarcation process was followed by some degree of resettlement out of the BNFPAs territory, the KA citing security problems as a justification for the move (Appendix 9.4.2). Local people were quick to associate this with the re-demarcation exercise undertaken earlier (Appendix 9.2.1G). In an apparent reference to such experiences, an elderly person at Wushwush sub-*Kebele* summed up his fears thus: "threads always follow the needle"! This should also be seen against the background of the problems surrounding state-farmer relationship in other aspects of peasants' life as well (see Section 6.4.2 and Appendix 9.11.3).

It is also worth pointing out that the involvement of community representatives and *Idir* officials in the re-demarcation process did not allay the fears of the average farmer either. It was established that a good proportion of *Idir* officials and other members of community groups never had any direct interest in the forest areas which they were meant to negotiate with the technical staff (see Appendix 9.11.4 for details). For instance, women and Manjos representing, respectively, Kayakella KA (where Arabakasha sub-*Kebele* is found) and Bitachega sub-*Kebele* were found to have resided in the non-BNFPA sub-*Kebeles* and had no material interest in the demarcated forest areas. As some members of the professional team fielded for demarcation observed, the above community representatives had never set foot on some of the re-demarcated forests and knew very little about respective villagers' use rights (Seblewongel Deneke, personal communication). From field observations and verbal reports of BFDCP field personnel it has become increasingly clear that the re-demarcation exercise started to be dogged by the same forms of local defiance, including wood poaching, farmland clearance, and felling of boundary marker trees, that accompanied the original state forest demarcation process.

In an ostensible scaling up of the experiences of FARM Africa the Zonal Department of Agriculture passed directives to demarcate larger forest areas outside BNFPA for utmost protection in late 1998 (KSZ-DoA 1998b). Local level natural resource personnel understood this as a move towards making such forest patches an integral part of the BNFPA (Appendix 9.12.2). This undertaking was a component of the Zone-wide forest governance initiative that was in the offing at the time (discussed in the next sub-section). The directive also envisaged involving elders and *Idir* leaders in the re-demarcation process (KSZ-DoA 1998b). In addition to these community representatives, demarcation teams always included personnel from local agricultural offices, local political cadres, and KA militias (Decha DoA OF 1996 - 1999). Under such circumstances it is doubtful whether the involvement of elders would make any difference to the intended outcome of demarcation. Moreover, like the BFCDP approach, demarcation here was also target driven, the quota being set at the Zonal level.

Furthermore, archival sources at district levels indicated that forest demarcation was often undertaken by administrative fiat. There were many instances where *Woreda* administrative council bodies spearheaded the designation of threatened forest areas as state forests. Moreover, one *Woreda* court proceeding ordered the district agricultural office to demarcate a forest area that had been encroached by farmers and entitled the neighbouring KA office to harvest spices found in the forests the way it saw fit (Decha DoA OF 1996 - 1999).



In a nutshell, the demarcation experience outlined above appears to be bereft of any consistent management or social purpose. Archival sources as well as discussions with personnel at Gimbo and Decha *Woreda* Agricultural Offices made it clear that the local government seized demarcation as a formal/legal basis by which to prosecute those who were said to have inflicted damage to the forest. Some of the culprits were not necessarily those involved in commercial wood exploitation. For instance, a DoA file in Decha *Woreda* details confiscation of bundles of climbers from groups of farmers reportedly because these items originated from demarcated areas (Decha DoA OF 1996 - 1999).

#### **7.10.3.3 Zone-wide institutional development initiative**

Faced with a progressive increase in the incidence of illegal wood harvesting and upon realisation of its inability to discharge its role as custodians of forests, in 1998 the Zonal Department of Agriculture sought that 'forest protection and development committees' (FPDCs) were established at all levels of the administrative hierarchy (KSZ-DoA 1998b). (Unless stated otherwise, this is the basic reference document to the following discussion.) To this end, the Department issued a directive outlining activities of FPDCs at the three tiers of local administration (Zonal, *Woreda*, and *Kebele*) and stipulated a hierarchical relationship between them. The stated objective of FPDCs is to enhance governance of forests in ways compatible with state ownership of forest resources and local level forest use rights. In this relation, the guideline emphasised the need to specify land use zones at each KA. The guideline also prescribed formation of sub-committees at village levels to ensure forest protection and development activities.

At the Zonal and *Woreda* levels respective administrative council chairpersons headed FPDCs. The Zonal level structure allowed representation of at least ten different government departments and religious leaders, while the *Woreda* level structure envisaged a significant involvement of section heads of the Department of Agriculture, but also provided room for other Departments including that of Education and Justice. At the KA level FPDCs were organised under the chairmanship of the KA head and embraced a couple of other KA functionaries, government extension agents, selected *Idir* leaders, village elders, and school principals.

As noted in Section 7.10.3.2 above, the demarcation of village forests into what were locally conceived of as state forests was a consequence of the above undertaking. In general, FPDCs have not measured up to the expectation of the Department of Agriculture. According to archival sources of the Zonal Department of Agriculture, *Kebele* FPDCs received little organisational assistance and their contribution towards arresting the pace of forest destruction has been evaluated as unsatisfactory. The department also alleges that *Woreda* level FPDCs have failed

to discharge the tasks expected of them (KSZ-DoA OF 1996 - 1999). In short, the broad-based arrangement that had been thought to address the problem of forest destruction has been beset by practical problems. At the time of the fieldwork, enforcement of government forest laws was as much a function of the goodwill and initiative of the KA functionaries as had been the case in the preceding years.

## 7.11 Discussion

The chapter has provided the empirical bases for evaluating the forms of State-society interaction with regards to the allocation and enforcement of forest use rights to rural households. The analysis spanned a quarter of a century and examined the involvement of State institutions pertaining to two central governments of widely different political orientation. In both cases, however, State ownership of land resources and the attendant land use rights conferred to rural households provided the legal framework within which State-community relationship has been examined. At the operational level, government-supported grassroots rural organisations as well as the central/local government machinery mediated this relationship. These notwithstanding, in the case study areas, the 1980s had seen a virtual disengagement of the PA from farmland allocation. Moreover, the 1990s in general have been characterised by a slack period in terms of formal, PA-mediated intra-community land redistribution.

Two extreme tendencies appeared to characterise the role of the PA as provider of forest use rights in the case study areas. Specifically, in most locations the PA system under the *Derg* played a limited role in forestland allocation, thereby acceding, albeit inadvertently, to the indigenous systems of forest tenure establishment, the workings of which will be discussed in the ensuing chapters. On the other hand, in areas where the PA had been dragged into playing a forest allocation role at the time of land reform it continued mediating the tenure provision process until the *Derg* proclaimed a halt in land resource allocation towards its final days in power. In this, locally framed authority, the PA ensured that forest use rights were exercised in close proximity to place of residence and that forest access reflected both intra- and inter-community equity. This was the case where, respectively, the PA instituted product-specific forest access for some of the newly formed households and where it entitled outsiders to establish use rights through forest lease. Such a village-bound tradition of forest access is believed to have important management implications, an issue addressed later in the thesis (see Section 11.3.3, Chapter Eleven).

The chapter has also shown that the different government-instituted community structures of the post-1974 epoch used their perceived role of forest tenure provision to reward valour in wars and/or to lure the promising rural elite into assuming community-based political positions that



could strengthen local political alliances. This has a degree of resemblance to the *Maderia* form of resource tenure that the Imperial Ethiopian State used as a mechanism of returning political favours to civil and military personnel. On the other hand, although the post-*Derg* era had seen a freeze in land resource allocation, there were isolated cases that enabled formal CBOs to apportion forest holdings to new community members. Even so, this was made in such a way that it did not interfere with the resource use rights of individual households. Furthermore, the KA system participated actively in the legitimisation of land market transactions that had also involved permanent transfer rights in tree resources, acts that go contrary to the letter and spirit of the country's land laws.

From the above experience it follows that state-community interactions in land resource allocation, particularly the ones mediated by formal CBOs, followed the ground rules that characterised the quiet rural life and reflected the subtler inter-personal relationships that are played out in the exercise of local authority. In this context a strict adherence to government policies has always been informed as much by political expediency as by local conceptions of 'power' and social goodwill. The KA system has also followed similar principles with respect to adjudicating intra-community resource tenure conflicts.

An important lesson that could be drawn from such a balancing act relates to the fact that law promulgation without the attendant logistical, administrative and implementational commitment to see it through could be subject to varying interpretations at the local level. While this is not necessarily an undesirable state of affairs, it is essential that policy makers realised the organisational limitations of the State in the implementation arena. In fact, given the varied agro-ecological conditions within which forest farmers' operate, a fruitful implementation of natural resource directives demands a reassessment of the spatial scale of policy formulation in the first place.

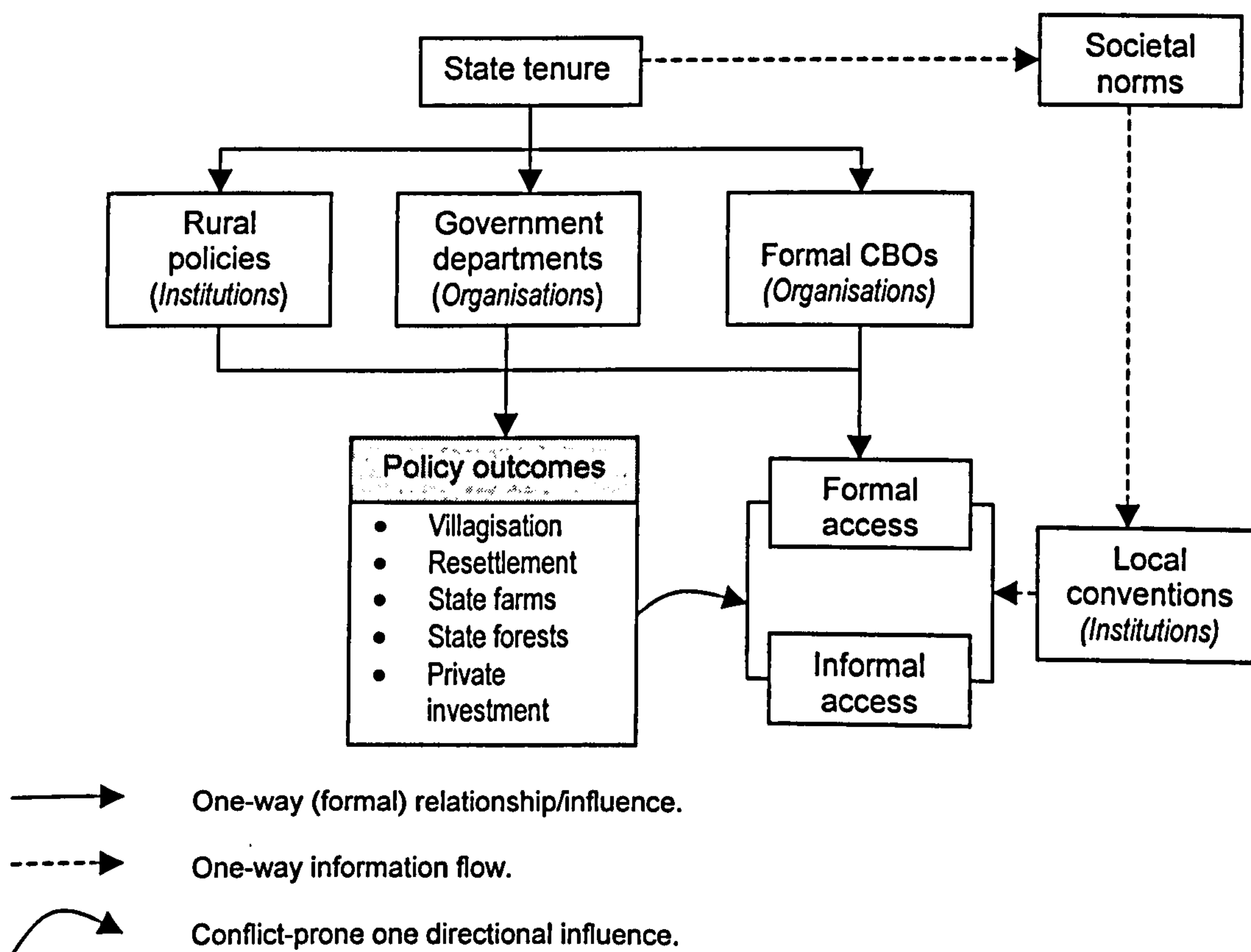
At the other end of the spectrum, the implementation of the myriad land management, settlement and investment strategies of the post-1975 State resulted in either outright denial of local people's forest use rights or created uncertainty regarding continued use of village forest areas. In these schemes, it should be recalled, the locus of power determining the nature and pace of change was in the hands of the government functionaries and political cadres, formal CBOs playing a subordinate role. As the chapter has demonstrated, whilst discharging this 'other' role, formal CBOs exhibited a pattern of behaviour akin to what Scott (1985, Chapter 7) characterised as *calculated conformity*, a tendency to show outward support for powerful outsiders when they get involved in rural affairs. True, some of the state-sponsored schemes have been reversed at the earliest sign of a loosening of central control in a manner analogous to Scott's (1985) *open*

*defiance or active resistance* (31-32). However, the general trend has been one of a continuation, in different forms, of state-endorsed programmes with all their potentials for aggravating local-level forest tenure insecurity.

Figure 7.2 summarises the conflict-ridden nature of State-community interactions in the forest tenure provision scene and the multiplicity of influences shaping the way formal CBOs such as KAs operate.

The observed conflicts between the rural policy outcomes and the forest access status of villagers is a result of a non-consultative policy process that is bolstered by the State's exclusive ownership right of all land resources. Societal norms and values pertaining to forest agriculture have not been given any attention in the State's dealings with the local community. Indeed, as the one directional informational flow emanating from the domineering posture of 'state tenure' depict, local people's perception of local forest access establishment and enforcement had to accommodate the new realities which State tenure created at grassroots level.

**Figure 7.2: State-community interactions in the forest tenure scene**





The chapter noted that the closest forest villagers and their local organisations were involved in anything resembling a formal management role was when the different development actors co-opted them in forest (re-) demarcation and protection tasks. The chapter assessed the depth and breadth of local institutional capital acquired in this process. To this end, it looked at the rationale behind and the efficacy with which the forest interventions were effected as well as the nature of the functional space provided to the CBOs. It has been shown that community involvement facilitated the creation of new (state) forest boundaries that could serve as an operational space for professional forest managers. However, there is a concern that forest boundary adjustment could be used as an official excuse to exclude villagers from forest use on grounds of 'forest protection' by a civil service and administrative apparatus imbued with a "fences and fines" approach to forest conservation. It is thought that this bodes ill for the credibility of the CBOs and their representatives involved in the task.

Moreover, one wonders whether in a tightly farmed landscape, where forest resources are subject to a multiplicity of uses and local claims, the carving out of state forest areas as a *tenure category* was the preferred option for co-opting the participation of the user community in forest protection and management. As it turned out, the CBOs who participated in the boundary demarcation scheme had no planning and decision making role. They in fact were used as mere local arms of control for enforcing a particularly over zealous interpretation of the statutory forest law. Finally, the organisation and management structure of the CBOs created for the task of demarcation and forest protection were also found to have had some fundamental weaknesses. To start with, these entities were established at a scale far removed from the resource base that they were meant to oversee. Furthermore, the membership composition of the CBOs lacked transparency and was characterised by uniformity. In short, it was a prescriptive arrangement that attempted to bind together politically initiated farmers with widely respected local personalities in the name of community participation.

A lesson of experience of wider significance that comes out of the institutional arrangements put in place for forest governance relates to the untenable association of the concept of *community* with *the aggregate of households found in a KA*. In reality, the KA is a diverse politico-administrative space composed of several villages with reasonably distinct spatio-ecological interests and varying local organisational capabilities. Under such circumstances, it would ideally have been necessary to opt for better-focussed approaches that could help in building rapport with the people who mattered. This, however, is bound to have its own limitations as a stricter interpretation of the approach might conflict with the need for operating within the parameters of the official grassroots administrative boundary. These point to the need for identifying modalities of local organisational involvement that help strike a delicate balance between ensuring

management efficiency on the one hand and conferring official legitimacy on the other - an issue discussed later in the thesis (Section 11.3.3, Chapter Eleven).



## **8. Beyond statutory land laws: informal forest access channels and the role of traditional community-based organisations in tenure administration**

### **8.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the workings of informal forest access principles and tenure administration practices that had the effect of establishing property rights in land resources are investigated. Forest access arrangements concluded as part of the farming system of the study areas (i.e., access established in the course of production and marketing) are discussed in the next chapter. Hence, the informal access channels discussed in this chapter include customary access and family-centred access, the latter includes family grant (or *Wejoo*) and inheritance. In this research customary access refers to traditionally upheld procedures by which access to resources is obtained through ancestral claims and proven record of resource use.

The remainder of the chapter is organised as follows. An overview of the significance of informal forest access mechanisms in the case study areas sets the scene. Section 8.3 analyses the importance and manifestation forms of customary forest access. Section 8.4 examines the forms and circumstances of access to forest resources through family grant. The section also provides an outline of the importance of inheritance as a means of forest access. As will be shown shortly, of the informal forest access mechanisms discussed in this chapter, inheritance is the principal channel through which both male- and female-headed households could claim direct forest access. Hence, societal practices concerning inheritance will be assessed in conjunction with the discussion on women and forest access in the study areas, which is the subject of Section 8.5. In Section 8.6 the role of informal community based organisations in tenure administration is investigated. The final section synthesises the main issues discussed in the chapter.

### **8.2 An overview of informal forest access mechanisms**

Table 8.1 summarises the number of (indigenous) households who reported relying on forest resources accessed through any of the three informal access mechanisms under discussion (customary tenure arrangements; inheritance; and family grant) at two bench mark times in their respective household evolution. Given that households accessing forest resources through these channels were established at varying periods (see Sections 7.9.2 and 7.9.3 in Chapter Seven), such an endeavour is likely to provide a broad indication of the extent of inter-temporal relevance of the three informal access mechanisms noted above.

**Table 8.1**  
**Informal mechanisms of forest access**

Description	HH formation period		Current situation	
	HHs	Per cent	HHs	Per cent
Customary access to village forests	61	25.4	69	28.4
Inheritance	38	15.8	45	18.5
Family grant ( <i>Wejoo</i> )	18	7.5	19	7.8
Sub-total	117	48.8	133	54.7
Households with forest access	240	100	243	100
X <sup>2</sup>	0.162, P > 0.05			

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

It is clear from Table 8.1 that at both times, around half of the indigenous households had to rely either on their customary access rights in using forest resources or on the two forms of people-to-people access mechanisms (i.e., inheritance and *Wejoo*). A chi square test also showed no statistically significant difference in the number of households relying on the three traditional forms of forest access at the above two benchmark periods. This is indicative of the tenacity of informal arrangements in addressing the forest livelihood concerns of the indigenous population. Put another way, despite the various changes in property rights and governance regimes, informal tenure principles have at all times been integral parts of the forest tenure structure in the case study sites.

An attempt was also made to examine the extent to which the importance of informal channels of forest access varies across the different social categories (Table 8.2).

**Table 8.2**  
**Informal forest access mechanisms by household category**

Household category	Customary access		Inheritance		<i>Wejoo</i>		Total	
	HHs	Per cent <sup>1</sup>	HHs	Per cent <sup>1</sup>	HHs	Per cent <sup>1</sup>	HHs	Per cent <sup>1</sup>
Female-headed	2	14.3	7	50.0	0	0	9	64.3
Manjo	15	60.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	17	68.0
Male-headed (Kaffecho)	52	25.5	37	18.1	18	18.1	107	44.0
X <sup>2</sup>								0.991, P > 0.05
Total	69	28.4	45	18.5	19	7.8	133	54.7

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> as a proportion of corresponding numbers of households with forest access.

As may be gathered from Table 8.2 each of the three informal forest access mechanisms have varying degrees of importance to the three household groups. While 'inheritance' provided a forest access avenue for the majority of female-headed households, 'customary access' was found to be a more important channel of forest access for Manjos and Kaffechos. It was not, however, possible to ascertain the general validity of this observation through a chi square analysis as the expected frequencies in each case violate the restrictions on the use of the test.



In any case, the reliance of a high proportion of households from each category on informal access channels coupled with absence of any statistically significant difference in the associated values suggest the system-wide importance of informal mechanisms. The following sections explore the significance of the above three instruments and their respective operational principles.

### 8.3 Customary tenure principles and access to forest resources

As shown in Chapter Two, in much of the developing world, customary land laws have declined progressively in efficacy; however, customary access practices have been maintained. In this sub-section the relevance of this observation in the context of the case study areas is examined through analysing the current significance of customary access to forest resources across the indigenous population taking into account the time line of their household establishment period.

**Table 8.3**  
**Customary forms of forest access**

Household establishment period	Households	Percent <sup>1</sup>
<i>Pre-Derg</i>	17	26.6
<i>Derg I (1975-1979)</i>	15	44.1
<i>Derg II (1980-1990)</i>	16	27.6
<i>Post-Derg (1991-1997)</i>	21	24.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>28.4</b>
<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>3.196, P &gt; 0.05</b>	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> as a proportion of corresponding numbers of households with forest access.

Table 8.3 shows that well over a quarter of households in the case study areas depend mainly on forest resources they obtained through customary access principles. Time of household establishment appears to have no influence on the number of households accessing forest resources through the operation of customary access channels. However, there is more to the inter-generational dimension of customary forest access than Table 8.3 portrays. From field observations and discussions with the youth group it was realised that often forest holdings of the youth (that is those who established their households in the 1980s and 1990s) were far less diversified in terms of the range of NWFPs they support than those claimed by the well established households. Similarly, the microenvironments within which these holdings are located were less conducive to practising forest-based gathering than those claimed by the older households (Appendix 11.2.4). This situation is a direct consequence of the principle of "prior occupancy" which, it is to be recalled, is an important aspect of customary tenure (Table 8.4).

**Table 8.4****Mechanics and justifications for customary forest access claims in the case study areas**

Major customary tenure principles/claims	Remarks on 'typical' groups
Claim of ancestral territory.	Manjos; <i>Alamos</i> and some of their followers.
Forest ownership during the pre-1975 period.	Offspring of <i>Gacheukiros</i> .
'Forest use' area during the pre-1975 period.	Former forest lessees, <i>de facto</i> users and/or their offspring.
Proximity of residence to a forest patch.	Villagers in Bitachega and Sheeka.
Proven track record of tree use for honey before establishing one's own household.	Households established in the 1980s and 1990s.
Knowledge of forest area as a sharecropping partner.	Households established in the 1980s and 1990s.
Collection of items of low commercial value for household and/or community use.	Resource poor women; children; herbalists.

Source: Synthesised from key informant interviews (Appendices 9.2.1F, 9.2.2A and 9.6) and focus group discussions (Appendix 11.2.4).

Table 8.4 shows the variety of forms through which customary forest access is justified. The first three principles signify the validity of historical patterns of settlement and access to forest resources to the present forest tenure structure. In particular, most of the present Manjo households reside in what is locally regarded as their respective ancestral territories. It is to be recalled that, these areas had been circumscribed by, and are the products of, the then prevailing social division of labour that relegated the Manjos to the denser forest areas. Similarly, the customary tenurial claim that the *Alamos* presently make, also has its own roots in the spatial domain in which their forebears had discharged their roles as overseers of traditional belief systems. Finally, despite the radical nature of *Derg's* land reform, it was learnt that pre-reform forest ownership and/or forest use have all along been used to back up customary claims. This applies to Kaffecho *Gacheukiros* and their descendants as well as those who had been using village forests on a lease basis from absentee landowners during the Imperial period.

Residual customary rights are also claimed along territorial lines. In places where the PA system had left village forest use to the discretion of the local people, villagers living closer to a forest area were the first to lay a customary claim on its tree resources. This form of customary access can also transcend administrative boundaries. For instance, people living in villages that lie along KA and district boundaries claim customary access to forest resources that otherwise fall in different administrative units than their respective places of residence. It was learnt that villagers from the case study areas claim access to forests belonging to other KAs and *Woredas*, so do residents of neighbouring areas in the case study sites (Appendix 9.2.1F). Such incongruence between the administrative boundary within which forests are located and residence of customary users also applies to some of the re-demarcated BNFPAs, a fact rarely taken into account in the re-demarcation process (see Section 7.10.3.2).



The forms of customary access that characterise the younger households are mostly rights they established through the use of forest trees in ways recognised and valued by other forest users in the vicinity. This takes mainly the form of hanging honey barrels on selected trees and effecting regular management care on the main tree and the surrounding bushes. Such endeavours often begin very early in life (Appendix 11.2.4). It is not uncommon to find school children have bee keeping domains in village forests that they secured in the course of assisting their fathers produce honey. There were also a number of instances where younger household heads identified 'vacant' forest trees while taking part as sharecropping partners in honey production. The litmus test for village-wide recognition of such claims, however, lies in regular and sustained use of the forest resources in question (Appendix 11.2.4).

Finally, customary tenure principles in the case study areas also manifest themselves in the operation of "secondary rights". These rights are operationalised through the relative freedom of action individuals have in the collection of items of low commercial value destined for household consumption (e.g. firewood) and/or community use (e.g. medicinal plants) from forest areas which have recognised claimants. It should be noted that the ground rules for accessing these items vary from one area to another and depend mainly on the relationship of the beneficiary with the right-holder. In general, if the source of the above forest goods is very near to the right holder's residence, the intended user is expected to seek the consent of the former, as this is regarded as an integral part of the right-holder's domestic domain. On the other hand, if the location of the forest is far from residential areas, it is highly unlikely that the owner would invest labour on its upkeep, except perhaps hanging beehives. Under such circumstances, secondary users are allowed a degree of forest access that would not jeopardise the right-holder's interest in tree/forest use (Appendices 9.8 and 11.3.2).

In addition to the spatial considerations mentioned above, customary tenure principles also impose temporal constraints in the exercising of secondary rights. In particular, no outsider would be allowed to fetch firewood or any other forest item during honey harvesting and coffee collection times for fear that the permission for the above activities would create loopholes for potential intruders. Scarcity of suitable firewood during the major rainy season also prompts primary right holders to restrict outsiders from entering their forest domain (see, for instance, Appendix 11.3.2).

In summary, one of the salient features of customary tenure in the study areas is the recognition it gives to residual rights that are anchored on spatial/territorial and historical grounds. Customary tenure also provides those with no acceptable parameters to claim exclusive land resource right

with use-oriented, albeit transient, rights. Evidently, the various customary access principles are operational within the general framework of state tenure in land resources. Thus, owing to the operation of customary access practices one observes the coexistence of the four classes of right holders that dominate the rural resource tenure scene in Africa. These categories, it should be recalled, are state, groups, households, and individuals within households (see Section 2.4).

## 8.4 Family-centred access mechanisms

This section assesses the importance of family grant (*Wejoo*) and inheritance as forest access mechanisms.

### 8.4.1 *Wejoo*- family allocation of land resources

The discussions in the preceding section focused mainly on inter-household aspects of access to forest resources. However, as noted in Chapter Two, there are important intra-household inequities in access to land resources that warrant closer investigation. One of these pertains to inter-generational issues in the allocation of land resources, which in the context of Kafa is mediated through the *Wejoo* mechanism. Table 8.5 sets out the extent to which the *Wejoo* mechanism serves as a principal means of access to farmland and forest resources in the case study areas.

**Table 8.5**  
**Contribution of *Wejoo* as a mechanism of access to land resources**

Period	Farmland		Forest resources	
	HHs	Per cent <sup>1</sup>	HHs	Per cent <sup>1</sup>
Pre-Derg	17	25.0	2	3.1
Derg I	9	24.3	1	2.9
Derg II	17	24.6	2	3.4
Post-Derg	42	36.2	14	16.1
X <sup>2</sup>	3.14, P > 0.05		11.08, P < 0.001	
Total	85	29.3	19	7.8

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> as a proportion of corresponding numbers of households with access to the pertinent land resource.

The practice of *Wejoo* is more pronounced as a mechanism of farmland allocation than as a provision of tree resources for forest-based gathering purposes (Table 8.5). This is not surprising because traditionally *Wejoo* is a farmland grant that households get at time of establishing their families. It is interesting to note that, even during the earlier years of the *Derg* (i.e., *Derg I*), when the PA had the ability to allocate land holdings, about a quarter of households preferred the provisions they had had through *Wejoo* to requesting the PA for farmland. This is mainly



because of the tendency of the extended family to live and work in proximity with one another. While, on the other hand, the continued importance of *Wejoo* among younger households was a direct result of the disengagement of PAs from land allocation roles. The above also explains why there was no statistically significant difference among the number of farmland *Wejoo* beneficiary households established at different periods.

It is also evident from Table 8.5 that households established in the 1990s depended most on *Wejoo* as a forest provisioning mechanism and the result was statistically significant as well. The fact that these households were still in the earlier phases of their household cycle could be one reason why *Wejoo* was found to be a dominant means of forest access. It should be underlined that due primarily to the existence of competing claimants to household forest resources, the range and adequacy of trees provided through family allocations leaves much to be desired. Such provisions do not often go beyond a handful of suitable trees for hanging beehives on (Appendix 11.2.4). The absence of alternative, more rewarding, forms of forest access mechanisms open to the above members of the young generation was found to have been a crucial factor that tied them to tree resources obtained through *Wejoo*. Discussions with younger household heads also revealed that continued use of *Wejoo* land resources would be considered an expression of one's loyalty to one's ageing parents and goes a long way towards securing yet more *Wejoo* land and winning candidacy for inheritance. This is a new development that has resulted largely from the increasing scarcity of land resources at the disposal of the younger households (Appendix 11.2.4).

The tendency to cling to *Wejoo* as a strategy for consolidating future access to land resources is often met by an equally calculating move on the part of the benefactors, the older generation. This mainly takes the form of using *Wejoo* provision of tree resources as a bargaining chip to claim access to the labour of the newly established households. It is important to note that *Wejoo* is a provision that hinges mainly on the willingness of the benefactor, and hence does not always entitle the recipient to a permanent use right. For instance, the youth group at Sheeka sub-*Kebele* pointed out instances where a falling-out of sons with their fathers resulted in withdrawal of *Wejoo* land-use rights that the youth had been provided with in earlier years (Appendix 11.2.4).

Table 8.6 summarises the patterns of *Wejoo* provision in tree resources and the expectations of the benefactors from this undertaking.

**Table 8.6**  
**Typology of family allocation of forest holdings/tree resources**

No.	Motives/reasons for <i>Wejoo</i> provision	Benefactor-beneficiary relationship
1.	Outright grant at time of own household formation.	Father-son; brother-brother
2.	An encouragement to shoulder household headship.	Widowed mother-son
3.	Expectation of support from recipient during old age	Father-son
4.	Mechanism used to keep offspring in share-cropping arrangement with natal family in food farming.	Father-son
5.	Desire to make recipient live and work nearby and provide unspecified assistance to benefactor.	Father-son
6.	Desire to have effective familial control over distant forest holdings.	Father-son; brother-brother
7.	Form of payment in kind for keeping benefactor's crop from vermin attack.	Extended family network
8.	Caving into claim of right of use by assertive offspring.	Widowed mother – son

Source: Elders' interviews (Appendix 9.2.1A) and focus group discussions (Appendix 11.2.4).

From Table 8.6 it follows that provision of forest resources through *Wejoo* is an integral part of the decisions affecting household production of food crops and, in the case of female headed households, it is used as a way of initiating elder sons to assume household headship in due course. In some cases widowed women were also reported to have been pressurised to cede a portion of their inherited forest holdings to their offspring. Sons in these households often advanced the argument that 'the tree resources had belonged to their fathers'! (Appendix 11.2.4). The picture that emerges from the foregoing is that provision of tree resources in a *Wejoo* is largely a man's prerogative and that recipients are almost always male members of the household.

#### 8.4.2 Inheritance

This sub-section outlines the extent of inter-temporal importance of inheritance as a forest access channel (Table 8.7).

**Table 8.7**  
**Inheritance as a mechanism of access to forest resources**

Period	HHs	Per cent <sup>1</sup>
Pre-Derg	11	17.2
Derg I	2	5.9
Derg II	13	22.4
Post-Derg	19	21.8
X <sup>2</sup>	3.68, P > 0.05	
Total	45	18.5

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> as a proportion of corresponding numbers of households with forest access.



Although the number of households claiming direct forest access through inheritance has shown some variation across the four periods, the difference is not statistically significant. Indeed, there is no *a priori* reason to suspect a higher level of importance of inheritance in one period than in the other. However, as noted in Section 8.1, given the openness of inheritance to both men and women it will be worthwhile to understand its mechanics and appraise its implications for gender relations, issues discussed in the ensuing section.

## **8.5 Women and access to forest resources: the property rights dimension**

### **8.5.1 Introduction**

Another crucial aspect of intra-household access to resources relates to women's land rights. In this regard the principal aim is to understand the factors governing the extent of direct rights that women have over land resources and the constraints they face in this respect. The discussion recognises the existence of gender relations at several levels, including relations within households, between households and at societal level. The latter is reflected in state-society relationships. The following sections address the above issues using data from a combination of quantitative and qualitative sources.

### **8.5.2 Intra-household gender relations and access to forest resources**

Gender relations at the household level and their effects on women's land rights are mirrored through the descent system at work. It is to be recalled that the Kaffecho are patrilineal and that historically all land resources were allocated through male household heads. Moreover, in part because of stereotypes arising from the prevailing gender division of labour, husbands and adult men/boys are sole right-holders of households forest resources. Specifically household headship entitles men to claim overall control over household land resources; while, on the other hand, there are accepted societal norms that also qualify boys to hold rights over forest resources even *before* marriage (see Section 8.3 above).

The exclusion of female household members from acquiring direct land rights is reinforced by the patrilocal and exogamous nature of marriage and the associated perception that when the girl child comes of age she would be lost permanently to her husband's extended family network. As regards married women, the only way through which they obtain access to land resources is through their husbands and this often requires permission to use the resources (Appendix 11.3.1). There are, however, some exceptions to this, chief amongst which is the influence of

polygyny on the access rights of wives. It was learnt from discussions with women's groups (Appendix 11.3.1) that wives in polygynous marriage face different forest tenure structures from those in monogamy, as explained below.

It was established that husbands consult their wives about their intentions of establishing polygynous household, and the issue is presented in the form of the household's need for additional labour. In the event that this materialises new land is cleared or a portion of the available farmland is set aside with the view to providing a means of sustenance for the additional wife/wives. As part of the dowry, often the junior wives will be provided with separate *enset* stands and/or coffee bushes around the homes built for them. It should be noted that, the coffee resources at the disposal of the 'original' family, which the senior wife helped to establish, are considered as the property of that particular household, the husband overseeing the management process. This often constitutes the bulk of the coffee plants that the now-enlarged household owns. In contrast, the coffee land given to the junior wife/ves is regarded as their respective property, hence the husband is less involved in the management of the resource than he would be with regards to the household's coffee with which the senior wife is associated. Therefore, co-wives have less diffused property rights and more control over some of the household's forest resources than do the senior wives. However, the fact that polygynous marriages are in the minority (see Section 6.2.4) means that the dominant picture regarding married women's land rights remains through their husbands.

As regards other forest benefits the type of marital arrangement seems to have no effect on access rights of the junior wife/ves. For instance, access to honey production domains is exclusively controlled by the husband, and the household where the senior wife is located is the major beneficiary of the harvest. Often co-wives are not required to take part in the production of honey, hence do not have any right in terms of sharing the produce. In households where the senior wife is unable to partake in the rituals of honey production one of the co-wives will be called upon to replace her. This entitles her to a share of the harvest.

It should be appreciated that government policies have the potential to address imbalances in intra-household gender relations and in enabling women to obtain property rights in land resources in their own right. Indeed, the 1975 land reform decree provided a case for land allotment "without differentiation of the sexes" (PMAC 1975: 95). In view of the potential challenge which this posed to the established social order a translation of such an intent into practice needed much closer follow-up than was given to the implementation of the reform. Consequently, PA leaders of the period implemented the land reform in ways consistent with the



prevailing pattern of authority in the household (Appendix 9.3.2). Hence, opportunities were missed in terms of ensuring women's direct access to land resources.

As noted in Appendices 2.4.1 and 2.4.2, the post-*Derg* period has seen policies and constitutional provisions that underscored women's equality in terms, among others, of access to property. As far as access to, and control over, land resources go, little has changed on the ground and the above traditional rules and working procedures still predominate. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the operation of the inheritance system and in the social practices surrounding divorce settlements. These are discussed in connection with the forest access rights of female-headed households in the case study areas.

### 8.5.3 Female-headed households and access to forest resources

#### 8.5.3.1 Overview

As in most parts of rural Ethiopia women assume household headship either subsequent to divorce or upon the death of their husbands. Seen in this way, a study of patterns of resource access among female-headed households elucidates the inter-household dimension that gender relations take. This is because, forest tenure provision to female-headed households is a reflection of societal values regarding divorce settlements and inheritance provisions and is an outcome of the competition that these processes entail. Table 8.8 provides information regarding the past and present forest access status of female-headed households in the case study areas.

**Table 8.8**  
**Marital status and forest access among female-headed households**

Mechanisms	Time of headship			Current situation		
	Divorced	Widowed	Total	Divorced	Widowed	Total
Forest/tree access	2	16	18 (64.3%)	2	12	14 (50%)
Inheritance	0	9	9	0	7	7
PA allocation	1	3	4	1	1	2
Customary access	1	2	3	1	1	2
Sharecropping	0	2	2	0	3	3
No access	3	7	10 (35.7%)	3	11	14 (50%)
	$X^2 = 3.07, P > 0.05$					
Total	5	23	28 (100%)	5	23	28 (100%)

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

From Table 8.8 it can be deduced that in both periods female-headed households obtained forest access using a variety of formal and informal mechanisms. A Spearman's correlation coefficient was computed to explore the extent of concordance in the status of forest access among female-headed households across the two periods. This resulted in a moderately high value of 0.79 ( $P = 0.01$ ), suggesting that over the years a similar number of female-headed households accessed

forests using each of the four mechanisms identified in Table 8.8. It should be noted that claims of customary access by female-headed households are attributed to the forest tree rights that male household members established in the course of time (Appendix 11.3.1). On the other hand, sharecropping in this context refers mainly to agreements which the household head/members conclude in NWFP activities, the details of which are discussed in Chapter Nine. In some of the areas where the PA office had been involved in forest tenure provision divorcee and widowed women also benefited (Table 9B in Appendix 9.3.3). Similarly, the PA did not discriminate against those women who had come from other areas subsequent to their marital instability (Appendix 10.3).

During both of the reference periods well over a third of female-headed households had no access to forest resources. It was not possible to undertake a chi square test to see if the lack of access shows a statistically significant difference among the two categories of female-headed households (i.e., widowed versus divorced), because the procedure would violate the requirements of the test regarding expected values. However, a cursory examination of the order of magnitudes of the 'observed' and 'expected' frequencies shows a remarkable degree of similarity (Table 8.8 in Appendix 12.1). Hence, the marital status of the household head did not seem to have any influence on the lack of forest access. This suggests the prevalence of deep-seated institutional factors that militate against women's tenurial rights. Thus, in light of the factors that engender female household headship it becomes necessary to examine the land rights dimensions of inheritance provisions and divorce settlements in conjugal relationships.

### 8.5.3.2 The gender dimensions of land resource inheritance

The analysis in this sub-section uses data collected through questionnaire survey as well as information from qualitative sources. Table 8.9 provides information on households who had inherited land resources at varying times of their existence in the study areas.

**Table 8.9**  
**Inheritance of land resources in the case study areas**

Type of land inherited	Household head		Total
	Female	Male	
Tree-resource-related	8 (44.4%)	39 (69.6%)	47 (63.5%)
Coffee holdings	0	1	1
Farm land and forest holdings	8	38	46
X <sup>2</sup>	1.58, P > 0.05		
Homestead/farm land	10 (55.6%)	17 (30.4%)	27 (36.5%)
Total	18 (100%)	56 (100%)	74 (100%)
Per cent <sup>1</sup>	64.3	21.5	25.8

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> as a proportion of the corresponding household category in the sample.



Evidently, a quarter of the sample households inherited a land resource of one variant or another. The proportion of women who inherited forest holdings of some form was lower than the corresponding figure for male-headed households, but the result is not statistically significant. Hence, there is no *a priori* reason to assume that women inheritors were confined to the homestead domain. Indeed, as could be inferred from Appendix 7.9, almost all of the 18 female-headed households who experienced inheritance responded that they were the *only* heirs of the land resources at the disposal of their previous household, indicating an absence of any trend that discriminated against *current* female household heads from inheriting forest holdings. In contrast, more than a quarter of the male-headed households reported to have co-inherited land resources with either their siblings or their mothers and stepmothers (Appendix 7.9).

From the above it is tempting to conclude that adequate inheritance provisions are made to enable widowed women obtain direct access to land resources. However, group discussions brought to light the fact that in monogamous families there is a strong preference for men to bequeath land resources to their sons. As a rule, a woman only inherits wholly the land resource of the household if she has no adult male offspring from her deceased husband or if the husband did not have adult son from another relationship in the area (Appendix 11.3.1). In other words, had widowed women been given the opportunity to inherit land resources from their husbands irrespective of the above considerations and restrictions, many more independent female-headed households would have come into being and the extent of women's inheritance of forest holding could have been understood from Table 8.9. This, obviously, was not the case. It would, therefore, be necessary to examine experiences of male inheritors concerning provisions made to ensure that widowed women had access to land resources. This is summarised in the following table.

**Table 8.10**  
**Provisions made to wives by male household members at time of inheritance**

Description	Relationship of benefactor to heir			
	Father	Brother	Total	Per cent
Heir enjoined to take care of the natal family	32	0	32	59.3
Wives inherited part of the land resource	5	0	5	9.3
No provision as wife had died earlier	11	0	11	20.4
No provision as deceased had been a divorcee	4	2	6	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

According to Table 8.10 the issue of inheritance provision to women is pertinent to the first two categories of inheritors (a total of 37 households). In the majority of these households the inheritors were charged with the task of administering the land resources and household affairs of their natal family. This, as far as it goes, is a tradition well respected and accepted across a wide

spectrum of the rural society. For that matter, it is not uncommon for widowed heiresses to entrust their sons to lead the family once they reach adulthood (Appendix 11.3.1).

Nevertheless, from in-depth interviews with women informants as well as from discussions held with women's groups it was learnt that the above descent-based inheritance system has an in-built mechanism to erode progressively women's land rights (Appendix 11.3.1). In particular, once passed to their offspring women would rarely be consulted about major household production and marketing decisions and tend to be treated just like any other household member. The situation worsens when the heir establishes his own family, as this would mean a separation of residence and with it disappears any residual decision making involvement women might have had concerning household resource allocation. For all intents and purposes women who had been made to depend on the provisions of their sons would in the long run find themselves devoid of any direct access to land resources. In short, because of cultural influences, even the much criticised descent-based inheritance laws have not been adhered to in respect of ensuring the land rights of widowed women.

The above does not, however, apply to women heiresses charging their sons with full land management responsibilities, for they are still right holders and have the legitimacy to dictate household land use decisions if needs be. With regard to inheritance in polygamous marriages, large proportions of the household resource will be earmarked to the household where the senior wife lives and the remaining property will be distributed among the other household/s (Appendix 11.3.1).

#### **8.5.3.3 Divorce settlements and forest access**

From discussions with women's groups particularly at Sheeka sub-*Kebele* (Appendix 11.3.1) it was gathered that male elders chosen by both parties settle divorce. For practical and cultural reasons divorcee women rarely attempt to reorganise their lives anew in the particular community they lived with their husband. Hence, once divorced, women tend to obtain what the mediators consider the woman's share and return to their natal families and communities where they could get protection and sympathy. This in most cases would be either in another village within the sub-*Kebele* or in a different area altogether. Consequently, in the event of divorce, land resources such as farmland, trees used for mounting beehives, *enset* and coffee holdings always remain in the hands of the husband. The woman is entitled to a share of household items, livestock, and available stock of agricultural produce such as grains, honey and coffee. Informants noted fewer instances where women also obtained a cash estimate of their share from the household *enset* fields.



Women's group discussion participants at Sheeka sub-*Kebele* recalled cases where some women requested mediators to let them harvest a portion of household's honey when it was due as part of the divorce settlement. This was met with stiff resistance from husbands on the grounds that bees had absconded and that it would be beyond the capacity of the women to protect the hives until the harvest period. The elders involved in settling the case also upheld this latter view. The group discussion revealed that often women do not have a working knowledge of the exact location of forest trees that their husbands use for honey production as well as the number of beehives the husband had mounted. While they ascribe this to their marginal involvement in the honey production process, they expressed a strong desire to have a full knowledge of their household's land-based resources (Appendix 11.3.1). Hence, for women in the case study areas the issue of resource/tree rights was not as an "alien" a subject as some purport for women in the southern region (*cf.* Original 1999: 207).

Overall, gendered rights and responsibilities within marriage are also reflected in divorce settlements. Furthermore, as regards the plight of women divorcees, what a writer on Kafa ethnography remarked over three decades ago still holds true: in the event of divorce, "[t]he men stay with their land - the women move with their fortune" (Orent 1969: 290).

## **8.6 Informal community-based organisations and institutions in tenure administration**

### **8.6.1 Introduction**

This section analyses the organisational bases of natural resource tenure administration at community level giving particular attention to (a) the role informal CBOs and other cultural institutions play in securing locally sanctioned forest use rights for community members, and (b) the working relationships between formal and informal CBOs in the enforcement of access to land resources.

### **8.6.2 The role of the *Idir* system in tenure enforcement**

From interviews with key informants, including *Idir* leaders, it was learnt that in the post-*Derg* period offences that are considered too local to be handled at the KA level have increasingly been settled either through the *Idir* mechanism or through the mediation of elders (Appendix 9.5). At times *Idirs* refer cases to village elders of their choice defining modalities of the arbitration and/or adjudication process. In this way the *Idir* not only directly handles tenure conflicts but also

provides the necessary organisational forum for resolving or addressing forest-use related offences and disputes.

In the event of conflicts arising from the infringement of forest use rights the process of establishing evidence is very much a community-wide affair. In particular, upon discovery of any such transgression the right holder beats a *Gono* - a high pitch hollowed out log or wooden barrel used as a drum in the event of distress - to attract the attention of villagers to hear the charges and/or observe damages (Appendix 9.5). This is an age-old tradition in highland Kafa and dates back to the era of the Kafa Kings (see, for example, Orent 1970b: 291). *Idirs* give particular weight to evidence gathered in this way as the chances of catching wrongdoers red-handed in a forested environment is often a difficult matter. As in the pre-1974 period, there are also instances where *Idirs* organised *Outo* (see Appendix 3.4.5) in an attempt to trace theft of honey barrels from village forests (Appendix 9.5).

Table 8.11 contains some examples of natural resource tenure conflicts that local people reported directly to *Idirs* and settled by them.

**Table 8.11**  
**Examples of natural resource tenure conflicts reported to and adjudicated by *Idirs***

No.	Cases	Proceedings
1.	Clearance of forest trees around farmland area.	<i>Idir</i> ruled in favour of the <i>status quo ante</i> .
2.	Theft of wooden barrels meant for bee keeping.	Culprits paid varying sums in indemnity and case processing fee for the <i>Idirs</i> .
3.	Theft of coffee beans from forest holdings.	Same as (2) above.

Source: Interview with *Idir* office holders (Appendix 9.5).

There is not much difference in the nature of the offences reported to *Idirs* (Table 8.11) and those reported to the *Kebele* Social Courts (Table 7.8, in Section 7.10.1.1). In fact, from discussions with *Idir* leaders it became clear that the extent of involvement of *Idirs* in tenure conflict resolution is contingent more on the specific circumstances surrounding the offence committed than the type of resource use conflict *per se*. For instance, local people tend to present conflicts that arise from enforcing customary tenurial rights to *Idirs*, not to *Kebele* Social Courts. The first case in Table 8.11 falls under this category. Furthermore, forest use conflicts backed only by circumstantial evidence tend to be presented to *Idirs* and vice versa. The second case in Table 8.11 is a typical example. Within this context *Idirs* also adjudicate over conflicts involving 'outsiders'. The issue of 'outsiders' arises because, as noted in Section 8.3 above, in some places forests and forest use rights straddle administrative boundaries. In such cases the resultant conflicts are often presented to the *Idirs* where suspected culprits belong. The third case in Table 8.11 is one such an instance.



Finally, with the exception of tenure enforcement interventions outlined above, the *Idir* system in the case study areas has a limited proactive forest management role that village level organisations in similar socio-cultural situations are noted for (cf. Table 3.3 in Section 3.3.2.3). There were only two *Idirs* in the case study areas that have spearheaded collective action in the management of village forests (Appendix 9.5). In one case (Sheeka sub-*Kebele*) this was spurred in 1995 by the need to counteract a widespread problem of theft of honey barrels from village forests for which the local youth were held responsible. In this regard, the case was presented to the *Idir* which in turn provided a forum for all village residents to deliberate on the issue. This culminated in participants condemning the act and vowing in traditional religion terms to be vigilant against such intrusions - an event that villagers believe to have yielded good results.

In another case the need for *Idir* involvement in forest management was a consequence of members' agreement to co-ordinate their honey harvesting schedule. In particular this was a case initiated at Woka sub-*Kebele* where *Idir* members saw the harm individual honey harvesting practices had on the swarms of bees in the forest ecosystem and called for a greater synchronisation of activities. While all members in principle accepted this, no binding arrangements were put in place to consider it an institutionalised management mechanism.

### 8.6.3 The *Alamo* institution and conflict management

As noted in Chapter Four, the *Alamo* institution wields substantial authority over a good section of highland Kaffecho. More germane to the discussion here is the role that practising *Alamos* play with regards to mediating resource use conflicts among their respective followers (Appendix 9.6). Informants mentioned that land access and NTFP related disputes are one of the many cases referred to the *Alamo* institution. Typically, disputes in this case take the form mainly of intra-household (e.g. father-son) misunderstandings arising from household land allocation as well as inter-household disputes concerning transgression of forest use rights (Appendix 11.2.4). Both parties consider *Alamos'* decisions final. Informants are of the opinion that the *Alamo* institution also has important deterrent functions.

On the other hand, from field observations and informal interactions with the general public it is known that, in addition to the *Alamo* institution, there are a couple of traditional religious rituals that are generally believed to act as deterrents for all forms of conflicts in rural Kafa. These centre on the practice of cursing culprits through planting needles in and around the premises of some of the more famous Churches and other places of worship.

**8.6.4 Working relationships among community-based organisations in tenure enforcement**

In practice, the gulf separating formal and informal organisations in respect of tenure enforcement is not as wide as it appears in theory. In fact, all indications are that there are considerable operational relationships between the *Kebele* Social Court and the *Idir* system (Appendix 9.4.3). For instance, *Idirs* often take members who fail to abide by their bylaws to *Kebele* Social Courts, and there are instances where the latter act as a go-in-between *Idirs* and their offending members. Some *Idirs* have even formalised this relationship through depositing their bylaws with the KA office that specified the modalities of KA involvement in *Idir*-wide affairs (Appendix 9.5). This, however, is not as widespread a practice as in other rural areas of highland Ethiopia where, most informal CBOs have a wide range of developmental functions that necessitate recognition and backing of the KA structure (see Yihenew 1996b).

On the other hand, *Kebele* Social Courts also consider *Idirs* in the case study areas as important allies in law enforcement, as *Idirs*, either of their own will or upon instructions from the KA, will identify offenders and report/hand them over to the *Kebele* authorities. In some areas, KA officials also double as *Idir* office holders, thereby reinforcing the interdependence of the two organisations (Appendix 9.5). This situation could also militate against the autonomy of informal organisations with respect to pursuing the grassroots working procedures that they are noted for.

Table 8.12 contains examples of specific working relationships between formal and informal CBOs in the case study areas in the sphere of natural resource tenure enforcement.

**Table 8.12**  
**Examples of natural resource tenure conflicts involving a hierarchy of CBOs**

No.	Cases	Appeal body	Adjudicating Body
1.	Trespassing forest holding for bee keeping.	KA.	<i>Idir</i> /village elders.
2.	Breach of sharecropping agreements.	KA.	<i>Idir</i> /village elders.
		<i>Idir</i> .	KA.
3.	Theft of honey from forest.	<i>Idir</i> .	KA.
4.	Trespassing pockets of grazing land in forest areas	KA	Village elders
5.	Farmland boundary disputes.	KA.	<i>Idir</i> /village elders.

Source: KSC OF 1996 - 1999 & interviews with KA officials (Appendix 9.4.3) and *Idir* leaders (Appendix 9.5).

Table 8.12 demonstrates the existence of a two-way relationship between the KA system and informal organisations and institutions. In as much as the KA refer cases of tenure conflict to the *Idir* for decisions, so the *Idir* need the involvement of the KA in resolving conflicts. Local level institutional leaders advanced a couple of reasons why the KA refers tenure conflict cases to informal bodies for adjudication. These range from a realisation of its lack of knowledge of the



local tenure provision process (e.g. cases one and two above), to a recognition of its inexperience in dealing with issues that had broader inter-community implications (e.g., case number four). In all these three cases (i.e., Cases one, two and four), resource tenure had been established through customary principles and practices, that is, outside the realm of the formal system. With reference to case number four, the parties involved in the dispute were settlers' groups and Kaffecho farmers at Wushwush sub-*Kebele*. It is important to realise that this is a typical case where village elders are involved in tenure-related arbitration as the contending parties belong to different *Idirs*. It is also not uncommon to find that *Idirs* or *Idir*-appointed village elders feel obliged to intervene with a view to protecting an obvious culprit from the heavy hands of the law. The involvement of *Idirs* in case number five above was prompted by such considerations.

There are two types of *Idir* assessed cases that eventually find their way to the *Kebele* Social Court. The first one relates to cases where the *Idir* exhausted the necessary fact-finding operations and wanted the KA to pass the appropriate verdict. Case number three in Table 8.12 fits into this category. The second category pertains to cases of appeal. It should be recognised that, unlike in the *Alamo* institution, the decision of *Idirs* is not final and that it is not unusual for people to pursue their cases into the formal system of justice administration (Appendix 9.5).

From discussions with the pertinent CBO leaders a couple of tentative observations regarding the principles behind the establishment of working relationships between KAs and *Idirs* can be made (Appendices 9.4.3 and 9.5). To start with, the relative distance of the *Idir* area from the KA office or from the sub-*Kebele* where influential KA officers reside have important bearings on the extent to which *Idir* members make use of the KA judicial body. In particular, other things being equal, the closer the spatial organisation of *Idirs* to either of the above locations the greater is likely to be the interaction between the two organisations in discharging their respective mandates of tenure enforcement and vice versa. At the same time, the KA often assesses the extent of organisational strength of *Idirs* before referring back cases to them. Often the greater the track record of the *Idir* in discharging wider social functions the higher will be the likelihood of KAs to enlist their co-operation in the management of tenure conflicts and vice versa.

Finally, the attempt at eliciting attitudinal information from institution leaders concerning their perception of future involvement in forest management was met with apparently contradictory views (Appendices 9.4.3 and 9.5). KA officials discounted the KA structure as a suitable organisation to shoulder the responsibility of local forest management. Invariably they were of the opinion that *Idirs* were the most appropriate forums for the task, but underlined the need to give the necessary guidance and to monitor their activities periodically. Most *Idir* officials, however, were not as enthusiastic about such prospects and appeared to be unsure of their

supposed potentials. They emphasised the voluntary nature of *Idir* membership and, given their lack of formal legislative recognition, wondered if they could measure up to expectations.

## 8.7 Discussion

This chapter has identified and evaluated the workings of a number of informal forest access mechanisms that are anchored on a common set of cultural values and kinship interactions. These mechanisms manifest themselves through the operation of customary tenure principles, family allocation practices, inheritance arrangements and divorce settlements. It should be noted here that the last three mechanisms have essentially an intra-household character. However, once they are operationalised, they mark the beginnings of household headship; hence, help to depict the inter-generational and gender dimensions of family-based access to forest resources.

It has been shown that customary tenure principles manifest themselves through the notion of 'respect for prior occupancy' and that these principles have endured the fundamental reorganisations to which the rural tenure system in Kafa had been subjected over the years. In fact, these principles were instrumental for the permeation of traces of pre-conquest and pre-revolution forms of forest holdings into the present tenure structure. Moreover, the continued operation of customary tenure principles have given the necessary stimulus for the establishment of village settlements close to respective common forest resources. The historically embedded nature of customary arrangements also means that in some locations the spatial extent of forest resources accessed by user groups straddles current administrative boundaries.

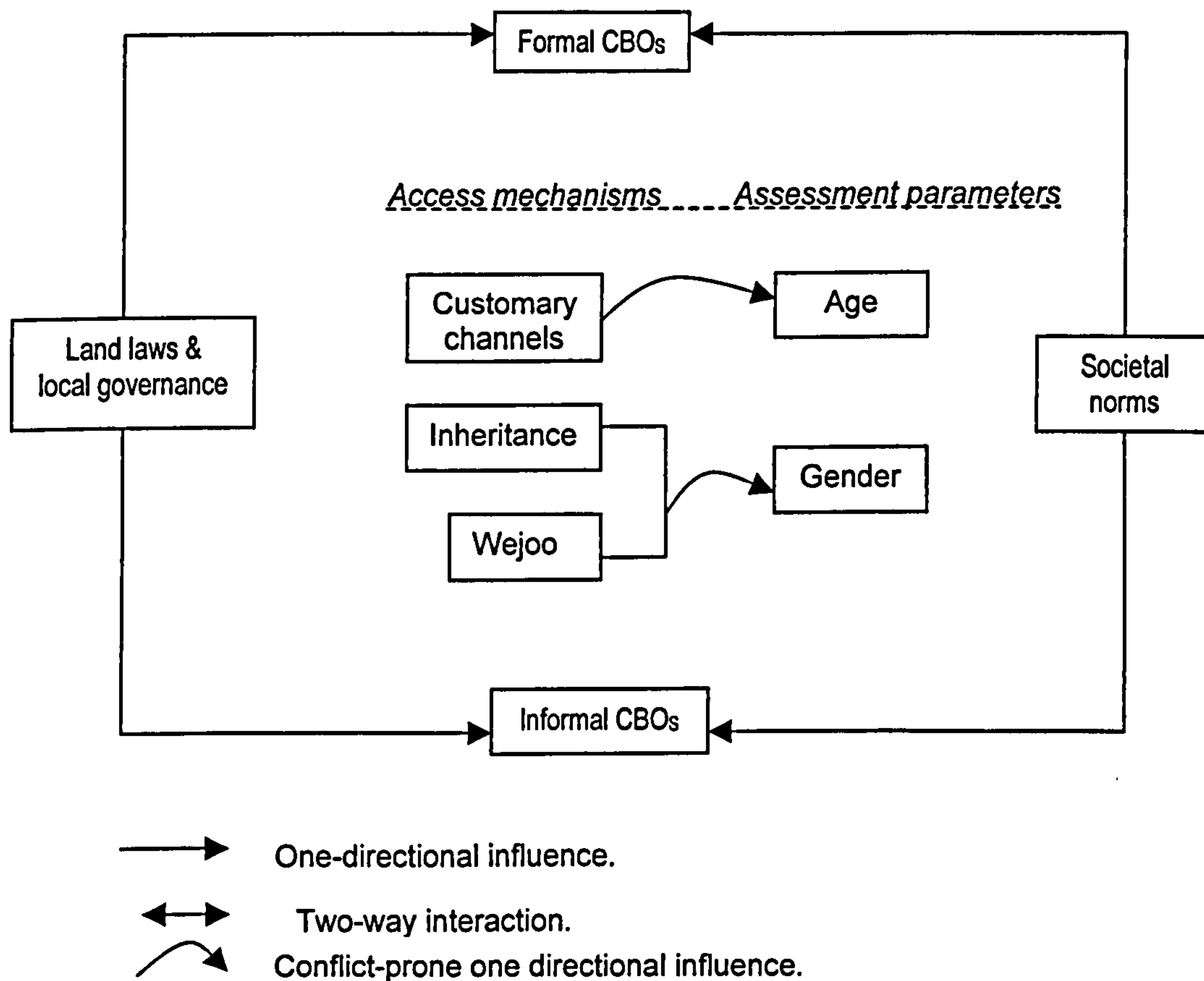
Similar to the experiences with PA sanctioned forest access, the village-based territoriality of access that the operation of customary tenure principles affords has the potential to bind users together as a unit and to introduce enforceable rules of exclusion. Therefore, it is necessary that such an orderly spatial structure of access be assessed carefully as it could provide opportunities for the evolution of home grown resource management strategies in forested areas of the country. After all, one of the most important attributes of successful common forest resource regimes is the existence of predictable user groups (Section 3.4.2, Chapter Three).

The embodiment of derived or secondary rights within the customary access principles discussed in this chapter benefits especially the poor who would otherwise have to incur costs to satisfy their forest goods needs. Seen in this way, customary tenure has an important role in redressing inequities in inter-household forest use rights as well as in enhancing the stake of villagers in their local environmental resources. However, such a positive outcome has to be viewed in conjunction with the inter-generational inequity characterising the distribution of customary



'primary rights' (represented as a conflict-prone interaction between customary channels and 'age' in Figure 8.1). This, it should be recalled, is a lacuna that PA/KA-sanctioned forest access also shares. This in turn raises a concern about the adaptability of this form of forest access in the face of a rapidly growing agricultural population.

**Figure 8.1: The workings of informal forest access mechanisms**



Therefore, any discussion on the resource management implications of forest tenure needs to examine the extent of flexibility of customary tenure principles within such a dynamic perspective. Such an analysis stands to benefit from an understanding of the local forest production context as well as the role that forest goods play in the local livelihood system, issues discussed in the following two chapters.

The study has also analysed family-centred forest access mechanisms and explored their role in ensuring inter-and intra-household equity. The practice of family allocation - *Wejoo* - has been instrumental in addressing the tree resource needs of the younger generation, thereby rectifying

some of the inter-generational inequities that both PA-sanctioned and customary forest access mechanisms engendered. Nonetheless, forest resources obtained in this way were on the whole of limited diversity and are characterised by a higher degree of instability. This is one form of forest access through which household level inter-generational politico-cultural interactions are played out. In the phraseology of tenure analysis, *Wejoo* belongs to the *limited transfer rights* category where tenure is the least secure (Place *et al.* 1994: 22). *Wejoo* is an access mechanism that benefits men only (Figure 8.1).

In a manner similar to *Wejoo*, the system of inheritance ensures a continued use of village forests by subsequent generations. However, this very system, which is informed by local customs of patrilineal descent and eligibility, discriminates against women being bequeathed land resources. Even in exceptional cases where women inherit land resources as guardians of a household, the prevailing social division of labour militates against the transformation of such endowments into entitlements. In particular, as the widowed household starts to be represented by a male member, women's land rights degenerate into a variant of secondary rights that can only be realised through the maintenance of good relations with the 'new' household head. The strained link between 'inheritance' and 'gender' in Figure 8.1 is meant to represent this state of affairs. The country's inheritance laws were also found to have been as replete with gender bias as the above local practices.

In patrilineal societies, such as the Kaffecho, the other feasible instance where women could secure forest access is through divorce settlements. Such arrangements were, however, shown to fare worse than inheritance, as sexual stereotypes come into play in the determination of the type of property divided up in divorce settlements, thereby leading to a *de facto* exclusion of women from access to natural resources.

Overall, the gender dimension of traditional systems of forest access leaves much to be desired. Furthermore, the legal infrastructure that could have rectified the situation was found to have been in need of an overhaul itself. Thus, the maintenance of gender equity in access to, and control over, forest resources remains as much a question of legislation as a matter of practical action aimed at bringing about incremental changes in societal practices, an issue elaborated in Section 11.3.2 (Chapter Eleven).

The multitude of parallel resource access arrangements that the cultural landscape has sustained over the generations was also found to have been amenable to adjudication using traditional structures. These entities, either of their own or in collaboration with formal CBOs, checked free-riding behaviour and contributed to tenure enforcement. As Figure 8.1 demonstrates loopholes in



the statutory land laws and weaknesses in local governance arrangements provide the basis for such a two-way interaction between formal CBOs and informal CBOs. These in turn have created opportunities for societal norms and values to influence the decision making process and its outcomes. However, these informal community networks have seldom taken up the proactive role that is so necessary for initiating collective action and asset management with which CBOs in other contexts are associated. At any rate, the wealth of organisational resources at the disposal of the communities and the healthy interaction between the different CBOs is one area where the search for effective forest management arrangements should focus.

## **9. Household forest uses and production-based access mechanisms**

### **9.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines household forest use patterns and their tenurial implications. To this end, the discussion gives particular emphasis to the organisation of labour in forest production across the different household categories. It is believed that such an analysis not only provides the basis for assessing the extent of involvement of the myriad of local actors involved in forest production activities but also helps identify the inter- and intra-household context within which production-based resource access regimes are concluded and sustained. As will be realised from the subsequent discussions, the different forest benefits have given rise to a multiplicity of use-based forest access conditions, chief amongst which is share cropping.

In order to address the issue systematically, the present analysis distinguishes between subsistence and market-oriented forest uses. The rest of the chapter is organised as follows. In Section two, some of the commonest subsistence uses of forest resources and local people's experiences with accessing these forest benefits are outlined. Section three analyses the state of commercial wood use. Here wood production practices are identified and the salient features of households involved in the trade discussed. The fourth section examines the organisation of production in marketable NWFPs. This is discussed along product lines and emphasis is placed on the nature and extent of share cropping as a mechanism of access to forest benefits. Moreover, the significance of product domestication as a tool of forest access is assessed in this section. Section five summarises the discussion and identifies issues for further deliberation.

### **9.2 An outline of subsistence forest uses and access to forest benefits**

Qualitative information gathered from the different categories of informants points to the significance of natural forest areas in the provision of food resources (Appendices 11.2.2, 11.3.3, and 11.4.2) and herbal medicines (Appendices 9.8 and 11.3.4) and as mediums where local people express their indebtedness to the nature spirit for its benevolence (Appendix 11.2.1). The following is a summary of the experiences of local people in the case study areas in respect of the uses and access dimensions of these forest benefits.

Wild plants constitute the bulk of forest foods consumed in the case study areas. Consumption of bush meat is almost always associated with Manjos. Indeed, compared to experiences among forest villagers elsewhere in Africa, the consumption of bush meat in Kafa is conspicuous by its absence (*cf.* Townson 1995). In general, boys tend to be more significantly involved in the



collection of forest foods and this is understood to be incidental to their other agricultural assignments. However, as a group, Manjos are said to rely on the collection of forest foods particularly during lean periods.

On the other hand, local people make considerable use of herbal medicines they collect from forest areas for the treatment of a range of human and livestock diseases. Local knowledge of herbal medicines is a result of generations of trial and error by the indigenous inhabitants and hence tends to be ubiquitously distributed; however, there are specialised herbalists whose services are needed in more serious cases. Given the vital role that natural forests play in the development of cosmopolitan medicine, the reported utility of local wild plants in addressing villagers' needs may not be surprising. It is also recognised that, in agrarian systems typified by lack of modern social service infrastructure such as rural Kafa, the efficacy of traditional plant medicines should be viewed within the cultural and psychological context of the healing process (see, for example, Abbink 1995).

Finally, local communities preserve sacred groves as part of their subsistence ethos, and this is exemplified through the *Dejo* ceremony, which is an age-old tradition in Kafa and has been an important part of the people's cultural lives before the 1974 revolution (Orent 1969: 50). *Dejo* is an all men affair such that women are not allowed any nearer to *Dejo* places during the event. Besides, the quest for 'cleanliness' also meant that no Manjo is involved in any aspect of the *Dejo* organisation process.

Essentially, while the benefits harvested directly from the forest contribute to people's physical well being, the ancestral spirits believed to occupy the sacred groves are thought to bless the agricultural wealth created in the course of production. Seen in this way, the two forms of subsistence forest uses reinforce one another.

A combination of customary tenure principles and open access conventions dictate the above and related forms of subsistence forest uses. While the consumptive uses are often exploited as village-bound open access benefits, sacred groves are preserved as the collective domains of the respective community groups organising the *Dejo* ceremony. Other forms of land uses have, however, increasingly threatened these forest use practices. With reference to culturally revered forests this emanated from a denigration of the associated belief system and is indicative of the lack of official recognition of the cultural values behind their preservation. The reported decline in the basket of forest foods in general and wild plants in particular seems to have been because of forest clearance and the consequent dominance of cultivated crops in the agricultural production system of the areas under study.

### **9.3 Commercial wood production: an analysis of practices and tenorial implications**

#### **9.3.1 Introduction**

There are important differences in the forms of forest access across the different types of wood processing activities. Hence, the following discussion is organised along product lines.

#### **9.3.2 Plank production**

Given the 'illegal' nature of plank production (see Appendix 2.4.4B) any attempt at acquiring statistically generaliseable data using the questionnaire survey was thought to be counter-productive. Hence, the writer opted to go through the list of households with key informants to establish the extent of villagers' involvement in plank production activities in three sub-*Kebeles* (namely, Bitachega, Sheeka and Wushwush) where informants were more forthcoming. It should be appreciated that although plank production is carried out clandestinely, the people involved are well known to community members. Key informants from the three sub-*Kebeles* identified a total of 34 household heads noted for practising their saw milling skills. This represents an average of six per cent of the corresponding households. Most of the participants were young and were either functionally landless or did not take farming as a serious engagement. Some saw-millers also involve apprentices who were eager to learn the trade and carry out the lucrative business of plank processing later in life. Invariably, apprentices were either young agricultural household heads, students from within rural villages or school dropouts from neighbouring urban settlements (Appendix 11.2.6).

From youth group discussions it was learnt that often the services of plank processors are bought on a product share basis (Appendix 11.2.6). There are no major variations across the study areas in the share arrangements made between right holders of trees (hereafter referred to as "owners") and plank processors. Most commonly, the processor is entitled to obtain the quantity/market price of two-thirds of the planks produced, while the tree "owner" receives the remaining balance. In situations where the volume of work or the location of the production site demanded involvement of assistants/apprentices, the processor claims half the harvest, and the remaining half is divided equally between the tree "owner" and assistants. Occasionally, saw millers buy live trees (most notably Sudan Teak - *Cordia africana*) from tree "owners" for timber production purposes. It was learnt that this is the major mechanism by which wood processors from urban areas get access to tree resources from their surrounding hinterlands for lumber production purposes.



Plank processing in general, and the involvement of outsiders in the trade in particular, is significantly related to the extent of institutional control at the local level. Thus, these practices were said to be rampant during the earlier days of the post-*Derg* transition (Appendix 9.4.2), a situation observed in other parts of the country as a whole (see, for example, Mateos 1994). However, even at the time of the *Derg*, when the PA was a strong instrument of local control, wood processing activities had been carried out illicitly. It was also learnt that during the *Derg* gangs of skilled wood workers used to visit some of the more densely forested rural *Kebeles* to undertake wood processing on a product share basis (Appendix 9.2.1F).

Finally, local timber processors also make effective use of ambiguities in the prevailing forest tenure arrangements to exploit tree resources without necessarily consulting the respective claimants (Appendix 11.2.6). Needless to say, this situation contributes to the creeping expansion of 'open access' regimes in the utilisation of forest resources.

### **9.3.3 Production of household furniture and utensils**

As outlined in Section 6.3.3, a variety of household furniture and utensils are produced in all of the study localities. Most of these products are of long durability and hence are replaced infrequently. It was learnt from group discussion participants (Appendix 11.2.6) that skills in the production of some of these wooden articles are fairly ubiquitous and that most people who have access to the required tree resources either produce the items themselves or call traditional work parties to help them out in the manufacturing of the same. However, production of some of the more skill-intensive items such as wooden ducts or barrels entails skilled labour.

Given liquidity problems, farmers who have direct access to the pertinent trees for the production of the above items are said to prefer to buy the services of local carpenters in kind. This, coupled with some context specific reasons (noted below), call for a share cropping arrangement in wood processing activities (Appendix 11.2.6). In particular, the production technology in use is such that in order to produce any one of the major household utensils the whole tree has to be felled, thereby prompting production of more of the same item or other items of household importance from the felled tree. Either way, the tree owners often end up obtaining more items than they need for home utilisation; hence, the use of product sharecropping as a mechanism of wood disposal. Customarily, the harvest is shared equally among the two parties.

### 9.3.4 Woodfuel

In the case study communities firewood is often the only source of domestic energy. Moreover, about 96 per cent of urban residents in the district to which the case study areas belong meet their home energy requirements from woody biomass (CSA 1996c: 103-105), the hinterland serving as a source of supply. Thus, commercial production of woodfuel, that is firewood and charcoal, is widely practised in areas near to the major urban centres and in villages lying along motorable roads. Traditionally, Manjos were the only section of the rural communities involved in this; in fact, in historical Kafa sale of these items by a Kaffecho was a taboo (Appendix 9.2.1C). However, this tradition is rapidly changing.

The 'illegal' nature of commercial production of woodfuel as well as its socially despised status highly circumscribes the acquisition of quantitative information on the extent of Kaffecho market participation in the trade and the sources of product harvest. Thus, the evidence presented here concerning the Kaffecho relied heavily on data collected through focus group discussions (Appendix 11.2.6) and field observations. In contrast, data on Manjo involvement in commercial woodfuel production was obtained using the questionnaire method, and this has been enriched through a range of qualitative tools.

There are two ways in which the Kaffecho involve themselves in commercial firewood and charcoal production. The first is direct involvement whereby resource poor farmers fell trees and process the wood into charcoal and firewood for sale. This is especially the case during the main wet season (May - August), which is the 'hungry-gap'. The main sources for wood harvesting are the village forests that the culprits access without the consent of the right holders (Appendix 10.3). In general, the Kaffecho do not consider the sale of firewood and charcoal as a life long trade, as they use the proceeds from the sale of these items to capitalise on household production assets such as farm oxen (Appendices 9.4.2 and 10.3). Youth group discussion participants at Sheeka mentioned instances where woodfuel sellers left the business and joined the socially respectable occupation of food crop farming. However, in some isolated cases richer community members, who have officially recognised local forest access rights, are involved on a regular basis in commercial firewood production in a tacit agreement with their institutional customers such as hotels and bakeries in major urban settlements.

The second mechanism of Kaffecho involvement in the wood trade, is an indirect one. This refers to share arrangements that tree "owners" enter into with the Manjos. In particular, the Kaffecho would make available suitable woodfuel trees from "their" forest stock so that the Manjos would process them into bundles of firewood for sale at locations that the latter deem convenient. The



sale proceeds are divided equally among the parties. Manjos are also involved as sharecroppers in disposing of trees felled in the course of farmland expansion (Appendix 11.4.1).

Manjos also participate, in their own right, in sale of woodfuel (Table 9.1).

**Table 9.1**  
**Direct involvement of Manjos in commercial wood fuel production**

Sub-Kebele	Manjo settlement		Firewood	Charcoal	Total <sup>(a)</sup>	No. of Manjo HHs	
	Village	Location				HHs	%
Bitachega			1	0	1	9	11.1
	Chega	30 minutes by foot from main road.	1	0	1	5	20
	Yukira	90 minutes by foot.	0	0	0	4	0
Bitagenet			1	0	1	3	33.3
	Macha/Dega	30 minutes by foot.	1	0	1	3	33.3
Sheeka			12	12	12	12	100
	Barita/Wutwut	Edge of Bonga town.	12	12	12 <sup>(b)</sup>	12	100
Wushwush			5	0	5	5	100
	Matapa	Roadside.	5	0	5	5	100
$\chi^2$					22.77, $P < 0.001$		
Total			19	12	19	29	65.5

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99 and field experience (for location of villages).

<sup>(a)</sup> = refers to the total number of woodfuel sellers

<sup>(b)</sup> = all firewood sellers also sell charcoal.

Clearly, about two-thirds of Manjo households are involved in woodfuel sale. Furthermore, Manjos who live very close to motorable roads and urban areas are involved in much greater numbers in woodfuel trade than those residing in the rural hinterland, and the result is statistically significant. This underlines the importance of market demand behind Manjo involvement in woodfuel sale rather than Manjo predisposition towards this trade, as is popularly held in Kafa. In fact, Manjos who live far from major demand centres are full-fledged agriculturists (Appendix 11.4.1). Within this general context, however, some trained observers who lived and worked in Kafa maintain that in denuded areas of the sub-region Manjos complement their mixed farming operations through providing firewood to local farmers in exchange for food grains (Gezahegn Petros, personal communication).

From discussions with grass roots agricultural extension workers it was learnt that the number of Manjos in the woodfuel trade has been growing unabated. This is attributed to the loose institutional control over village forests and a continual influx of Manjos mainly because of the attractive share cropping offers they get from indigenous farmers (see Section 7.8.4) and kinship and marital relationships. With reference to the latter, the sheer number of Manjos in Sheeka

sub-*Kebele* and the disproportionately high concentration of non-indigenous ones (see Appendix 7.5) serves as a case in point. Here, despite the patrilocal nature of marriage, many Manjo husbands had moved to their parents in-law's domicile where, one suspects, the opportunities for regular income through sale of woodfuel were greater. As noted in Section 7.8.4, most newcomers do not have recognised forest access rights and their involvement in the wood trade has been made possible largely through tree theft. This situation has contributed to the consolidation of open access exploitation of common forest resources, thereby injecting a destabilising influence into the patterns of local forest tenure as they evolve over time.

In-depth interviews with Manjo households and discussions with Manjo men and women groups also throw some light on the workings of intra-household division of labour in relation to the woodfuel sector (Appendix 10.4). Unlike Kaffechos, where adult male members are responsible for woodfuel production and sale, in Manjo households every able-bodied member takes part actively in the entire process. However, as the household gets richer a clearer household division of labour emerges in male headed households whereby processing is undertaken jointly, but product marketing is left for women and children, the head acquiring the greater share of the sale proceeds (Appendix 11.4.1). Evidently, this reflects the desire of husbands for enhancing their respective social profile, rather than a denigration of the act of woodfuel sale as such.

## **9.4 Farming practices in and production-based access to marketable NWFPs**

### **9.4.1 Introduction**

This section discusses aspects of production organisation and the resulting use-based NWFP access arrangements. The remainder of the section is divided into eight parts. Part two provides an overview of the current importance of share cropping as a forest access mechanism. As will be shown below, each of the marketable NWFPs provides varying contexts of access and management experiences. In this regard, five sets of marketable NWFPs have been identified: honey, coffee, spices, condiments, and basketry products. Parts three to seven examine farming practices and production-based access experiences pertaining to each of the above products. Part eight provides a synthesis of local people's involvement in NWFP production and domestication. Part nine explores common characteristics of sharecroppers on the one hand and open access forest users on the other through examining the respective groups' agricultural resource endowments.



#### 9.4.2 Share cropping and access to NWFPs

Share cropping in NWFPs takes different forms depending on the type of forest product for which the agreement is concluded, the details of which are explained in the appropriate sections. In general, this is an access arrangement called for on account of technical reasons (namely, skill shortages) and socio-cultural factors specific to the forest-based gathering system in highland Kafa. Table 9.2 shows the number of households who rely on NWFP-based share cropping arrangements as a major means of forest access at the time of survey.

**Table 9.2**  
**Share cropping as a means of access to NWFPs**

Household establishment period	Households	Percent <sup>1</sup>
Pre-Derg	0	0
Derg I (1975-1979)	1	2.9
Derg II (1980-1990)	9	15.5
Post-Derg (1991-1997)	25	28.7
Total	35	14.4
X <sup>2</sup>	20.63, P < 0.001	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> as a proportion of the corresponding numbers of households with access to forest resources.

Overall, share cropping has played a minor role as a means of forest access. However, there are observable differences in its importance across households established in different periods. Whereas post-Derg households depend the most on share cropping as a principal means of forest access, it had virtually no importance to households established in the Imperial era as well as those in the first five years of the Derg period. These differences are also statistically significant. Such an inter-generational inequity in forest access is a consequence of PA forest allocation practices in the early years of the Derg as well as a reflection of the operation of the principle of 'prior occupancy' in customary tenure, both of which favoured older households.

Share cropping is a result of production-based agreements; hence, it is open both to those with no direct forest access as well as to tree right holders. Therefore, the significance of share cropping as a forest access mechanism is bound to be far greater than Table 9.2 portrays. The following product-specific discussions bear out this as do other access opportunities that arise as an integral part of forest-based agricultural practices in the case study areas.

### 9.4.3 Bee keeping practices and implications for forest access

#### 9.4.3.1 An overview of farmers involvement in bee keeping

The practice of bee keeping in Kafa entails hive preparation, mounting, management care, and harvesting, and most of these activities necessitate the involvement of more than one person (Appendix 11.2.3A). Customarily, bee keeping is an activity where only boys and adult men take part actively, a division of labour observed among Kafa's neighbouring ethnic groups as well (Stauder 1971: 23.). In the case study areas bee keeping is a widely practised activity. In the 1998/99 production season over two-thirds of households were involved in bee keeping (Table 9.3), and there were no statistically significant inter-locality differences in bee keeping involvement (Appendix 7.10).

**Table 9.3**  
**Participation in bee keeping in the case study areas by household category**

Household Category	Total		Mean number of hives	Coefficient of variation, CV (%)
	Households	Per cent <sup>1</sup>		
Manjos	25	86.2	30.0	125.6
Settlers	2	8.3	4.0	35.4
Kaffecho- male	179	78.4	11.1	84.0
Kaffecho-female	6	23.1	9.8	79.2
Total	212	68.2 <sup>(a)</sup>	13.2	125.3
Statistical test	X <sup>2</sup> = 11.34, P < 0.01		ANOVA: F = 11.261, P = 0.000	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> Category-specific proportion of households involved in bee keeping.

<sup>(a)</sup> As a proportion of sample households.

From Table 9.3 it is clear that a greater proportion of Manjos and male-headed Kaffecho households took part in bee keeping than the settlers groups and female-headed households, and the result is statistically significant. Judging from the mean number of hives per household, it is evident that Manjos in particular were involved more intensively in bee keeping than the rest, and the ANOVA result bears this out. Indeed, further data analysis using the "Multiple Comparison" procedure of ANOVA has shown a statistically significant mean difference in hive ownership between Manjos on the one hand and the two Kaffecho household categories on the other. This is by and large a reflection of the socially ascribed role Manjos have in forest-based production activities and their occupation of the forest domain. However, as the corresponding CV value indicates, the substantial participation of Manjos in bee keeping is marked by a high degree of inter-household differences in beehive ownership, thereby pointing to considerable intra-Manjo inequities in their involvement in bee keeping. This reinforces the point made in the previous chapters concerning the lack of institutionally recognised forest access of recent Manjo in-migrants (see, for instance, Section 7.8.4). It also mirrors a greater enthusiasm of some Manjo



members towards bee keeping than the majority of their kinsmen: the highest number of beehives claimed by a Manjo (180) is three times that claimed by the second highest.

The low level of participation of settlers and female-headed households is largely a consequence of their lack of direct forest access arising from the workings of the property rights system in place. To a degree this is also a result of the households' lack of knowledge about how to benefit from other production-based access arrangements (discussed below). The limited participation of female-headed households could as well be explained in terms of the dearth of labour characterising these households (see Section 6.2.4). As shown in Appendix 11.2.3A, bee keeping is a labour demanding activity that entails a pooling of intra-community skills and expertise, a difficult prerequisite for most female-headed households.

Honey is the major product of bee keeping in the case study areas, and that honey is produced primarily for the market. Only a small proportion of the harvest, which is often the lowest quality, is home consumed. Thus, as Table 9.3 shows, over two-thirds of households in the case study areas earn income through the sale of honey. As regards the gender-based household division of labour, honey marketing follows a similar pattern to the one ruling its production. In male-headed households, sale of honey was found to have been the prerogative of the household head, while in female-headed households male members were entrusted with the task, with no or little involvement of women (Appendix 7.11).

#### **9.4.3.2 Share cropping as mechanism of access to bee keeping benefits**

Bee keeping demands that households command not only direct access to tree resources but also the necessary physical strength and specific skills of the trade, attributes that are not necessarily ubiquitous. Consequently this activity entails considerable labour exchange among households in the rural communities. One such mechanism is the organisation of traditional work parties particularly for the preparation of beehives (Appendix 11.2.3A). However, given the regular follow up that honey production entails, these one-off labour exchange mechanisms were only complementary to the more enduring forms of production organisation as typified in share cropping. In general, tree right holders who, for one reason or another, were unable to effect bee keeping on their own often resort to a share cropping arrangement, which in this context exhibits a variety of labour use, input and output share arrangements. In general, the responsibilities of right holders (i.e., share renters) centre on their ability to provide suitable trees for bee keeping practices, while share tenants are expected to prepare hives and mount them. Harvesting is often a joint undertaking. In some share cropping agreements the division of responsibilities appears to weigh more on share tenants than on right holders and in some others the reverse

seems to be the case (see Appendix 11.2.4 for details). Nevertheless, all arrangements subscribe to the age-old practice of dividing the output equally amongst the two parties, hence farmers' use of the term *Gogoo* in characterising such an arrangement.

Table 9.4 provides information regarding the extent of prevalence of share cropping in bee keeping in the case study sub-*Kebeles*.

**Table 9.4**  
**Organisational forms of honey production by sample category, 1998/99**

Forms of production	Manjos	Non-Manjo households			Grand total	
		Male	Female	Total	HHS	Per cent
Own production only	8	48	4	52	60	28.3
Share cropping only	6	82	1	83	89	42.0
Own means and share cropping	11	51	1	52	63	29.7
Total	25	181	6	187	212	100
X <sup>2</sup>	5.74, P > 0.05					

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

From Table 9.4 it is clear that bee keeping in the case study areas is effected in three ways: through organising one's own labour, through the use of share cropping mechanisms, and through employing a combination of the two. Of these, the latter two mechanisms were the most dominant ones. A chi square analysis resulted in no statistical significance among the different household groups regarding the relative importance of the different forms of honey production.

All qualitative sources of information point to the fact that share tenants have affinal or marriage relationships with the respective tree right holders (Appendix 11.2.4). According to elderly informants from Bitagenet and Wushwush sub-*Kebeles* - localities bordering a neighbouring *Woreda* - the desire for concluding share cropping with one's own relative is so overwhelming that farmers transcend *Kebele/Woreda* boundaries to recruit share partners. In general, share tenant households represent the younger generation: the mean age of share tenant household heads was 33.1 years old (s.d. 8.9) as against 45.5 years (s.d. 15.8) for share renters, and these results were statistically significant ( $F = 18.404$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). In this connection, there is a general (cultural) expectation that younger community members assist their needy natal families and in-laws to have access to honey at least through concluding share cropping arrangements with the same (Appendix 11.2.4).

Given the involvement of at least two parties in share cropping arrangements it is essential that the relative significance of share cropping among the participating households be assessed. This is done through comparing the extent of prevalence of share cropped hives - critical elements of the scheme (Table 9.5).



**Table 9.5****Extent of prevalence of share cropped beehives among honey producers**

Description	All hives in Gogoo		Mixed ownership		Total	
	HHs	Per cent	HHs	Per cent	HHs	Per cent
Right holders	60	61.9	37	38.1	97	100
Share tenants	29	52.7	26	47.3	55	100
Total	89	58.6	63	41.4	152	100
X <sup>2</sup>	1.06, P > 0.05					

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

It is clear from Table 9.5 that neither right holders nor share tenants are dependent exclusively on share cropping. Although a greater proportion of forest right holders appear to be dependent entirely on share cropping, the result was not statistically significant, hence the finding was inconclusive at best. Indeed, the possession of own hives by 38.1 per cent of tree right holders involved in share cropping suggests that a 'dearth of bee keeping expertise' cannot be the sole reason for the participation of right holders in share cropping. In fact, from discussions with the youth group it was realised that some right holders tend to mount their own bee hives on trees near to their residential area and rent out trees in village forests to individuals (e.g. Manjos) living close to these areas (Appendix 11.2.4). The opportunities that this arrangement provides for regular management care and protection was said to be an important consideration that right holders take into account.

On the other hand, ownership of own bee hives by 47.3 per cent of share tenants points to the fact that 'lack of forest access' was not always a reason for taking up share cropping in honey production. Indeed, the desire to maximise honey production prompts some right holders who have the skills to manage their own honey production to also avail their expertise on share cropping basis to those who lack this. Furthermore, as noted earlier in this section, younger households not only carry out their own honey production but also assist their families and/or relations in acquiring honey through share cropping.

Finally, in light of the discussion in Section 9.4.2 that established 'share cropping' as a form of forest access, it is necessary to examine the extent to which this has been realised through bee keeping.

Table 9.6 sets out the forest access status of households involved as share tenants in bee keeping.

**Table 9.6**  
**Forest access status of share tenants in bee keeping**

Forest access mechanisms	HHs	Per cent
Tree right holders	25	45.5
PA provision/"lease"	7	12.7
Inheritance	4	7.3
Customary access	14	25.5
Share cropping	30	54.5
Honey only	20	36.4
Honey and other forest items	10	19.1
Total	55	100

Source: Appendix 7.12.

It is evident from Table 9.6 that 45.5 per cent of honey share tenants had direct official and/or customary access to forests. This corroborates the point made earlier regarding the openness of the sharecropping scheme to any one equipped with the tool of the trade. Conversely, share tenancy in bee keeping had enabled 54.5 per cent of interested 'treeless' households to take part in the creation of the local forest economy. The bulk of these households were established in the 1980s and in the 1990s (Appendix 7.12), when, as noted in the preceding two chapters, the opportunities for direct access to tree resources were rather limited. The agricultural resource endowments of all share tenant households will be examined later in the chapter (Section 9.4.9.2).

#### 9.4.3.3 The spatial dimensions of honey production

Local people in the study areas undertake bee keeping either through mounting hives inside village forests, or on trees scattered around farming fields or in both places (designated as 'mixed' in Table 9.7 below).

**Table 9.7**  
**Bee keeping by location of activity in the case study areas**

Forest access mechanisms	Location of activity			Total
	Forest	Fields	Mixed	
PA allocated village forest	27	8	2	37
Customary access	37	5	22	64
Share cropping	24	0	6	30
PA allocated farmland	1	20	2	23
Inheritance	10	23	5	38
Wejoo	2	12	1	15
Lease	0	4	1	5
Total	101	72	39	212
Per cent	47.6	34.0	18.4	100

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.



In general, an assessment of the microenvironment within which forest production activities are pursued is essential for weighing forest management options. Table 9.7 indicates the importance of the forest domain in bee keeping activities. Indeed, local people consider village forest areas as ideal bee keeping locations owing to the prevalence of diverse plant species and the tranquillity they provide to the bee colony. A significant minority of beekeepers also reported having to rely on bushes around farming fields for mounting beehives. This is in large measure a result of the lack of direct access to village forests.

A sizeable number of households who mounted beehives in and around farm fields are those who accessed tree resources through inheritance, PA allocated farmland, *Wejoo*, and 'lease'. By their very nature, most of these mechanisms entitle beneficiaries with limited tree resources. Qualitative sources of information also point to the fact that, because of a range of management considerations, households who have access to village forests prefer mounting beehives in and around their homesteads (Appendix 11.2.4). These factors include absence of suitable trees for mounting hives in one's forest holdings, necessity of protecting hives from theft, and the desire to effect periodic management care to the same. In all cases, however, people use trees from the village forests to prepare the traditional bee hives.

Given that forest trees used for bee hive construction are valued for their other uses as well, farmers claim that they increasingly find it difficult to meet their bee hive needs from trees in forest areas (Appendices 10.1 and 10.2). In part to get around this problem there are some isolated moves on the part of farmers to cultivate the needed forest trees and/or their close substitutes in areas over which they have the greatest control. According to the survey questionnaire, about five per cent of the bee keeping households reported having planted seedlings/cuttings of forest trees that they obtained from the natural forest with the view to meeting their bee hive needs (Appendix 7.13.1). The most popular domesticated trees in this respect are *Cordia africana* and cuttings of *Euphorbia* spp.

#### **9.4.4 Coffee production practices and access mechanisms**

##### **9.4.4.1 An overview of the coffee production scene**

In the study areas, coffee cultivation is one of the most important agro-forestry activities. In 1998/99 two-thirds of households covered in the sample survey were engaged in coffee production activities (Table 9.8).

**Table 9.8**  
**Farmers participation in coffee production and marketing**

Household Category	Production		Sale	
	Households (1)	Per cent <sup>1</sup>	Households (2)	(2) as per cent of (1)
Manjos	15	51.7	12	80.0
Settlers	16	66.7	3	18.8
Kaffeche-Male	163	70.3	120	73.6
Kaffeche-FHH	12	42.9	9	75.0
Total	206	100	144	69.9
X <sup>2</sup>	2.96, P > 0.05		8.22, P < 0.05	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> Category-specific proportion of households involved in coffee production.

It is readily observable from Table 9.8 that there are no substantial differences in inter-household participation in own coffee production across the different sample categories. Unlike honey, where production is spurred by sale, coffee production is pursued either for home use or for home use *and* sale. Thus, the desire for household self-sufficiency must be behind the statistically negligible difference in coffee production across the different household categories. While, on the other hand, the practice of marketing coffee showed marked inter-household difference, and this is largely because of the disproportionately low involvement of the settlers group. This being so, the number of households producing coffee has shown statistically significant inter-PA difference, with the coffee rich localities of Arabakasha and Woka comprising a much greater number of coffee producers than their share of households would indicate (Appendix 7.10).

The following sub-sections explore coffee production practices giving particular emphasis to sharecropping features, intra-household access dimensions and coffee domestication efforts.

#### 9.4.4.2 Ownership profile and the role of share cropping in coffee resources

Table 9.9 shows ownership profile of coffee resources and the importance of share cropping as a form of forest product access.

**Table 9.9**  
**Organisational forms of coffee production by sample category, 1998/99**

Forms of production	Manjos	Settlers	Kaffeche households			Grand total	
			Male	Female	Total	HHs	Per cent
Own production only	14	16	135	8	143	173	84.0
Share renters	0	0	11	0	11	11	5.3
Share tenants	1	0	17	4	21	22	10.7
Total	15	16	163	12	175	206	100
X <sup>2</sup>	2.91, P > 0.05						

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.



The majority of households manage their own coffee resources, while share cropping caters for the needs only of 16 per cent of coffee producers, all of whom were members of the indigenous community (Table 9.9). The data show no statistically significant differences pertaining to the organisation of coffee production across the three indigenous household categories.

The main factor that necessitates share cropping in coffee production is the scale of operation, that is the prevalence of coffee holdings that are too large for individual household management (Appendix 10.1). The modest showing of coffee share cropping points to the progressive levelling of coffee holdings in the course of households' demographic cycles. As far as the mechanics of share cropping goes, share tenants are expected to assist respective share renters in weeding work before embarking on coffee collection during the peak season. From in-depth interviews it was gathered that coffee collection during the main harvest period entitles share tenants to receive a third of the total quantity they pick. On the other hand, a second round coffee harvest, which mainly involves the collection of fallen coffee beans, would qualify share tenants to receive half the amount they collected. This is a time-consuming activity and one which is looked down upon, and this perhaps is why the amount accruing to the share tenant is set higher. Similar to bee keeping, share tenants in coffee production have marriage or other social ties (e.g. subjects of *Alamos*, dependent *Manjos*) with share renters. In coffee scarce areas such as Sheeka sub-*Kebele* some individuals were reported to collect coffee on a share cropping bases with relatives resident in neighbouring localities (Appendix 11.2.4).

In order to evaluate the role of coffee share cropping as an exclusive forest access mechanism, it is essential that the current forest access status of coffee share tenants be examined. This is presented in Table 9.10.

**Table 9.10**  
**Forest access status of coffee share tenants in the case study areas**

Forest access mechanisms	Forms of production		Total	
	Share only	Own and share	Total	Per cent
Tree right holding households	4	6	10	45.4
PA provision	0	1	1	4.5
<i>Wejoo</i> /Inheritance	0	3	3	13.6
Customary access	4	2	6	27.3
Share cropping households	12	NA <sup>1</sup>	12	54.6
Coffee only	4	NA	4	18.2
Coffee & other forest items	8	NA	8	36.4
Total	16	6	22	100

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> = Not applicable.

Share tenants in the coffee sector had either customary access to forests or had secured access to tree resources from the family network (Table 9.10). This is not unexpected, because, as

noted in Chapters Seven and Eight, village forests to which households have customary access are by and large devoid of coffee resources, while *Wejoo* provision in forest resources rarely extends beyond selected trees for bee keeping purposes. The other half of the coffee share tenants (54.6 per cent) relied exclusively on the institution of share cropping as their product access mechanism. Evidently, for some 18.2 per cent of these households, coffee production activities provided the only opportunities for realising forest benefits.

Given the despised nature of taking up coffee share tenancy, it is highly conceivable that participation of the 22 households (i.e. about 11 per cent of coffee producers) as share tenants was more of a coping mechanism prompted by the need to make ends meet, rather than a reflection of an enterprising attitude on the part of the participating households. This point is further explored as part of a wider discussion on the relationships between household resource endowments and share cropping involvement in NWFPs at large (see Section 9.4.9.2).

#### **9.4.4.3 The intra-household dimension to coffee access**

Access to coffee also has an important intra-household dimension. From group discussions and in-depth interviews it was learnt that, in male-headed, coffee-endowed households, the head closely supervises the coffee production process (see Appendix 11.3.2.). He takes an active part in tending the coffee plant as well as in the main harvest, while letting other household members forage for fallen beans during the second round of coffee collection. Also, husbands are responsible for marketing the major coffee harvest (Appendix 7.11). The involvement of women/wives and children in coffee marketing is customarily confined to the minor harvest, which is of much lower quantity and inferior quality.

Informants noted that many households attach considerable importance to coffee as a cash crop; hence, husbands make sure that no unripe coffee is harvested at least for home use. This often creates tension in the household as wives tend to be tempted to use green coffee beans for home consumption purposes as often as possible (Appendix 10). Such intra-household differences in production objectives have also been observed in other agricultural production systems of the country. For instance, among pastoralist households, husbands' interest for minimum milking on grounds of leaving enough feed for calves had to be balanced with the interest of the wives for optimum milking so as to ensure adequate household milk supply (Helland 1994: 188). Likewise, in wood-scarce parts of northcentral Ethiopia where grain production dominates, Teferi (1994) reported that the preference of husbands to use animal dung for fertilising their farms is countered by their wives' desire to use the same as domestic fuel (28).



In the context of the case study areas, households who are faced with bridging the coffee consumption gap during the pre-harvest season often resort to using coffee leaves and/or fenugreek, barley and millet in place of or in combination with coffee beans to produce a substitute beverage called *Chemo* (Appendices 10.2 – 10.4). In this way, not only intra-household conflicts are soothed but also the opportunities for cash income are widened.

#### 9.4.4.4 A look at the location of coffee production

Garden coffee is the most important source of coffee bean production (Table 9.11). However, natural coffee occurring in village forests (i.e. forest coffee) was the major source of production for around 30 per cent of the households in the case study areas, two-thirds of whom were living in the two coffee rich localities of Arabakasha and Woka. The 'mixed' category (Table 9.11) refers to households who accessed coffee both from their backyards as well as from forest areas.

**Table 9.11**  
**Collection and domestication of coffee by location of activity**

Location	Supply source		Domestication site	
	HHs	Per cent	HHs	Per cent
Field/garden	133	64.6	101	97.1
Forest	63 (42) <sup>1</sup>	30.6	3	2.9
Mixed	10	4.9	0	0
Total	206	100	104	100
X <sup>2</sup>	38.1, P < 0.001			

Source: Questionnaire survey 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> Number of households in two 'coffee rich' localities who harvested forest coffee.

On the other hand, farmers strive to ensure the continued presence of coffee in the agro-ecosystem via domestication. In fact, about half of coffee producing households reported to have had some experience in planting coffee in their respective farm holdings. A sizeable proportion of coffee planters obtained seedlings directly from the naturally grown stock in village forests (Appendix 7.13.2). Coffee cultivators provided a range of reasons for their involvement in domestication. These included production (e.g. low yield per unit of forest coffee), marketing (e.g. perception of high product demand) and consumption (e.g. desire for household self-sufficiency) motives (Appendix 7.13.1).

As Table 9.11 shows the most preferred places for coffee domestication were the garden around the homestead and nearby farming fields, where, one can surmise, the perceived security of tenure is the greatest. Also, these areas are the closest spatial domains for effecting day to day care and protection from theft and vermin attack. Such farming practices must have been responsible for the dominance of garden coffee as a supply source. Indeed, a chi square analysis pointed to a significant difference in the importance of the different spatial units used for

the twin activities of collection and domestication. This confirms the importance of forests and fields as coffee collection sites and fields/gardens as the preferred domestication domain.

The garden/forest coffee dichotomy as sources of product supply/domestication sites as well as the vitality of village forest areas as a local coffee gene pool has important resource management implications that will be discussed later in the chapter.

#### 9.4.5 Production of spices

The discussions in this section focus on the two most abundant spices in the case study areas, namely Ethiopian cardamom and long pepper.

##### 9.4.5.1 Farmers' involvement in spice production

Collection and marketing of Ethiopian cardamom has a long history in the case study areas (Appendix 4). In contrast, elderly informants and NTFP traders reckoned the early 1980s as the beginnings of commercialisation of long pepper in the case study areas. From the different categories of informants it was learnt that both Ethiopian cardamom and long pepper do not feature high in the diets of the local populace, and that the overriding objective of gathering spices is sale (Appendix 9.9).

According to survey findings almost all households involved in sale of Ethiopian cardamom also sell long pepper. Hence, the following discussion looks at spices just as one forest benefit category.

Referring to Table 9.12, first, none of the settler households had been involved in collection of spices. This is not unexpected, given the restricted access rights of this group of households. Secondly, Manjos were more involved in spice collection than the Kaffecho ( $X^2 = 26.73$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). The forest domicile of the Manjos must have created the necessary conditions for their greater degree of involvement in spice production.

**Table 9.12**  
**Organisational forms of spice production in the case study areas, 1998/99**

Forms of production	Manjos	Kaffecho households			Grand total	
		Male	Female	Total	HHs	Per cent
Own production only	13	33	2	35	48	82.8
Share renters	0	4	0	4	4	6.9
Share tenants	4	0	2	2	6	10.3
Total	17	37	4	41	58	100
Per cent	58.6	15.9	15.4	15.9	18.6	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.



As Table 9.12 shows only 17.2 per cent of spice producers relied on the institution of share cropping. Here, share renting is a reflection of a desire to dissociate oneself from sale of spices, a low status activity (Appendix 10.1). Consequently, the share tenant is responsible both for the collection and the marketing of the items under consideration. However, the preliminary processing activities that often precede marketing (see Appendix 11.2.3C for specifics) are undertaken within the right holder's household. As in bee keeping, the share tenant retains half of the sales proceeds and gives away the other half to the right holder. A discussion on the asset endowments and overall economic status of these share tenants is deferred to later in the chapter.

#### **9.4.5.2 Household division of labour in spice production**

At the household level, too, there are some important differences between Manjo and non-Manjo households concerning the way in which labour is organised in the production and marketing of spices. From in-depth interviews it was understood that in most Kaffecho households' children and women are the major spice producers (Appendix 10.1), while among the Manjos, there is a substantial degree of adult male labour involvement especially in Ethiopian cardamom production. Specifically, Manjo informants at Sheeka and Wushwush sub-*Kebeles* underlined that during the major harvest (May – June) period Manjo men (husbands) are the ones who collect Ethiopian cardamom occurring in and around the household domain, while collection during the minor harvest season (November – January) is left for women and children (see, for example, Appendix 11.4.1).

In spite of differences in the extent of direct involvement of Kaffecho and Manjo household heads in Ethiopian cardamom collection, in both cases these members are responsible for the marketing of the items. In contrast, long pepper collectors, who mostly are women and children, are also responsible for product marketing (Appendix 7.11). Among the Manjos in particular, this is largely a result of intra-household share cropping arrangements whereby women and children collect, dry and sell long pepper on an equal share agreement with the household head (Appendix 10.4). Therefore, in male-headed households the production of spices in general, and that of long pepper in particular, is a forest benefit made more accessible to children and women who otherwise appear to have limited control over major NWFPs such as honey and coffee.

### 9.4.5.3 Micro environments in the production of spices

Table 9.13 presents information concerning the spatial units used for the collection and domestication of Ethiopian cardamom and long pepper.

**Table 9.13**  
**Collection and domestication of spices by location of activity**

Spices	Source of supply				Domestication place			
	Farm bushes	Forest/ Open access	Total	$\chi^2$	Garden	Farm bushes	Forest	Total
Ethiopian. Cardamom	31 (58.5%)	22 (41.5%)	53 (100%)	1.74, P > 0.05	2	11	3	16
Long pepper	15 (44.1%)	19 (55.9%)	34 (100%)		1	1	0	2
Total	46	41	87		3	12	3	18
Per cent	52.9	47.1	100		16.7	66.6	16.7	100

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

The source of product supply for the two types of spices is evenly split between bushes around farmlands and village forests accessed with no restriction. The importance of the farm field domain as a source of spice collection is primarily a result of the management care farmers accord to the pertinent plants found in a wild state (Appendix 11.2.3C). Also, as Table 9.13 shows, the practice of plant domestication around farm bushes must have contributed to the acquisition particularly of Ethiopian cardamom from more secured locations. In fact, the lack of direct access to E. cardamom and the unsustainability of its exploitation as an open access harvest were the factors that prompted most of the farmers to domesticate it (Appendix 7.13.1). In the opinion of informants the vegetative nature of Ethiopian cardamom bodes ill for its cultivation in the backyard as it competes with the more valuable crops including *enset* and vegetables for space and/or soil nutrients (Appendix 11.2.3C). Incidentally, these preferred sites by farmers also meet the shade requirements of the plants themselves (see Section 4.3.2). Spice domesticators obtain the required saplings from the natural forest (Appendix 7.13.2).

It should be appreciated that the open access nature of spice collection was in part a consequence of the lack of official recognition of individual right holding of the under storey in some of the PA forests (see Section 7.3.4) as well as the difficulty of establishing and/or enforcing customary access through labour investment in spice production. The low status nature of long pepper collection coupled with the recent history of its commercialisation must have contributed to the product's exploitation as an open access resource. Besides, it is highly conceivable that the comparatively 'free-for-all' nature of spice collection could be an important reason for the low incidence of share cropping in the items and the limited effort put into their domestication.



Finally, almost all households who harvested spices as open access benefits had some form of direct forest access as well (Appendix 7.14). While this is not necessarily an inconsistent observation it is of interest to examine the specific circumstances of households who capitalised on the opportunities created by open access use of spices. This will be addressed in conjunction with the discussion on the agricultural resource endowment of households who benefited from involvement in open access exploitation of other commercialised NWFPs (Section 9.4.9.3).

#### 9.4.6 Access issues in the production of condiments

##### 9.4.6.1 Farmers' participation in Buckthorn production

The discussion here focuses on buckthorn, which has wide commercial significance. Similar to spices, the use of buckthorn for home consumption purposes, namely as a condiment in the preparation of alcoholic drinks such as *Tej* (honey wine), among rural households is rather infrequent and farmers who did not have direct access to the plant often meet their requirements through their local social networks (Appendix 11.3.2). Commercial buckthorn production is a response to the regular demand the item commands primarily among the myriad of liquor shops that dot market towns and urban centres in highland Kafa, as indeed urban Ethiopia as a whole. In other words, the significance of access issues in buckthorn production derives mainly from its commercialisation.

Table 9.14 shows the organisational forms of commercial buckthorn production among the different sample categories.

Settlers were not involved in commercial buckthorn production (Table 9.14). Also, there was no statistically significant difference between Manjos and non-Manjos with respect to their involvement in buckthorn production.

**Table 9.14**  
**Organisational forms of buckthorn production by sample category, 1998/99**

Forms of production	Manjos	Kaffecho households			Grand total	
		Male	Female	Total	HHs	Per cent
Own production only	6	16	3	19	25	71.4
Share renters	0	6	0	6	6	17.1
Share tenants	0	3	1	4	4	11.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Per cent<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>11.3</b>	
<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>1.1.3, P &gt; 0.05</b>					

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> Category-specific proportion of households involved in commercial buckthorn production.

Evidently, over a quarter of buckthorn producing households used sharecropping arrangements – as share renters and share tenants. Sharecropping as a mechanism of access to buckthorn is realised exclusively through product marketing. From youth group discussions it was learnt that, although the Kaffecho consider the sale of buckthorn a low status activity, they do not under-value its income significance. Consequently, some households find a middle ground through concluding a share cropping arrangement in the marketing sphere (Appendix 11.2.4). Thus, share tenants are made responsible for selling buckthorn that the tree right holder gathered, and the sale proceeds are divided equally among the parties. Often, share tenants are children from within the residence village of share renters and with whose parents the latter had close interactions (Appendix 10.1). Again, in the interest of analytical rigour, the economic status of share tenant households is examined together with other households of similar experiences (see Section 9.4.9.2).

Consistent with the low social esteem attached to buckthorn marketing, households who opt to engage directly in the sale of buckthorn tend to entrust the responsibility of product marketing to their offspring or wives (Appendix 7.11).

#### 9.4.6.2 The spatial dimensions of buckthorn production

Table 9.15 gives an idea of the spatial dimensions of buckthorn collection and cultivation. Bushes around farming fields and the homestead domain are the single most important sources of buckthorn and, unlike spice collection, no households rely on open access exploitation of the item for commercial purposes (Table 9.15). In contrast to honey and spices the forest domain appears to be of limited significance as a source of product supply. The expected values for collection and domestication sites also bear this out (Table 9.15 in Appendix 12.1); however, the need to adhere to restrictions of chi square analysis rules out an assessment of the statistical validity of the above observation.

**Table 9.15**  
**Collection and domestication of buckthorn in the case study areas.**

Location	Collection source		Domestication place
	HHs	Total	
Field	27	77.1	33
Forest	8	22.9	0
Total	35	100.0	33

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

Domestication of buckthorn, spurred mainly by a perceived rise in product demand and desire for household self-sufficiency (Appendix 7.13.1), has been an important supplement to the utilisation of wild buckthorn. As with other wild plants, the naturally grown stock was the major source of



the domesticated seedlings (Appendix 7.13.2). As Table 9.15 shows buckthorn seedlings were planted around homesteads and/or in cultivated fields, sites professionals consider ideal for the task. Botanical research has shown that buckthorn is "... rather light tolerant, it thrives in open fields and, consequently, does not require shade as a prerequisite of its growth and development" (Legesse 1995: 255).

#### 9.4.7 Forest product-based micro enterprises

In the case study areas non-wood handicraft activities are few and far between. The dominant activities in this regard are the preparation of sleeping mats and carrier bags, both of which use hardened/dried palm leaves. These activities pale into insignificance when compared to the diverse range of local NWFP processing that forests in other parts of Africa and Asia are known to support (see Townson 1995; PRAVA 1997). From women group discussions it was clear that most farmers are self-sufficient in the above items, as they possess the necessary skills to produce them at home. Also, the above products are of some domestic importance in urban areas, prompting some rural dwellers to produce them for the market (Appendices 11.2.4 and 11.3.2).

Information on the extent of local peoples' involvement in the production/marketing of the above goods and the state of access to the source of the raw material is provided below.

**Table 9.16**  
**Market participation in palm leaf processing and access to palm trees**

Participant households	Access to/source of raw material			
	Own field	Open access	Total	Per cent <sup>1</sup>
Female	2	5	7	25
Male (Kaffecho)	5	13	18	6.4
Total	7 (28.0%)	18 (72%)	25 (100%)	8.0

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> As a proportion of the corresponding sample households.

In sharp contrast to their significant involvement in the marketing of wood and a range of non-wood products, the Manjos are conspicuous by their absence in commercial palm leaf processing (Table 9.16). This is mainly attributed to cultural constraints that affect product marketing. In particular, the dominant community groups disdain the purchase of final products such as mats and bags from Manjos, for this is believed to compromise their "cleanliness" for food processing activities, which the items will also be used (Appendix 9.2.1C).

Evidently, a quarter of the female-headed households take part in palm leaf processing, and this activity represents the second highest involvement (after coffee) by this community group in the commercial NWFP sector. The livelihood implications of such market participation will be

explored in Chapter Ten (see Section 10.3.3). For now, it is worth noting that, the disproportionately high involvement of women-managed households in palm leaf processing is supported by gender stereotypes in the social division of agricultural labour. In particular, appropriation of palm leaves is often the responsibility of male household members, while women undertake the handicraft work with occasional assistance from other household members (Appendix 11.3.2). As regards product marketing the survey result shows that this was primarily the responsibility of women and children (Appendix 7.11).

The other issue of importance worth noting is the resource access dimension of the above activities. As could be evidenced from Table 9.16, by and large, the lopping of palm leaves for mat and bag making is not subjected to strict access regulations. This is in fact one of the manifestations of customary tenure principles at work. According to informants, such an access mechanism is also informed by a local recognition of the beneficial impact that periodic pollarding would bring to the growth of the plant itself (Appendix 11.3.2), a practice common among forest villagers in sub-Saharan Africa (FAO 1993a: 111).

Finally, it should be noted that, over 70 per cent of households benefiting from open access use of palm leaves had either officially or customarily sanctioned forest use rights (Appendix 7.14). The wider agricultural resource endowments of households who seized the opportunity of the open access nature of palm leaves extraction is discussed later in the chapter.

#### **9.4.8 A comparative overview of NWFP production and domestication**

##### **9.4.8.1 A summary of farmers' involvement in NWFP production and domestication**

The purpose of this discussion is to compare and contrast the extent of involvement of local people in the collection of the different marketable NWFPs and to provide an overall picture of the role NWFPs play in local livelihood diversification. Table 9.17 summarises the number of households involved in the production and domestication of the five sets of marketable NWFPs.



**Table 9.17****A summary of NWFP production and domestication**

Activity	Household category				Total		Domestication	
	Manjo	Settler	Kaff.male	FHH	HHs	% <sup>(a)</sup>	HHs	% <sup>(b)</sup>
Bee keeping	25	2	179	6	212	68.2	11	8.8
Coffee production	15	16	163	12	206	66.2	104	83.2
X <sup>2</sup>	16.71, P < 0.001							
Spice collection	17	0	37	4	58	18.6	16	12.8
Buckthorn production	6	0	25	4	35	11.3	33	26.4
X <sup>2</sup>	2.44, P > 0.05							
Palm leaves processing	0	0	18	7	25	8.0	0	0
X <sup>2</sup> (plant-based NWFPs)	11.52, P < 0.005							
Total							125	40.2 <sup>(*)</sup>

Source: Various tables in Sections 9.4.3 – 9.4.7.

<sup>(a)</sup> As a proportion of total sample households.<sup>(b)</sup> As a proportion of total number of households domesticating forest plants.

Bee keeping and coffee production are the most commonly practised forest-based activities in the case study localities (Table 9.17). Indeed, honey and coffee were the only marketable items in which all the four household categories participate. However, a chi square analysis has shown statistically significant differences in the involvement of the different household groups in producing these two forest goods. The factors behind this are examined below.

To start with, the proportion of Manjo households involved in coffee production was much lower than the case in bee keeping. Given their forest domicile one would have expected a greater visibility of Manjos in the coffee sector as well, and this situation appears to reflect either the limited interest they had in coffee cultivation or the poor floristic composition of their forest areas. Secondly, despite the expropriation of their forest domains during the post-*Derg* transition, settlers were substantially involved in coffee production. This was largely a result of their attempts at coffee domestication, a process reinforced by the importance of the coffee beverage at household level. Finally, in spite of the unfavourable forest tenurial backdrop behind the establishment of female household heads, they fared better in coffee production activities than in bee keeping. In part this is because of the closeness of the coffee production space to the household domain where women undertake most of their work and partly because of the amenability of establishing access to coffee through share cropping compared to involvement in bee keeping. Moreover, the shortage of adult male labour circumscribes female-headed households from partaking in bee keeping operations.

In contrast to coffee and honey, spices and buckthorn production not only attracted far fewer households, but also showed no statistically significant differences in the involvement of Manjos, Kaffeos and female-headed households. One explanation for this could be the low social

esteem associated with the marketing of these items. At any rate, this is indicative of the existence of a hierarchy of NTFP dependency in the local forest livelihood system.

As Table 9.17 indicates, in the case study areas some 40 per cent of households undertake plant domestication; however, this was a mono-culture practice where coffee dominates. A chi square analysis confirms the relative popularity of coffee domestication vis-à-vis that of spices and condiments. On the other hand, only a few households were engaged in the domestication of forest trees, which is not unexpected. The writer's field experience in forest conservation activities in other parts of Ethiopia points to the fact that the long gestation period of indigenous trees is the principal reason for farmers reluctance to cultivate forest trees. This being so, it is to be recalled that, in almost all cases the backyard or the farming field is the preferred domestication place, the only exception being Ethiopian cardamom which is cultivated in nearby fields and inside their forest patches. Yet, the natural forest was the single most important domain where farmers acquired the necessary seedlings/cuttings for their domestication efforts.

As noted in the earlier sub-sections, NWFP production/collection was made possible through own production and/or via involving others in a share cropping arrangement, which is why the latter was regarded as a forest access mechanism. The following section summarises product-specific experiences in share cropping.

#### **9.4.8.2 A synthesis of the product basis of share tenancy**

The foregoing discussions have established share cropping as a fairly widespread means that farmers employ to gain access to a multitude of forest products. The discussions have also pointed out that some households are involved in the share cropping of more than one forest product. However, the preference for understanding the nuances of product-specific sharecropping issues and the respective forest access status of participating households precluded a discussion on the overall role of share cropping in the local forest farming system. The research recognises the importance of this issue for any informed discussion on forest livelihoods and this is addressed in the present section.

It will be recalled that the basis for the conclusion of share cropping agreements varies between forest products. With reference to honey, this was principally a result of lack of the requisite skill on the part of share providers, while 'scale of operation' arising from extensiveness of holdings was identified as the main factor behind coffee share cropping. The case for share cropping in spices and buckthorn is related to the stigma some households attach to their direct involvement



in the marketing of the same. These factors have their own differential impact on the extent to which product-specific share tenancy arrangements in the case study areas are concluded.

Table 9.18 provides a breakdown of forest products in which the indigenous population takes part either as share renters or as share tenants. The analysis excludes settler groups because they have practically no involvement in the scheme.

**Table 9.18**  
**Share cropping households by type of forest product**

Product	Share renters		Share tenants		Total share croppers <sup>1</sup>		Share tenants (No forest access)	
	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	Per cent
<b>Single product</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>85.4</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>72.7</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>80.5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>71.4</b>
Honey	82		38		120		20	
Coffee	0		6		6		4	
Spices/buckthorn	6		4		10		1	
<b>Multiple product</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>28.6</b>
Honey and coffee	11		12		23		6	
Honey and plant NWFPs	4		4		8		4	
Coffee and spices	0		2		2		0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>% (indigenous households)</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>NA</b>

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> This excludes the double counting that would have resulted because five households had a share renter status in some products but were share tenants in others.

Well over half of the indigenous households benefit from the institution of share cropping either as share renters (i.e., share crop providers) or as share tenants (Table 9.18). This is far greater than the percentage of Kaffecho households whose main form of forest access was reported to have been share cropping (14.4 per cent - see Section 9.4.2), and is suggestive of the complementary role that share forest farming plays as a means of forest product access.

In general, 'single-product' share cropping dominates the scene. In this connection, honey production is where most sharecropping activities prevailed. This, coupled with the equal harvest share that characterises share bee keeping, leads one to conclude that share cropping in honey production has the greatest resource distribution effect of all marketable NWFPs in the case study areas. Furthermore, given that share cropping arrangements are concluded out of the express need of right holders to maximise output from their tree resources, the high degree of prevalence of share cropping in honey production staves off idle capacity in the system. This is bound to contribute to a more efficient use of tree resources in the local forest economy.

It is also clear from Table 9.18 that some sharecropping partners have equally benefited from the scheme through involving themselves in more than one forest product. It appears that the involvement of share tenants in multiple product share harvesting was more pronounced than that of share renters; however, because of the double counting involved a chi square analysis could not be made to ascertain the observation. In any case, it is highly conceivable that the relative ease of entry into forest product share cropping, the wider spacing in harvest periods of the different forest benefits, and the flexibility of the institution of NTFP share cropping to engage a diversified range of household labour must have facilitated the incidence of share tenancy in multiple forest products.

Finally, it is necessary to examine why plant-based NWFPs in either of the product categories grouped in Table 9.18 generated fewer opportunities for share cropping than bee keeping afforded. With reference to coffee, this is essentially a reflection of the sufficiency and dexterity of individual household labour for its collection. It can also be surmised that large coffee holdings are in short supply in the case study areas because of the continual redistribution of land resources by the PA system (see Section 7.3.4) and the diminution of per capita holdings arising from the workings of family-centred access mechanisms such as *Wejoo*, as intimated by elderly informants (Appendix 10.1).

On the other hand, in view of the general climate of denigration surrounding the collection of spices and buckthorn, one would have expected a greater amount of sharecropping involvement than has been reported in Table 9.18. The explanation for this apparent anomaly rests with the organisation of intra-household division of labour in these lowly valued NWFPs. In particular, the desire for earning additional income from the sale of gathered items is such an important consideration that most households would rather assign women and children to the task than let share tenants partake in the sale proceeds. Consistent with the observations made in respect of commercial wood production, it appears that for most households the gradation of NWFP activities only exists in so far as the male household head is not seen as directly involved in them.

#### **9.4.9 Household characteristics of sharecroppers and open access forest users**

##### **9.4.9.1 Introduction**

This sub-section explores common characteristics of households directly benefiting from the farming system-induced access arrangements, namely share cropping and customarily sanctioned open access forest uses. As regards share cropping, it is of utmost importance to see if share tenants are significantly poorer than share renters. This is believed to be a fruitful line of



enquiry because participation in share cropping is often associated with poverty (Kant and Nautiyal 1994). With reference to open access exploitation of spices and palm leaves, it has already been shown that households who harvested either of these products from village forests were not always those who lacked any forest access. This notwithstanding, the literature on common forest resources underlines the livelihood significance of open access benefits to the poorest community members (Jodha 1993), a contention worth examining in the context of the case study areas.

In view of the above, a fuller knowledge of share tenancy and open access use demands an examination of the resource endowments of the actors involved. Indeed, an understanding of the economic characteristics of (a) households benefiting from share cropping and (b) those who participated in NWFP gathering activities for which unrestricted entry and resource use was a viable alternative access regime is believed to throw light on forest livelihood portfolios in the case study areas.

Obviously, sharecropping households can be specified as dichotomous values: 'share renters' and 'share tenants'. With reference to involvement in NWFP activities for which open access use was also an option, participating households fall into the dichotomies of either 'open access users' or 'users from own sources'. Each of the above four categories of households is expected to share in common certain defining characteristics. Thus, in order to understand the major factors that distinguish each of these groups of households the research employed Discriminant Analysis (see Section 5.5, Chapter Five). As intimated above, each of the two dependent variables in the present discussion - 'household role in share cropping' and 'sources of NWFP use' - are qualitative or categorical in character. The independent variables used in the analysis included agricultural resource endowments (including livestock ownership and size of land used for food grain production, and *enset* land), food and forest farming production levels, and extent of households' direct forest access. It should be noted that, the above variable specification is in line with local notions of well-being, for it incorporates some of the most critical factors and asset endowments that farmers used in ranking community members into wealth groups (see Appendix 7.2).

A total of three sets of discriminant analyses were undertaken using the questionnaire survey data that dealt with participation in NTFP share cropping on the one hand and sources of spices and palm leaf collection on the other. The latter because these were the two NWFPs that were also accessed as open access resources. As regards NTFP share cropping, the statistical analysis was undertaken in two sets. These relate to (I) bee keeping households engaged in share cropping and (II) households involved in the share cropping of plant-based NWFP

activities. The resultant outcomes are discussed in Section 9.4.9.2 below and will be referred to as cases I and II respectively. The principal reason for treating share cropping in bee keeping separately from share cropping in other NWFPs was because of the observed differences in the social and economic circumstances surrounding share cropping involvement in honey production vis-à-vis other forest products (see Section 9.4.8.2).

The third set of discriminant analysis (or case III), which deals with the characteristics of households involved in NWFP activities that are also obtained as open access benefits, is discussed in Section 9.4.9.3.

#### 9.4.9.2 Agricultural resource endowments of share cropping households

Table 9.19 shows the extent to which the statistical analysis helped in correctly predicting the inclusion of the independent variables into the categories of share tenants and share renters.

**Table 9.19**  
**Classification results, Cases I and II**

Cases	Group	Predicted group membership (%)		Hit ratio	Canonical correlation
		Share tenants	Share renters		
I	Share tenants	65.5	34.5	85.5	0.724 <sup>1</sup>
	Share renters	3.1	96.9		
II	Share tenants	96.4	3.6	93.0	0.838 <sup>1</sup>
	Share renters	9.5	90.5		

<sup>1</sup> Significant at 0.0000 level.

As regards case I (i.e. share cropping in bee keeping) share renters are classified much more accurately than share tenants. The relatively limited success in correctly predicting membership of share tenants in bee keeping indicates the participation of households of varying levels of agricultural resources at either ends of the share cropping spectrum. Referring to case II (i.e. share cropping in plant-based NWFPs), a very high proportion of both share renters and tenants were classified accurately. This means that share cropping partners in coffee, spices and condiments show, as a group, a higher degree of homogeneity than those in share honey production. In both cases, however, share renters showed a more discernible pattern of agricultural resource endowments than that exhibited by share tenants.

In any case, judging both from the high magnitude of the overall classification success rate (as represented in the 'hit ratio') and the canonical correlation coefficient, it can be concluded that the analysis has used the most relevant grouping variables. However, an understanding of the economic status of share cropping partners necessitates a closer examination of the relative importance of the different independent variables employed in the classification process. An



often-used means of interpreting the discriminating power of grouping variables is given by structure correlations, which measure "the simple linear correlation between each independent variable and the discriminant function" (Hair *et al.* 1998: 272). Table 9.20 contains the 'structure correlation' of the first five most important explanatory variables.

As may be noted from Table 9.20, the discriminating variables in the first case are more or less the same as those in Case II. However, given that the correlation values portray the extent of strength of association of predictor variables with the dependent variable, there is a discrepancy in the relative importance of the grouping variables across the two cases. In what follows an attempt is made to provide a case-by-case examination of the above and associated results.

**Table 9.20**  
**Structural correlates, Cases I and II**

Variables	Values	
	Case I	Case II
Forest right holding	0.834	0.391
Size of farmland (food grain)	0.484	0.492
Age of household head	0.418	--
Number of oxen	0.125	0.666
Number of bee hives	-0.086	0.220
Number of livestock	--	0.602

With reference to Case I, the major contributors to the function were, in that order, forest right holding status of households, farmland size, age of the household head, oxen and bee hive ownership. In fact, as the group statistics show (Appendix 12.2), on average, share tenants were headed by younger households, owned less farmland and fewer oxen than share renters and were constrained by lack of direct forest access. As noted in Chapters Seven and Eight, older households tend to have an edge over the recently established ones in terms of institutionally recognised access to land resources. In view of this and the high degree of physical strength and agility which bee keeping activities require it is only natural that younger households were involved as share tenants.

Interestingly, Appendix 12.2 also shows that share tenants had on the average a greater number of beehives and produced more of the staple maize than share renters. However, these differences in household resource endowments appear not to be statistically significant, suggesting that in material terms share tenants in bee keeping were neither poorer nor richer than their share partners. In other words, despite differences in natural resource and asset endowments across the two groups, the labour intensive nature of forest and grain farming must have enabled the young, i.e. share tenants, to realise a higher degree of farm productivity. Furthermore, given that share tenancy in bee keeping was as much a social obligation as an

economic necessity the diffused nature of household resource endowments across the two groups of sharecropping partners is not unexpected. This also explains why a significant minority of share tenants in bee keeping were incorrectly classified as share renters in the analysis (Case I in Table 9.19).

As Table 9.20 shows, in Case II the variables that discriminated the most are, in a descending order of importance, number of oxen and other livestock owned, size of farmland, bee hives ownership, and forest holding status of households. From Appendix 12.3 it is clear that share tenants have a significantly smaller mean number of both categories of livestock than share renters. For that matter, mean oxen ownership among share tenants (0.57 oxen) was much smaller than the corresponding average for the entire sample (0.95 oxen), which is also statistically significant ( $t = -3.234$ ,  $P = 0.03$ ). Moreover, on the average, share tenants had significantly smaller farmland holdings and had fewer beehives than share renters (Appendix 12.3). It should be noted here that there was no statistically significant difference in the average household size of the two groups of share cropping households. Hence, share tenants must be feeding a similar number of mouths from a much less endowed household resource base. From the above it follows that, on the whole, share tenant households in plant-based NWFPs not only were visibly less endowed than share renters but also represented the poorest members of the local communities in the case study areas.

#### 9.4.9.3 Household characteristics of NWFP open access users

Using Discriminant Analysis it has been possible to classify correctly over 80 per cent of both 'open access users' and those accessing spices and palm leaves from their 'own' sources. The overall classification success rate indicates a moderately high degree of group membership prediction, a situation corroborated by a reasonably high value of the canonical correlation coefficient (Table 9.21).

**Table 9.21**  
**Classification results, Case III**

Group	Predicted group membership (%)		Hit ratio	Canonical correlation
	Open access users	Own source users		
Open access users	82.2	17.8	82.9	0.697 <sup>1</sup>
Own source users	16.1	83.9		

<sup>1</sup> Significant at 0.0000 level.

In view of the above, it will be necessary to examine the predictor variables that showed a greater degree of correlation with the dependent variable.



**Table 9.22**  
**Structural correlates, Case III**

Variables	Values
Number of livestock	0.769
Number of oxen	0.732
Size of <i>enset</i> land	0.427
Size of farm land (food grain)	0.353
Forest right holding	0.306

From the above it emerges that livestock ownership and access to agricultural land were the most significant variables in terms of distinguishing between open access users and users from own sources. Appendix 12.4 shows group-specific mean values of all the independent variables and their statistical significance. To start with, the mean number of livestock at the disposal of 'own users' is more than twice that for 'open access users'. Similarly, on average, oxen ownership - an important indicator of agricultural wealth - among 'own users' is almost three times greater than the corresponding figure for 'open access users'. Furthermore, size of land under *enset* by 'own users' was almost twice as large as that claimed by 'open access users'. The mean values of these agricultural resources characterising 'open access users' are also far lower than the average for the larger sample from which the two groups of households were drawn. On the average, open access users were also characterised by statistically significant less land for annual crops and lower food grain production than households gathering spices and palm leaves from their own sources.

From the above it follows that those who extract forest benefits from open access regimes are the resource poor segment of local communities. This tallies well with the general finding of the earlier discussion that links aspects of spice collection and palm leaf processing as engagements of last resort.

## 9.5 Discussion

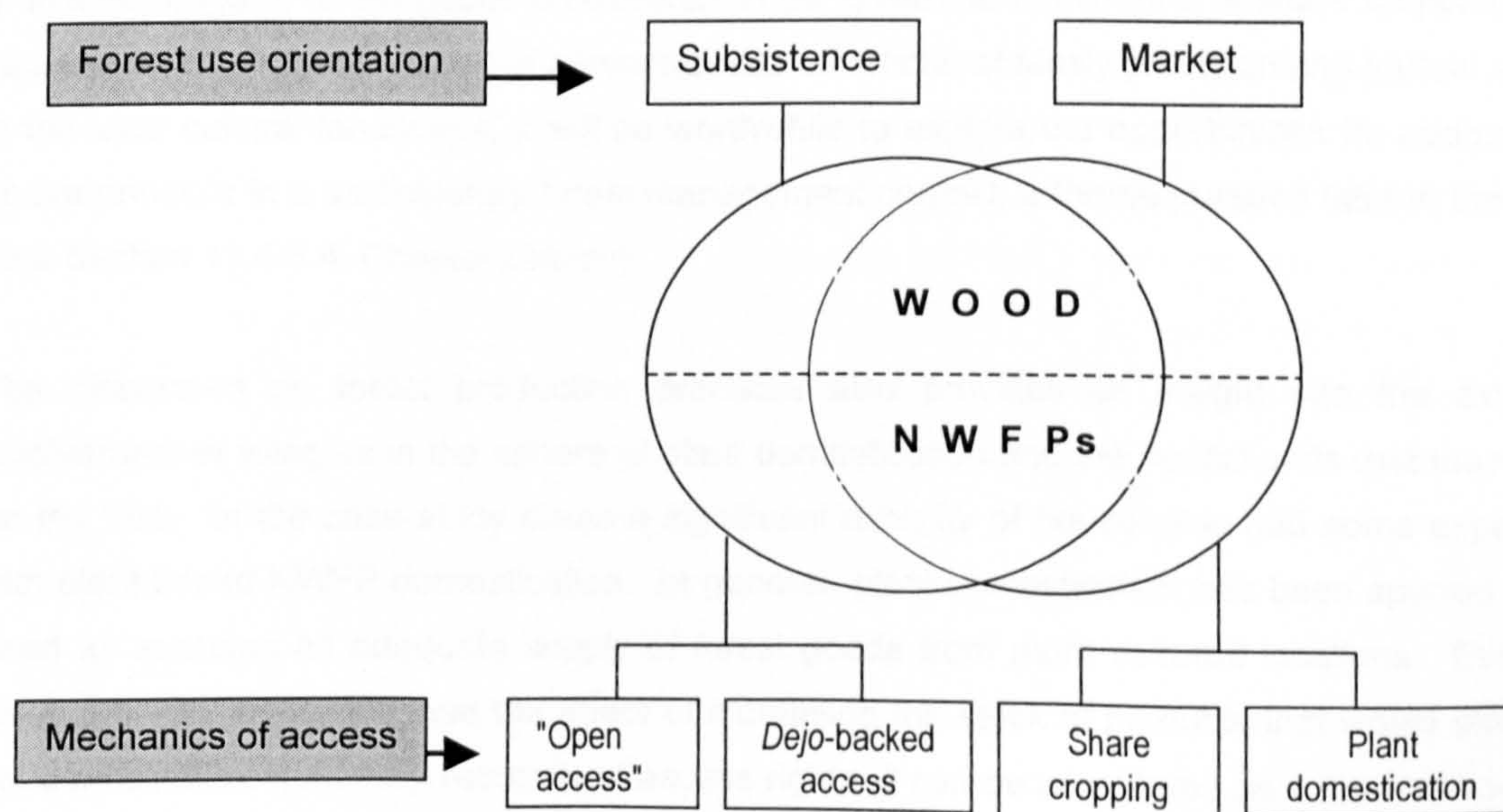
This chapter has shown the existence of durable forms of forest access established informally in the course of forest goods production. An adequate understanding of this required a study of the diverse forms of local level forest uses and their respective inter-and intra-household access characteristics. The study recognises the wide range of home- and market-oriented uses to which forest products are put at village level. Within this context, however, some forest goods are produced more for their exchange rather than their direct use value. Thus, a distinction has been made between subsistence and commercial wood and non-wood use (Figure 9.1). While subsistence forest uses are in the main exploited as 'open access' benefits, those of market-oriented uses presuppose more secure access rights and are characterised by varying forms of production organisation, thereby giving rise to production-based access to forest goods.



The discussion has demonstrated the need to qualify the concept of 'open access use', as customary tenure principles of territoriality impose their own constraints on the ways in which people harvest what are considered free-for-all forest products. For instance, the collection of wild food plants by adult household members takes place as an integral part of the domestic and/or field chores of the collectors, whose spatial domain is circumscribed by the village territory in which the household resides. The same can be said of the lopping of palm leaves or collection of wild spices. Even so, such forms of forest product use have been under increasing pressure from other forms of land uses that tend to discount future returns heavily. In other words, despite the intertwined nature of open access benefits with customary access rules, the resources exploited in this way are prone to the dangers of the tragedy of the commons. This is bound to have negative repercussions on the livelihoods of the resource poor, the commoners, since they are the most reliant on forest produce accessed through least contested claims.

Within the context of subsistence forest uses the research has also identified the importance of sacred groves and the *Dejo* ceremony in the cultural lives of the local people. This is in line with the myriad non-consumptive or passive use services that forest areas in other agrarian systems are known to provide. *Dejo* can, therefore, be thought of as a means of securing some form of collective forest access to those who are taking part in the ceremony. Sacred groves in the study localities have also been subjected to unsustainable forms of use that interfered with the cultural and inspirational values of village forests. This is primarily a reflection of absence of a proactive resource management regime that appreciates the organic link between environmental conservation and spiritual beliefs.

**Figure 9.1: Use-based forest access channels**





As regards the commercial significance of forest resources, consideration has been given to a number of wood and non-wood products. It was found that the desire for sale has been an important driving force behind households' involvement in forest production activities. In this connection an understanding of the specific use-based access arrangements necessitated a study of the nature of the social organisation of labour in forest production. This led to the identification of two principal forms of forest production organisation: own production and share cropping.

Tree right holders who discharge their own forest-based operations do so through mobilising own household labour and, in very limited instances, through organising traditional work parties. There were, however, several farming systems-specific and cultural factors that necessitated right holders to opt for share cropping arrangements in forest production activities. It was established that share cropping has been an important mechanism through which those left out of other forms of forest access could participate in the local forest economy (Figure 9.1). This institution has also been argued to contribute to task-specific efficiency. But, the extent of its contribution towards system-wide efficiency should be weighed against the ease with which it promotes unsustainable forms of wood harvesting. As will be discussed below, this is bound to affect the significance of share cropping in promoting sustainable forest livelihoods.

Share cropping in forest production activities assumes two distinct forms. In wood processing activities it designates an employment relationship between share renters and tenants. In NWFP ventures, on the other hand, share cropping manifests itself as a form of local social capital that enables resource poor households to have a stake in forest-based activities. In fact, despite the progressive monetisation of Kafa's rural economy this institution has maintained its attractions for a diverse range of forest goods producers. Thus, given the dominance of share cropping in the forest production system and the pervasiveness of notions of family provision and mutual support in the local cultural landscape, it will be worthwhile to explore the opportunities for adapting the above principle in a participatory forest management context, a theme pursued later in the thesis (see Section 11.4.3.4, Chapter Eleven).

The discussion on forest production practices also provides an insight into the extent of involvement of villagers in the sphere of plant domestication and the spatial units that they prefer for the task. In the case study areas a significant minority of households had some experience with plant-based NWFP domestication. In general, plant domestication has been spurred by the need for ensuring an adequate supply of forest goods from more secured locations. Evidently, given that 'domestication' had the effect of increasing the stock of products that would otherwise have entailed institutionally recognised access rights, it can be considered as a production-based

forest access mechanism (Figure 9.1). Furthermore, plant domestication has the potential to deepen the livelihood diversification and intensification processes unfolding in the case study areas.

Domestication has also been shown to have a forest management function, because it aims at enhancing the productivity of the forest ecosystem. The practice has virtually been a farmer-led one and is symptomatic of the dearth of institutional support farmers obtained in respect of forest-farming activities. In this regard, village forests played a crucial role as a source of seedlings/saplings for the domesticated plants. With minor exceptions, the most preferred locations for plant domestication have been residential and farm field areas where tree management and tenure enforcement have proved to be the easiest. This dynamics, that is the forest/garden dichotomy in NWFP domestication, points towards the need for a careful assessment of the potency of conventional participatory forest management approaches that are anchored on promotion of and benefit sharing from NTFPs found in forest domains. At the same time, the particular role of common forest resources as generators of planting materials should be taken into account in the framing of policies that aim at sustainable forest use.

Irrespective of the forest access mechanism in place, at the household level, the process of forest production brings about differential entitlements for household members. Thus, the use-based access arrangements discussed above have also been examined from the perspective of intra-household division of responsibilities in the forest production-marketing continuum. The observations made in this regard vary as between forest products.

Men tend to be largely responsible for honey production and marketing with all the implications for the leeway that this gives to decision-making authority. This is the basis of the findings of the discussion in Chapter Eight that centred on the lack of women's knowledge about a household's bee keeping operations as well as their inability to share from bee keeping resources in the event of divorce (see Section 8.5.3.3). In contrast, the production of such items as coffee and Ethiopian cardamom requires the involvement of all household members; however, the responsibility for marketing is the prerogative of the male household head. As a result men tend to override domestic consumption needs in favour of the market. In fact, male household heads disengage themselves from the marketing sphere only if some social stigma is attached to the activity. At a more theoretical level, this portrays the tension that exists between market forces and cultural values and is indicative of local people's adaptive livelihood responses to the lures of the market.

The above practice creates opportunities for women and children to take part more actively in forest product marketing, thereby improving their chances of generating cash income



independently of the male head. On the other hand, the intra-household/gender implications of the practice of cultivating hitherto gathered forest products in and around the domestic domain need closer examination. After all, the home garden is a landscape niche with which women are also most familiar.

The discussion on the nature of household organisation of labour in forest production activities has provided useful insights into the prospects that sustainable forest management regimes could face in the future. It is believed that the direct participation of both genders and all age groups in the forest production sphere poses both a challenge and an opportunity for future forest management endeavours. In particular, the active involvement of younger households in the woodfuel trade as well as the apprenticeship role that the more enlightened community members take up in plank production have the unintended consequence of a culture of continuity of, and inter-generational skill transfer in, extraction of hard wood. This in turn could be inimical to possible efforts at sustainable forest use.

Equally importantly, the continued involvement of the youth in such non-destructive forest uses as collection of wild foods, spices and honey gathering provides a fertile ground for initiating workable forest management arrangements using the above products as possible entry points. Ultimately, however, the success of forest conservation initiatives depends on the institutional environment for respecting local tenure conventions and enforcing statutory forest laws (a theme discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight) and the economics of the varying forest product engagements. The empirical basis for the latter are discussed in the following chapter.

## **10. Forest products and the exchange economy of rural households**

### **10.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the part played by forest products in the exchange economy of rural households. Such an endeavour is expected to inform the extent to which rural households have a financial stake in their local environmental resources and the existence or otherwise of potential for enhancing such a stake. The latter constitutes the essential preconditions for putting in place sustainable resource management modalities. In order to place the analysis in its appropriate context, the discussion also takes cognisance of other aspects of the agricultural-based livelihoods that local people pursue in the case study areas. The deliberations in this chapter focus on the traditional inhabitants of the case study areas who, as noted in the previous chapters, have a near monopoly over local forest resources. In other words, given their marginal involvement in forest product marketing, 'settlers' are excluded from the present analysis.

The remainder of the chapter is divided as follows. Section two sets the scene by providing the extent of market dependence of the different household categories on forest products. Section three discusses the composition of agricultural cash incomes in the case study areas and provides estimates of sample- and activity-specific cash income levels. Section four illustrates the significance of forest product income in the case study areas through assessing its role in the maintenance of household food security. Section five assesses the major market-related factors affecting forest product income, and these mainly centre on local people's marketing practices and their consequences. Section six summarises the discussion and identifies the leading threads of the findings.

### **10.2 An overview of market dependence of rural households on forest products**

In the preceding chapter the issue of market participation was discussed in relation to each of the traded forest products. It has been shown that in most cases participation in forest production activities was driven by the desire for sale. As the accent of the discussions in the previous chapter was on the relevance of use-based access arrangements vis-à-vis individual forest products, it was thought necessary to defer to the present chapter an assessment of the range and type of forest livelihoods that the different category of households pursued.



**Table 10.1**  
**Extent of household participation in forest product sale**

Household Category	No. of HHs by range/type <sup>1</sup> of forest items sold			Total		Mean (CV, %)
	1 item	2 items	> 2 items	HHs	Percent <sup>2</sup>	
Manjo	3 (Woodfuel)	10 (Woodfuel & honey)	16 (Woodfuel, honey, & spices)	29	100	2.8 (38.4)
Female	7 (Various NWFPs)	2 (Coffee & spices/ mats)	5 (Honey, coffee, & mats/bags)	14	53.8	2.1 (65.9)
Male Kaffecho:	80	76	47	203	87.5	
'Rich' <sup>3</sup>	23 (Honey)	31 (Honey & coffee)	15 (Honey, coffee, & others)	69	94.5	2.0 (45.9)
'Poor' <sup>4</sup>	57 (Honey)	45 (Honey & coffee)	32 (Honey, coffee & others)	134	84.3	1.9 (47.6)
Total (HHs)	90	88	68	246	85.7	2.0 (49.0)
Per cent	72.4		27.6	100		
X <sup>2</sup>	13.49, P < 0.05					

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> 'Type' refers to composition of forest goods sold by the majority of households in the corresponding sample category. <sup>2</sup> As a proportion of the relevant sample category. <sup>3</sup> Households categorised into the top two wealth ranks. <sup>4</sup> Households categorised into the bottom two wealth ranks.

Evidently, over 70 per cent of households were found to have marketed either one or two forest products (Table 10.1). While the remaining households sold three or more products, the maximum number of forest products any one household sold was five. As the chi square values indicate, there was significant inter-household difference in the range of forest items marketed. On average, Manjos sold a greater number of forest products (2.8 products) than any of the other groups, and their participation was marked by the lowest relative intra-group variability (CV = 38.4 per cent). It is worth noting here that sale of woodfuel typifies the majority of the Manjos. In contrast, female-headed households were involved in sale of an array of plant-based NWFPs; however, sale of coffee appeared to be the most common feature that the majority of these households shared with one another. This being so, the range of forest products that female-headed households sold corresponds to the overall sample average; however, the high CV value shows the existence of considerable intra-group differences of experiences in this respect.

Finally, the majority of both richer and poorer (Kaffecho) household groups marketed one or two forest products, and there was no statistically significant difference between these household groups in terms of the range of items they sold ( $X^2 = 0.12$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). In fact, honey and coffee were marketed by most of the male-headed households - 'rich' and 'poor' alike - who reported to have sold two or more forest items. Thus, if at all market participation in forest goods had impacted on the wealth status of male-headed Kaffecho households, then the difference in the two broad wealth categories must lie more in the quantity marketed than the type of forest product sold.

An attempt has been made to understand the factors responsible for the significant inter-household differences in the number of forest products marketed. To this end, a multiple regression analysis has been employed to analyse the relationship between 'number of forest products households sell' (dependent variable) and a host of agricultural factors of production that are thought to have a bearing on the decision of the household to engage in forest product sale. These factors, which constitute the independent variables, include the following: (a) number of livestock (TLU); (b) farmland size (*timad*); (c) type of forest access; (d) age of the household head; and (e) number of adult household members. The result is shown in Table 10.2.

**Table 10.2**  
**Regression results**

Independent variables	Standardised coefficients ( $\beta$ )	T	Significance
Number of livestock	-0.196	-4.155	0.000
Farmland size	0.193	3.105	0.002
Forest access status	0.507	6.439	0.000
Age of household head	0.180	2.084	0.038
Adult household members	0.214	3.279	0.001
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0.806</b>		

Source: Computed from the Questionnaire survey (1998/99) data.

From the high value of the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) it can be inferred that the inter-household variations in market involvement were reflections mainly of the above independent variables. It is instructive to note that of these variables, only livestock ownership has an inverse relationship with the number of forest products households sell. This goes in line with intuition, because a higher level of forest dependency is partly a consequence of limited household involvement in the mixed farming sector where livestock (including oxen) play a critical role. This observation is also consistent with earlier findings that established Manjos as the most forest dependent groups (see Table 10.1). It is to be recalled that Manjos own the fewest number of livestock of all the sample categories (see Table 6.9).

On the other hand, the positive sign associated with 'farmland size', 'age of the household head', and 'number of adult household members' and their statistical significance indicate the importance of land and labour in explaining differences in the sale of forest goods. With regard to farmland, the result points to the fact that households with higher than average land holdings tend to sell a greater number of forest goods than the rest. Similarly, older households and those with a higher number of adult household members tend to be involved in the sale of a greater number of forest produce than the others. It is evident from Table 10.2 that the type of access to forest resources that the household enjoys is the most important of all the independent variables in terms of influencing the number of forest goods households sell on a regular basis. In view of the



observed dependence of local people on use of forest products in the wild state, this is not unexpected.

Appendix 7.15 compares the extent of market participation of households in relation to the type of forest access right they claimed. In general, households who accessed tree resources through 'lease', *Wejoo*, and share cropping were involved in sale of a lower number of products than those who had had either PA allocated forest patch, inherited forest holdings or tree rights claimed through customary tenure principles. It is to be recalled that, while the lease mechanism was primarily a means to acquire agricultural land (Section 7.8.3), *Wejoo* provision, by definition, entitled beneficiaries with a limited number of trees (Section 8.4.1). As regards share cropping, the above corroborates an earlier finding that stipulated a greater concentration of share tenants in single product activities (see Section 9.4.8.2). It is worth remembering that the above three forms of forest access were principal access characteristics of the younger households. As intimated in Chapter Seven the other forms of forest access mechanisms that afforded a greater number of marketable forest goods were characterised on the whole by a remarkable degree of floristic composition.

In light of the above the following section assesses the relative contributions of forest products to the household exchange economy.

### **10.3 Composition of household cash income**

#### **10.3.1 Introduction**

The discussion in this section draws information from the 40 households where fortnightly cash income data was gathered for one calendar year. These households, it is to be recalled, included one Manjo household from four of the study sub-*Kebeles* where Manjos reside (4), one female-headed household per sub-*Kebele* (6), and 30 male-headed households. The latter comprised one household from each of the first three wealth categories per sub-*Kebele* (18) and two 'poorest' households per sub-*Kebele* (12). Earlier discussions have demonstrated the existence of considerable differences in forest product market participation among the three sample categories, namely Manjos, female-headed households and indigenous male-headed households. This is followed through in the presentation of the findings on household income.

The case for generation of income data from a non-probability sample has been made in Section 5.4.3.2. At any rate, the analysis in the subsequent sub-sections has taken cognisance of the smallness of the sample sizes under study and the attendant difficulties of making statistical

generalisations. In this regard, the relevance of the sample findings to the wider community has been established only after an assessment of the essential characteristics of the pertinent household groups has been made.

In order to aid comparison, cash income sources were categorised into three baskets of goods: wood, NWFP, and mixed farming. Each of these was in turn classified into varying numbers of product groups. The wide range of products in the mixed farming sector necessitated a greater degree of product aggregation than was necessary for forest goods. Appendix 8.2 provides a list of agricultural items respondents sold and the corresponding 'product groups'.

### 10.3.2 Agricultural cash income among Manjo households

As Table 10.3 shows, the households chosen for the present analysis relied very heavily on forest production activities as cash income sources.

**Table 10.3**  
**Annual average household cash income among the Manjos (in Birr<sup>1</sup>)**

Items	Sub-Kebele				Mean	CV (%)
	Bitachega	Bitagenet	Sheeka	Wushwush		
Wood	0.00	218.00	1599.75	763.50	645.31	110.4
Construction	0.00	120.00	212.50	43.25		
Woodfuel	0.00	98.00	1387.25	720.25		
NWFPs	222.42	1611.25	625.80	471.30	732.69	83.1
Honey	172.00	888.00	544.00	388.00		
Coffee	16.00	201.25	0.00	44.00		
Spices/Herbs	34.42	522.00	59.30	39.30		
Mats/bags	0.00	0.00	22.50	0.00		
Mixed farming	67.00	102.50	314.70	40.00	127.55	100
Food crops	14.00	96.50	39.00	35.00		
Horticulture	2.50	6.00	40.60	0.00		
Livestock	36.50	0.00	229.35	0.00		
Others	0.00	0.00	5.75	5.00		
Total	289.42	1931.75	2540.25	1274.80	1505.55	64.4

Source: Income data record sheets, 1998/1999.

<sup>1</sup> One Birr was approximately USD 0.14 at the time of survey.

To start with, income from wood sales, and particularly that from woodfuel, was of considerable importance to these households. Households from Sheeka and Wushwush in particular acquired considerably higher incomes from wood sales than the rest. Conversely, two of the Manjo households had little or no involvement in wood trade activities. Incidentally, these households were among those Manjo communities who occupied remoter villages. The high value of the coefficient of variation reflects the wider dispersion of income levels from wood sales among the chosen households.



As discussed in Section 9.3.4 most Manjos from Sheeka and Wushwush sub-*Kebeles* are involved substantially in the sale of woodfuel. It has also been observed that while Manjos at Sheeka sub-*Kebele* are among the major suppliers of wood fuel to Bonga town residents, those at Wushwush take advantage of their proximity to a main road for selling wood. It is also interesting to note that over 80 per cent of the value of the wood sold over the 12 months period was realised through a fairly large number of high value fortnightly transactions (Appendix 8.3.1). This is indicative of the prevalence of the practice of bulk sale of wood. Indeed, field observations have shown that Manjos at Wushwush sell wood fuel to truckers and institutional customers as a cartel and that there is a good deal of labour co-operation among Manjo households in the preparation, processing and marketing of woodfuel. With reference to Manjos at Sheeka, it is not uncommon for all adult household members to supply the nearby urban market with fuelwood at least thrice a week, that is during the three main market days of Bonga town. All in all, the observed annual income from wood sales, particularly at Sheeka and Wushwush, could be taken as an important pointer of the livelihood significance of the wood trade among the larger Manjo community engaged in this activity.

Sale of NWFPs has been a consistently important source of household income in the households under study. In fact, this source of income was on average the single most important contributor to household income and showed the lowest intra-group variability. As Table 10.3 makes evident, sale of honey was the single most valued element of NWFP income. As will be seen below, the Manjo groups had a considerably higher income from the sale of honey than either of the household group chosen for the study. Given the customary forest access right that most Manjos enjoy and their substantial involvement in bee keeping (see Table 9.3), the observed high contribution of honey to the income of the above households cannot be considered an isolated case, but rather is indicative of general trends.

Finally, as can be deduced from Table 10.3, the role of mixed farming as a household income source has been negligible. This is not unexpected, for in-depth interviews with these households has shown that in the food farming sector their preference lay on root crop production for domestic use. They also claim to be seriously constrained by the lack of draught power for field crop farming (Appendix 10.4). It will be recalled that average oxen ownership among Manjo households was significantly less than the corresponding mean value for the rest of the survey respondents (see Section 6.4.3). It should as well be noted that most people shun the purchase of food crops from Manjos (Section 6.2.5), which narrows the Manjos' ability to obtain the best price for their food output. In short, the observed low monetary income contribution of mixed farming in the four Manjo households is likely to portray the overall situation among the larger Manjo communities in the case study areas.

### 10.3.3 Agricultural cash income among female-headed households

Table 10.4 shows the contributions of the different aspects of forest and food farming to the composition of income in six female-headed households.

**Table 10.4**  
**Income sources and levels among female-headed households (in Birr)**

Items	Sub-Kebele						Mean (CV, %)
	Arabakasha	Bitachega	Bitagenet	Sheeka	Woka	Wushwush	
Wood	0.00	0.00	0.00	316.25	0.00	107.00	70.54 (181.1)
Construction	0.00	0.00	0.00	119.25	0.00	107.00	
Woodfuel	0.00	0.00	0.00	197.00	0.00	0.00	
NWFPs	365.95	257.90	549.55	172.55	156.50	125.00	271.24 (59.7)
Honey	0.00	0.00	264.00	0.00	20.00	16.00	
Coffee	195.00	0.00	175.50	8.80	105.00	96.00	
Spices/condiments	107.40	257.90	85.05	140.50	0.00	9.00	
Mats/bags	63.55	0.00	25.00	23.25	31.50	4.00	
Mixed farming	100.25	7.50	587.00	358.50	148.15	107.25	217.53 (99)
Food crops	32.75	0.00	7.50	60.75	67.90	77.25	
Horticulture	58.45	0.00	39.50	27.50	44.10	20.50	
Livestock	9.05	7.50	540.00	270.25	36.15	6.00	
Others	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.50	
Total	466.20	265.40	1136.55	847.30	304.65	339.25	559.31 (63.3)

Source: Income data record sheets, 1998/1999.

The average annual income of these households is far lower than those obtained for the Manjos. Of the three income categories employed in the discussion, wood sources had the least contribution to the income of female-headed households. In fact, this source of income only pertained to two households. Sale of construction wood among the non-Manjos takes the form mainly of bamboo sale - a culturally acceptable activity for a non-Manjo. On the other hand, among the Kaffecho direct involvement in the woodfuel trade presupposes the existence of a household member who has an adequate knowledge of forest areas and the skills and strength necessary for wood processing and marketing. In view of the general resource poverty characteristic of female household headship it is highly unlikely that most female-headed households would take part in this line of activity.

In contrast to the above, the generation of household income through sale of one or the other type of NWFP was shared among all of the studied female-headed households. However, consistent with the overall limited involvement of female-headed households in bee keeping, the majority of the above households did not derive income from sale of honey. Conversely, plant-based NWFPs accounted for an important share of total household forest income. The moderately high annual income generated from coffee marketing points to the product's wider livelihood significance. Similar observations can also be made regarding spices and condiments.



Furthermore, most women-managed households who take up forest-based production as a source of income not only obtained spices as open access benefits but also took part as share tenants in the collection/marketing of the same (Section 9.4.5.1). This, of course, signifies the important livelihood outlet that share cropping created for resource poor households.

Finally, it is to be recalled that palm leaf processing is one of the forest based activities where a large number of female-headed households take part (see Section 9.4.7). However, the modest income realised through sale of mats/bags tends to suggest the low value nature of this particular kind of activity. The relative self-sufficiency of most rural households in these products as well as the open access nature of palm leaf acquisition (Section 9.4.7) tends to dampen the market prices of mats/bags and hence the corresponding returns to labour.

As may be gathered from Appendix 8.3.2, almost all of the reported cash income from sale of spices, condiments and mats/bags was made up of a fairly large number of low value (under 1 USD) fortnightly transactions. Given the general context of poverty in which female-headed households find themselves, it is highly conceivable that income from these sources can only be used for meeting day-to-day household necessities.

The contribution of mixed farming to household income trailed behind that of NWFPs. In fact, if one disregards the occasional sale of livestock (notably, cattle) that some of the households undertook the overall share of mixed farming drops down even further. (It is generally recognised that, within the context of poverty, sale of cattle is taken more as a sign of desperation rather than livelihood diversification.) It is of interest to note that about 92 per cent of cash income that the above female-headed households realised from the food farming sector (i.e. through sale of food grains, root crops and horticultural products) is characterised by less than one USD fortnightly transactions (Appendix 8.3.2). Further data analysis has shown that three-quarters of these sale transactions constituted vegetables and *enset* products - products of the domestic domain.

As will be shown below, income from mixed farming was very low even by the standards of the poorest households. It is to be recalled that female-headed households were one of the least endowed groups in terms of the basic inputs necessary for food farming (see Section 6.4.3). Therefore, the limited contribution of mixed farming among the above households can be taken as a useful indicator of the sector's relative invisibility as a cash income source for the majority of such households.

### 10.3.4 Agricultural cash income among male-headed Kaffecho households

This section provides a comparative examination of income sources and levels among male-headed households of varying wealth status. Table 10.5 presents mean incomes of households belonging to each of the four wealth ranking groups.

**Table 10.5**  
**Income sources and levels among male-headed Kaffecho households (in Birr)**

Items	Wealth ranks				Mean	CV (%)
	I	II	III	IV		
Wood	5.00	13.50	1.33	15.87	10.31	267.2
Construction	5.00	13.50	1.33	15.87		
Woodfuel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
NWFPs	973.50	561.01	256.70	242.10	455.09	108.2
Honey	223.75	132.96	119.67	90.66		
Coffee	602.63	358.60	115.97	106.60		
Spices/Herbs	107.18	62.12	14.90	32.65		
Mats/bags	39.94	7.33	6.17	12.18		
Mixed farming	2150.84	845.20	421.13	296.38	801.99	135.7
Food crops	439.40	140.17	106.00	101.03		
Horticulture	46.18	68.70	20.13	40.06		
Livestock	1664.93	636.63	288.17	155.29		
Others	0.33	0.00	6.83	0.00		
Total	3129.34	1419.71	679.16	554.34	1267.38	102.5

Source: Income data record sheets, 1998/1999.

As Table 10.5 shows, agricultural cash income was realised mainly from the sale of NWFPs and of mixed farming products. Wood sale was of negligible importance as a household income source.

Coffee accounted for a good proportion of income from NWFPs for all wealth groups. This is in sharp contrast to that observed with regards to the Manjos where honey was by far the most important contributor (Table 10.3). The income significance of NWFPs appears to be related to the socio-economic standing of households, with the wealthier groups earning more from these sources than those considered resource poor. Wealthier households were long established ones and claim institutionally recognised forest access (Table 6.7, Chapter Six; Appendix 10.1). It is to be recalled that one of the criteria local people employed to classify community members into the first two wealth ranks was the household's endowment with adequate forest resources and their capability to extract honey and/or coffee in comparatively large quantities (Appendix 7.2). Seen in this perspective, not only is the above in line with expectations but also the reported NWFP income could approximate the reality in a greater number of wealthier households in the case study areas than just their own.



Evidently, given the cash crop nature of NWFPs, the limited income that poorer households generated from these items (Table 10.5) could be taken as an indicator of the meagreness of their resource endowments. It should as well be noted that some of these households were also reliant on share cropping in forest-based activities (see Appendix 10.2). As indicated in Section 6.2.7, limited access to forest resources and/or share tenancy are some of the defining features of households categorised into the lowest two wealth ranks (see also Appendix 7.2). Thus, the reported annual NWFP income of the above less endowed households should serve as an indicator of forest income boundaries for those with similar socio-economic standing.

Based on Appendix 8.3.3 one can make a couple of observations concerning the frequency and market values of fortnightly NWFP transactions that each of the two sets of households experienced. As regards the marketing of coffee, over 45 per cent of the fortnightly transactions effected by wealthier households were made up of values in excess of two USD, while among poorer households such transactions constituted only about 30 per cent. Most of the honey transactions in both groups of households fetched in excess of one USD. This is in sharp contrast to the frequency of market transactions pertaining to spices, condiments and palm leaf processing, which were almost entirely made up of under one USD values.

At the other end of the spectrum, income from mixed farming activities accounted for the largest proportion of household cash income across the different wealth groups. However, the relative significance of income from mixed farming sources tended to decline with 'wealth'. Thus, in poorer households NWFPs appeared to generate a comparable level of income as did mixed farming, while among those in the first two wealth ranks mixed farming activities were more important cash earners than those of forest products.

In line with the community wealth ranking outcome (Section 6.2.7), the high income from mixed farming reported for wealthier groups is consistent with the higher food crop and livestock resource endowments that characterise these households. The converse holds true for households in the lowest wealth categories. The poorer groups in the sample reflect some of the more glaring characteristics of their compatriots in the wider community: inadequacy of draught power, participation in food crop share cropping and livestock share rearing, and smaller farm land size (Appendices 7.2 and 10.2). Indeed, according to the questionnaire survey as at the 1998/99 production season, wealthier groups harvested, on average, more maize (290 kgs) and *teff* (73 kgs) than resource poor ones, which was 183 kgs and 35 kgs respectively. Similarly, mean livestock ownership among poorer households was much less (1.20 TLU) than that at the disposal of wealthier groups (3.39 TLU). An "independent samples" test has shown all the three sets of results to be significant at 99 per cent level.

The above notwithstanding, even among the richer segments of the Kaffecho households cash income from mixed farming was dominated by a myriad, low value fortnightly transactions. For instance 76 per cent of food farming and 62 per cent of livestock-related marketing transactions undertaken by these groups were valued less than one USD. The corresponding figures among the poorer groups were 86 and 75 per cent respectively (Appendix 8.3.3). Further data analysis, though, shows that among the wealthier groups, crops of higher market value such as food grains constituted over 20 per cent of transactions exceeding 2 USD, the corresponding figure for poorer households being about 12 per cent. Similarly, among the richer groups a third of livestock market transactions were over the 3 USD level and dealt mainly with exchange of live animals. This was under 20 per cent for poorer groups. In sum, while generation of cash income through sale of low value farm goods is shared by all income groups, wealthier households tended to be more involved in the sale of highly priced agricultural items than the rest.

All in all, the above discussion on wealth group-specific annual non-forest income is believed to throw some light on the magnitude and relative importance of mixed farming in the relevant categories of the larger community.

### 10.3.5 A summing up

The above assessment has reinforced observations made earlier concerning the existence of marked heterogeneity in household forest use patterns and extent of forest dependency. It is recognised that the nature of the data set did not allow for a statistical generalisation of outcomes regarding the importance of forest goods vis-à-vis mixed farming activities. However, given category-specific shared experiences and resource endowments some tentative observations can be made. Table 10.6 summarises the findings reported in Sub-sections 10.3.2 to 10.3.4.

**Table 10.6**  
**Mean cash income by source and household category**

Household category	Average cash income by source			Total
	Wood	NWFPS	Mixed farming	
Manjos	645.31	732.69	127.55	1505.55
Female-headed	70.54	271.24	217.53	559.31
Male-headed:				
Rank I	5.00	973.50	2150.84	3129.34
Rank II	13.50	561.01	845.20	1419.71
Rank III	1.33	256.70	421.13	679.16
Rank IV	15.87	242.10	296.38	554.34

Source: Tables 10.3 to 10.5.



With regards to Manjo households, one of the income categories that stands out most is the significant contribution of wood sale to household cash income. As noted in the previous chapters this is an environmentally destructive activity that Manjos undertake as a matter of course. The high income that Manjos obtain from this source shows the considerable stake they have in the wood sector. Given that cash income from wood sales was realised from a fairly large number of higher market value transactions and in view of the limited, if any, non-labour costs that the trade entailed, this income source must have provided Manjos with the opportunity to improve their economic conditions.

It is interesting to note that in the course of the wealth ranking exercise the majority of the Manjos were categorised as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Although the four Manjos used for the income analysis are among those considered 'poor', their mean annual agricultural income is fairly comparable to the 'middle income' Kaffechos. This apparent anomaly is essentially a consequence of the way informants defined 'wealth'. As noted in Section 6.2.7 (Chapter Six), the concept of wealth has both financial and non-material dimensions. Indeed, as regards monetary income, from the perspective of the local communities, it is not always *how much* a household earns but also *how* it generates the income and *how* it *spends* its earnings, that is taken into account in their conceptualisation of 'wealth'. As regards patterns of monetary expenditure, a determined effort on the part of the household head to extricate the unit from the *perceived dependence* on socially disdainful activities such as woodfuel sale is highly prized. Seen from this perspective, Manjos tend to fare worse than most Kaffechos, hence their relegation into the lowest wealth categories.

It is clear from the above summary table that, on the whole, NWFPs made considerable contributions to the cash income of households the sample covered. Also, the reported group-specific annual cash income levels obtained through the sale of NWFPs provide a broad indication of the income generating potential of NWFPs at the larger social groups from which the sample households have been drawn. With the notable exception of honey among the Manjos and coffee among the wealthier groups, NWFP cash income was constituted by a comparatively larger number of small market value transactions. Consequently, these proceeds are thought to be of limited significance in terms of rural capital accumulation or meeting important social obligations. However, it is highly conceivable that such income sources can be of some importance in addressing the every day cash needs of rural households. In contrast, households who engage in high market value transactions (e.g. wealthier households in coffee) had the potential to plan for using sale proceeds in activities that demand higher outlays than the meagre weekly cash income resulting from the sale of spices and condiments afforded.

Judging from the higher cash income that wealthier households raised from the sale of NWFPs it is tempting to conclude that in absolute terms these households tend to depend more on forest income sources than the poorer segments of the communities under study. In view of the observed skewed nature of forest access towards the propertied this should not come as a surprise. Nevertheless, for wealthier community members, mixed farming tended to be a more important contributor to household cash income than forest-based gathering. In other words, when viewed against aggregate household cash income levels NWFPs appeared to be more vital to the less endowed community sections than to the richer ones, and this is consistent with the findings of other similar studies (see Section 2.5.3.1, Chapter Two). In this regard, share cropping and open access exploitation of some of the less valued forest trees played important roles in enabling households to get access to forest produce that would otherwise have been difficult to come by.

#### **10.4 Forest product income and household food security**

In order to understand fully the livelihood significance of sales income from forest products, ideally it would have been necessary to investigate household expenditure patterns and locate how income from the above sources figure in the entire scheme of things. While an in depth examination of the issue was beyond the scope of the present research, some effort has been made to understand the mode of utilisation of forest product income so as to provide a flavour of the issues.

From discussions with government agricultural extension agents (Appendix 9.11.3) it was learnt that income from such major NTFPs as honey and coffee is seldom squandered. Drawing from the first hand experience they had, these grassroots agricultural personnel observed that most farmers use proceeds from the sale of NTFPs to settle their income tax obligations and to repay government agricultural loans. This was corroborated by the in-depth household interviews chosen for the household income study (Appendix 10). Field observations also pointed to the centrality of forest-based income in meeting households' other needs.

Given the livelihood direction of the analysis, it was thought essential to examine the possible links between forest product income and household food security. This also rests on theoretical and empirical grounds.

It is a truism that in agrarian societies the principal objective of farmers is to ensure an adequate family food supply throughout the year via pursuing a combination of activities in line with local resource endowments and market opportunities. In this regard, an examination of the



contributions of forest product income to household food security is believed to be a worthy line of endeavour. Turning to the empirical context, a recent country-wide sample survey indicated that in rural Ethiopia 'food' accounted for 54.2 per cent of total household expenditure and that the corresponding value for rural SNNPRS was estimated at 51.3 per cent (CSA 1998c: 323). While the 'food' category includes a variety of items including livestock products, culinary spices and condiments, root crops, horticultural items and food grains, the latter constituted by far the most important element - 60.4 per cent of the total value of expenditure (CSA 1998c: 175-176). The level of household expenditure reported above consisted of direct monetary expenditures on food and imputed values of subsistence uses from own sources; nevertheless, it highlights the importance of food in the overall basket of household expenditure in rural areas.

Against the above background, in the questionnaire survey an attempt has been made to establish in qualitative terms (a) the extent of purchase of food grains for own consumption over the five years preceding the study period and (b) the source of income households use to meet the shortfall. It was found that some two-thirds of the indigenous households had at various times bought cereals for use in respective households (Table 10.7). They ascribed the failure of their households to meet domestic food needs from own farms to a range of factors, chief amongst which are, in that order, unsuitable weather condition (e.g. excessive rainfall), vermin attack, and shortage of agricultural means of production (e.g. draught power and/or farm land), and shortage of farm labour (Appendix 7.16).

Table 10.7 shows income sources to which households resorted for buying food grains and the corresponding length of their experiences in reference to a five years period. As some of the households were less than five years old at the time of the survey, it was found necessary to accommodate this fact in the presentation of the data

**Table 10.7**  
**Household experiences with purchase of food grains and income sources used**

Income sources	Household category/food self insufficiency (in years)							Grand total	
	'Older' households <sup>1</sup>				'Younger' households <sup>2</sup>				
	1 -2	3 - 4	5	Total	1 - 2	3 - 4	Total	HHs	Per cent
Wood	7	0	4	11	1	1	2	13	6.8
NWFPs	30	4	25	59	6	5	11	70	36.5
Livestock	36	1	8	45	6	4	10	55	28.6
Horticulture	4	1	3	8	0	1	1	9	4.7
Wages	10	1	13	24	5	7	12	36	18.8
Others	5	0	1	6	1	2	3	9	4.7
Total	92	7	54	153	19	20	39	192	100
Per cent	60.1	4.6	35.3	100	48.7	51.3	100	66.9 <sup>3</sup>	

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

<sup>1</sup> HHs established for longer than five years at the time of survey. <sup>2</sup> HHs established after 1993, i.e. HHs less than five years old at the time of survey. <sup>3</sup> As a proportion of indigenous households.

It is clear from Table 10.7 (last row) that about 60 per cent of 'older' (i.e. more established) households showed only 'occasional dependence' on the market place to meet their subsistence needs. However, the remaining households had to depend on a variety of farm and non-farm sources for supplementing their basic food ingredients on a more or less permanent basis. This degree of permanence could be taken as a sign of structural food deficit in a microcosm. A higher proportion of the more recently established households appear to have experienced a disproportionately longer period of food purchases. Given the acute land resource constraints that these groups of households face, it is highly likely that they will continue to be increasingly dependent on the exchange sphere to satisfy the staple food requirements of their respective households.

As evidenced in Table 10.7 a total of 43.3 per cent of the households identified income from the sale of wood (6.8 per cent) and NWFPs (36.5 per cent) as their major means of buying food grains. Manjos were the only ones who cited 'wood' as an income source for the purpose. All indications are that the sale of wood is a high return activity for which Manjos enjoy a near local monopoly. The dependence of Manjos on wood sale even for meeting their food needs shows their failure to capitalise on household assets and food farming activities from the lucrative trade they have been involved in.

Income from the sale of NWFPs has been of considerable value in mitigating food shortfalls across the different household categories. Among the more established households who have shown signs of structural dependence on food purchases, NWFPs provided by far the most important fall back positions. It might also be of interest to note that, with minor exceptions, income from NWFPs consisted of sales income from honey and coffee. Clearly, these products are obtained from secure access domains. By implication, NWFPs that are exploited as open access benefits had very limited role in meeting household staple food needs. On the other hand, further data analysis has shown that about 40 per cent of households who accessed forest benefits through share cropping were found to have relied on the income they get as NWFP share tenants for the purchase of the needed food grains.

Several factors acting in concert influence the market values of forest products and the resultant financial capital forest villagers could realise. The major ones relate to the forms of exchange practises in place, including the type of market places, the timing of exchange transactions, and the extent of processing that producers put in the marketed product (FAO 1995). The next section addresses some of the issues giving particular attention to NWFPs.



## **10.5 The forest product market system and influences on household income**

### **10.5.1 Introduction**

The legal context within which forest products are harvested circumscribes the marketing channels through which these goods are traded. In general, most wood products are marketed covertly while NWFP marketing is an integral part of farmers' 'legitimate' endeavours. Hence, as detailed in the following two sections, one observes an underground forest economy realised through wood sale and an official forest economy that NWFPs nurture.

### **10.5.2 The case of wood marketing**

In the scheme of things, the acquisition of sufficiently corroborated information on this aspect of the forest economy was a difficult task. However, from field observations and interactions with the youth group discussion participants it was realised that wood marketing exhibits some product-specific differences, as noted below.

As regards plank marketing, in most cases, sharecropping partners are involved in transporting the items to the point of sale and this takes place clandestinely, during evenings and at night. Sometimes, the tree "owner" opts to dispose his share of the planks produced on his own. Often, individuals in nearby urban settlements act as a link between buyers and suppliers. On the other hand, because of official restrictions on tree felling, most of the more conspicuous wooden utensils do not appear in the periodic market places that farmers patronise, but rather are marketed within village settlements. This is likely to limit opportunities for shopping around for the best price. Indeed, the difficulty of marketing processed items was an additional reason for concluding sharecropping arrangements in wood processing - as a strategy of spreading the marketing risk.

Two different marketing channels are used in the marketing of woodfuel, and this is a reflection of the degree of official ambivalence surrounding this line of activity. On the one hand, wood fuel suppliers residing along main roads stockpile firewood at locations strategic enough to evade official scrutiny but accessible enough for transportation by passing truckers. This is a widespread practice among the Manjo, but is also a feature some Kaffecho households appear to have emulated. Archival documents at local departments of agriculture (Decha DoA OF 1996 - 1999; Gimbo DoA OF/1 1998 - 1999) attest to the concerns of professionals regarding the growing trend of roadside firewood sale by the Kaffecho following the construction of major highways and rural feeder roads. On the other hand, woodfuel suppliers residing in the vicinity of

Bonga town - Manjos at Sheeka sub-*Kebele* inclusive - and other major urban settlements move about the different quarters of the towns carrying firewood and charcoal. This rarely met any official restriction or regulation.

### 10.5.3 NWFP marketing practices and their income effects

The official nature of NWFP marketing means that producers are at liberty to sell these forest goods where they see fit. Table 10.8 shows product-specific channels of NWFP exchange in the case study areas.

**Table 10.8**  
**Channels of exchange in forest products**

Product	Places of exchange				Debt		Total (cases)
	Market centres		Village/ roadside		Repayment		
	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%	
Honey	167	78.4	16	7.5	30	14.1	213
Coffee	101	70.1	11	7.6	32	22.2	144
Spices	59	66.3	28	31.5	2	2.2	89
Condiments	28	80.0	7	20.0	0	0	35
Mats/bags	16	69.6	7	30.4	0	0	23
Total (cases)	371	73.6	69	13.7	64	12.7	504
X <sup>2</sup>	30.5, P < 0.001						

Source: Questionnaire survey, 1998/99.

Evidently, in all of the above forest products, at least two-thirds of households who engaged in direct sale of NWFPs did so in periodic market centres, as opposed to village/roadside locations. The result was also statistically significant. Although these market places are characterised by varying levels of periodicity (see Section 6.4.2), most of them continued to play the historically important role they had as forest product exchange places. Indeed, in five of the markets which local people visited one finds a wide ranging number of licensed traders to whom farmers sell their forest products. Furthermore, most forest goods transactions concluded in market centres are undertaken in the more developed of the market places. For instance, a total of 72 per cent of honey producers were found out to have patronised Bonga and Wushwush markets. Almost all of the market places in which the above forest goods were sold are located, on the average, under 10 km away from farmers' villages (Appendix 7.17).

NWFP exchange also takes place within village milieu and along main roads. This is essentially on account of the involvement of itinerant traders who are based in rural villages or nearby urban settlements. The only exceptions are condiments and mats/bags which, even when sold in villages and along main roads, are sold to buyers who are often final users (Appendix 9.9). It should be noted here that, the regulation of NWFP trade outlined in 6.4 is only partial, as it only



applies to retailers and wholesalers. Thus, market participation as an itinerant trader is open to any one interested.

Itinerant and licensed traders have symbiotic relationships. From interviews with both categories of traders (Appendices 9.9 and 9.10), it became clear that itinerant merchants serve as the lieutenants of urban-based traders. Often, itinerant traders buy NWFPs (most notably coffee, honey and spices) from the hinterland using capital advanced to them by licensed traders and supply the latter with fairly large market-ready items at agreed upon profit margins. The security of a guaranteed buyer at the end of the marketing line coupled with the lure of a cash advance is what prompts itinerant traders to partake in NWFP trade. Itinerant traders who use their own working capital have, however, a better bargaining power than the former group in dealing with their clients, both as buyers and as sellers. Either way, forest gate product prices were perceptibly lower than corresponding prices at nearby local markets. It was estimated that these differentials stood between 33.3 per cent (Ethiopian cardamom) and 50 per cent (dried coffee), as shown in Appendix 5.4.

Another aspect of forest product exchange is the practice of borrowing against NWFPs (Table 10.8). This is expressed through the marketing mainly of honey and coffee. The proportion of households who borrowed against coffee was higher than that for honey, and this was statistically significant as well ( $X^2 = 3.97$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). From in-depth household interviews it was learnt that households who had encountered cash flow problems borrow money from urban-based NWFP traders and, in limited cases, from richer community members (Appendices 10.2 - 10.4). Repayment is in kind - through providing a mutually agreed upon quantity of honey and/or coffee at time of harvest. The reference price used to determine repayment levels is the one prevalent during the preceding product harvest period, which as noted below, would generally be very low.

Discriminant Analysis was employed to characterise the agricultural resource basis of households who reported having regularly borrowed against NWFPs. To this end, the variables used to classify share tenants (see Section 9.4.9.1) as well as an additional one that deals with the number of forest items household sells were used as independent variables. This resulted in a hit ratio of 74.6 per cent, with 73 per cent of those who practised borrowing against NWFPs classified accurately. These and the mean values of the independent variables together with their respective statistical significance are reported in Appendix 12.5, and the findings are summarised below.

On average, 'borrowers' produced less *teff*, had less *enset* and other farmland as well as fewer oxen and other livestock than 'non-borrowers'. These results were significant at 95 per cent level.

However, 'borrowers' tended to have significantly higher numbers of beehives and were found to have been involved in selling a greater range of forest goods than 'non-borrowers'. From the above it emerges that, those who regularly borrowed against NWFPs tended to be functionally poor households with a higher degree of exposure to forest product marketing activities. In the opinion of in-depth interview participants who had a first hand experience in borrowing against NWFPs (Appendix 10.2) the double role of NWFP traders as village moneylenders facilitates the loan granting process, because lenders could easily assess the value of the forest products that borrowers offer as loan guarantors.

Hard data on loan amount and repayment agreements are difficult to come by as the entire undertaking is shrouded with secrecy. However, it is generally recognised that these loans are characterised by exorbitant interest rates. Based on experiences of five in-depth interviews with participants who were willing to divulge the necessary information, it was calculated that borrowing against coffee carried an implicit interest rate of between 36 to 49 percent per annum (Appendix 5.5). This is more than thrice the rate at which the government charges farmers for agricultural input loans. Given the low economic status of borrower households these high interest charges entail significant erosion to their purchasing capacity.

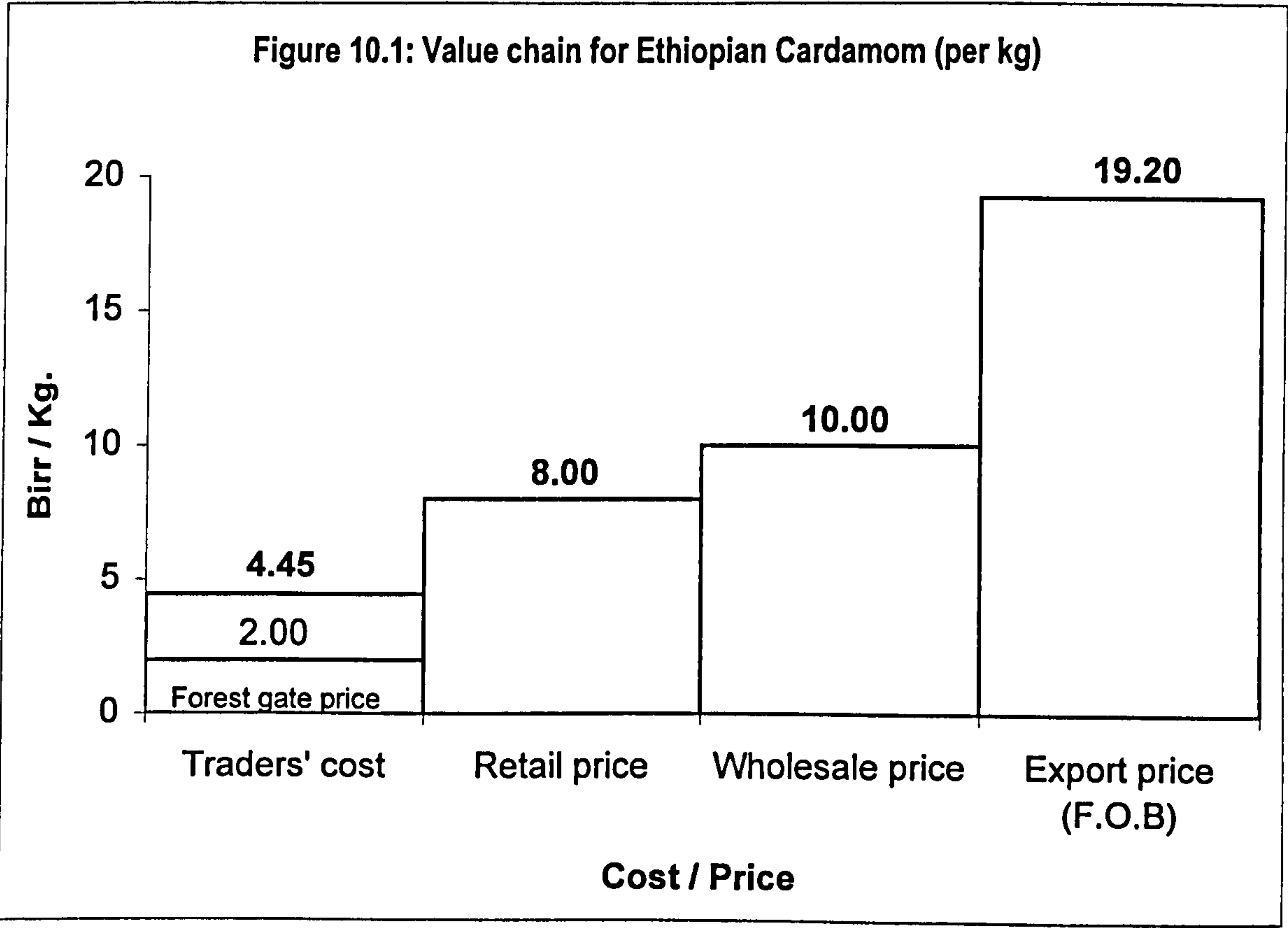
Irrespective of the different channels of exchange that households use, one of the salient features of NWFP marketing relates to the practice of early sale. For instance, while 89.4 per cent of the honey produced by NTFP respondents was sold shortly after harvest, some 55 per cent of the coffee beans that the above households collected were sold unripe (Appendix 8.4). The dominance of the practice of early sale has a direct unfavourable influence on NWFP income because greater product supply causes prices to plummet and condemns producers to be 'price takers'. In fact, it is the generally held expectation of early sale that moneylenders use as a justification for using low prices as a frame of reference for dictating terms of loan repayment (Appendix 11.4.1).

Farmers are well aware of the marketing problems they are faced with. However, they seem to have few alternatives for raising the needed cash income and meeting their tax obligations and inputs' loan repayment commitments. It should be appreciated that these expenditures have to be met during the months of December to April and were set deliberately to coincide with harvest periods of honey as well as the major food crops and NWFPs (see Appendix 9.11.1 for the local agricultural cropping calendar). It is highly conceivable that the need to settle such important financial obligations adds considerable pressure on farmers to continue practising early product sale.



Most forest products originating from highland Kafa in general and the study areas in particular also have inter-regional and international export significance. Licensed traders are at the heart of this trade matrix, and from interviews with this category of traders (Appendix 9.10) it was learnt that their clients in the central market of Addis Ababa also exported the coffee and Ethiopian cardamom they buy from them. While coffee is exported through the intermediary of a government parastatal, honey and spices (including Ethiopian cardamom) are sold by individual domestic traders mainly to neighbouring countries and the Middle East (MEDaC, 1998/99).

Against this background, Figure 10.1 illustrates the extent of price differentials across the various market set ups in which Ethiopian cardamom is exchanged - a commodity for which reasonably adequate marketing data were obtained.



Source: Appendix 5.6.

Referring to Figure 10.1, 'forest gate price' is the maximum farmers received from a kilogram of good quality Ethiopian cardamom, while 'traders cost' includes unit purchase price (i.e. 'forest gate price', tax and royalty fees as well as transportation, handling and related costs - for details, see Appendix 5.6). The retail price designates the average unit price licensed traders sell

Ethiopian cardamom in their premises, while the wholesale price is the minimum these traders charge their clients at the central market. Traders' profit range from 80 to 125 per cent depending on the location of sale.

Although Ethiopian cardamom export does not embody much value added, it is curious to note that the unit export price comes to about 1000 per cent of the forest gate price. It is, therefore, highly conceivable that there is a wide gulf between the share of producers and marketers in the value of Ethiopian cardamom. This fits into the discourse on the poor functional integration of rural producers in the workings of the domestic and international commodity markets and the attendant backwash effect trade engenders.

In part to manage the uni-directional nature of the benefits of trade in forest goods, in recent years, local people have embarked on some modest collective marketing projects. A good case in point in the case study areas is the involvement of the 'Yeibito farmers' multi-purpose co-operative society' in NTFP marketing (Appendix 9.7). The society started its participation in NWFP marketing in 1999 when it purchased honey and long pepper from its members and others with the view to selling during the lean period when prices pick up. The Society seems not to have encountered any major problem in meeting its marketing objectives and has even secured a respectable profit from its NWFP marketing operations. While it is early days in the life of this association, the local Co-operative Offices are encouraged by the good start it has shown and are keen on promoting similar schemes in many other forested areas (KSZ-CO 2000).

In summary, the discussion in this section has shown the multiplicity of marketing factors affecting the realisation of the potential market values of NWFPs accruing to rural producers. While some of these factors pertain to deep-seated structural problems affecting the workings of the agricultural sector, others are manifestations of the poor bargaining power of forest villagers, issues which some farmers began addressing through co-operative marketing.

## **10.6 Discussion**

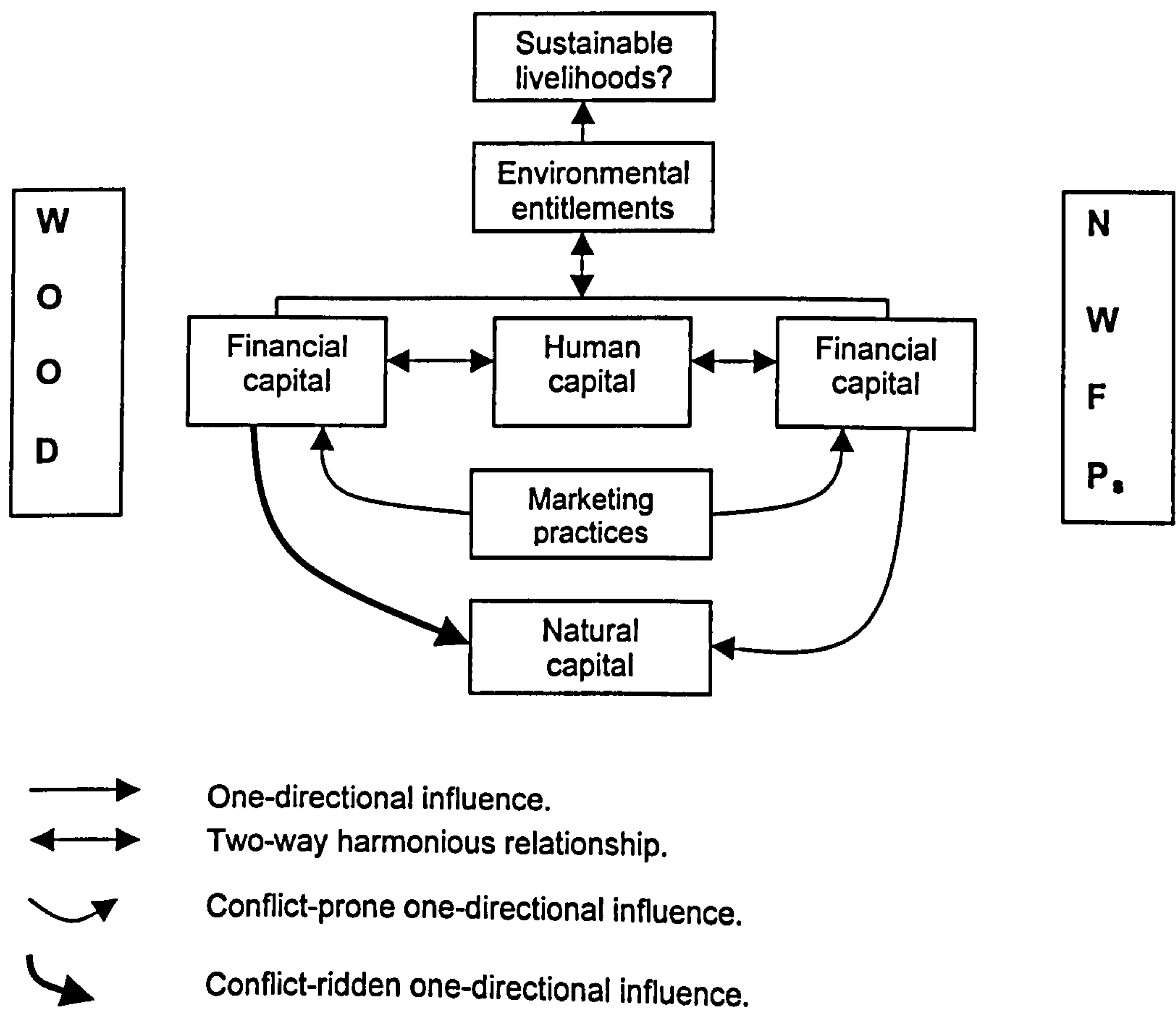
The objective of this chapter has been to assess the importance of forest production activities in the rural livelihood system as realised in the exchange sphere. It is recognised that livelihoods are maintained in many more ways than through the market. However, the high degree of exchange orientation of forest products, the importance of forest goods in shaping the economic history of the wider region, and the pivotal role of cash income in local people's interactions with the outside world were thought to be sufficient considerations to use market participation as a proxy for livelihood maintenance in the case study areas.



In general, the involvement of local households in forest produce marketing is considerable; however, there are observable inter-household discrepancies in this regard. In fact, households who accessed forest resources through formal mechanisms or through customary arrangements had the opportunity to participate in the sale of a greater number of forest goods than those who had to rely on share cropping or family allocations. Households who depended on share cropping were chiefly resource poor ones, female-headed and younger households inclusive.

Within the context of overall forest dependency Manjos tend to have more diversified forest livelihood resources than others. One of the factors that contributed to the visibility of Manjos in the forest sector is their participation in woodfuel trade. This, of course, was by no means confined to Manjos only. At any rate, while the overt or covert involvement in wood sales is primarily a consequence of an adaptive response to market opportunities and is an aspect of livelihood diversification, it falls short of the requirements of a sustainable livelihood strategy. In fact, there is a concern that such an income portfolio could prove to be anathema to attempts at a more rational forest use regime. This is especially so because wood sale is a high return activity and households involved in the trade relied heavily on this particular income source even for their food needs. The depleting impact of commercial-oriented wood production on the forest resource base and the possible destabilisation effect that such an activity could have on more prudent use of forest resources is depicted in Figure 10.2 (the left hand side of the diagram).

**Figure 10.2: Forest livelihood maintenance through market participation**



At the other end of the spectrum lie NWFPs, which were also found to have had varying degrees of livelihood importance for the different category of households. Among the wealthier groups, that is households who had more secure access rights, the high overall NWFP cash income has the potential to fuel household economic growth and expansion. While in poorer households, a category that also encompassed share tenants and open access users, not only was NWFP income low but also it was realised from large numbers of low value transactions. As a result, the significance of NWFP income in this context was thought to lie more in its contribution towards meeting occasional cash flow gaps than in helping households to capitalise on their assets. NWFP income has also served as a safety valve for redressing food self-insufficiency across the different household categories. The role that forest-based gathering played in respect of ensuring household food security was a consequence primarily of the failure of mixed farming activities arising from factors that are specific to the production system itself. This in a way challenges the generally held view concerning the limited vitality of 'on farm diversification' as a reliable income diversification option. It is to be recalled that the mainstream literature on household income diversification considers 'on-farm diversification' to be as prone as mixed farming activities to the dangers of crop failure.

In general, most of the indigenous households combined their skills and expertise in traditional forest-based agriculture (human capital) to provide NWFPs for the market. This has proved to be of varying degrees of critical importance for households in terms of meeting household cash income needs (financial capital). While NWFPs represent a much lower degree of ecological risk than traditional wood production practices, NWFPs are not entirely benign to the forest ecosystem (Section 2.5.3.4, Chapter Two). These are conceptualised in Figure 10.2 (the right hand side of the diagram). The financial capital which households derive both from wood and non-wood sale represent aspects of 'environmental entitlements'. However, there is a concern that under present institutional arrangements the interest in generating cash income from sale of forest products might jeopardise the sustainability of the forest livelihood system (Figure 10.2)

The research has also looked at the local livelihood significance of forest products in conjunction with the market place constraints characterising their realisation. It has been shown that the unofficial nature of commercial wood production drives its marketing underground, thereby denying the acquisition of competitive product prices. As regards NWFPs, a host of market place factors including distress sale, limited bargaining opportunities, and an absence of value addition to marketed products were noted to have undermined market returns accruing to the rural producer. In short, current forest product marketing practices negatively impact on the amount of financial capital forest villagers realise from their produce (Figure 10.2). An important lesson that can be drawn from this is that any attempt at setting in motion a process of livelihoods-based



resource management initiative should give due attention to influencing the market system in which forest goods circulate.

All in all, although forests represent important livelihood resources, there are several tenurial and operational constraints that thwart the workings of the forest use system that call for informed institutional interventions. The opportunities for this undertaking in the context of the case study sub-region are outlined later in the thesis (Section 11.3.3, Chapter Eleven).

## **11. A synthesis of the research findings and their implications**

### **11.1 Introduction**

In line with the objectives of the research set out in Section 1.3 (Chapter One), this chapter takes stock of the findings of the study and explores their operational and theoretical implications. The remainder of the chapter is divided into five sections. In Section two the findings of the research are synthesised from the viewpoints of past and present patterns of forest access (Objectives one and two), organisational bases of forest access enforcement (Objective three), forest livelihoods and forest management (Objective four). Section three explores the policy and management implications of the findings in the Ethiopian context (Objective five). Section four identifies the theoretical and conceptual ramifications of the research findings with a view to enriching the discourse on CPR analysis and management (Objective six). The final section summarises the discussion in the chapter.

### **11.2 A synthesis of the research findings**

#### **11.2.1 Forest access mechanisms and principles**

##### **11.2.1.1 The historical experience**

The research has established that historical Kafa was a highly centralised and hierarchical agrarian polity where a range of property rights in land resources thrived. In particular, the requirements of the King's entourage and the nascent courts of the kingdom necessitated the establishment of crown lands, which had a semblance of state tenure. At the same time the elaborate administrative structure of the kingdom created several office holding positions, and this enabled upper clan members to lay claim to vast land resources at their places of governorship. Given the constant warfare that shaped the evolution of the kingdom it was only natural that local chiefs surrounded themselves with trusted subordinates. Thus, the *Gumbo* system, which is essentially a resource tenure system based on kinship, proved to be an important mechanism for enlisting a sense of belonging among commoners. Such a tenure arrangement resembles the modern day concept of group property rights (Ostrom *et al.* 1999: 279) and was very much informed by the principle of ancestral occupancy, which is a defining feature of customary tenure rules in much of pre-colonial Africa (Delville 2000; Fortmann 1988). Moreover, largely because of low population density some forest areas were exploited as open access resources.

An important aspect of the hierarchical nature of social organisation in historical Kafa is the relegation of the Manjos to the forest domain, away from Kaffecho settlements. In addition, there came into being a trade-oriented tax system. In particular, Manjos and Moslem traders,



who had the skill and expertise, respectively, in the production and commercialisation of forest goods met their tax obligations by providing a range of forest products. The popularisation of such forest goods as honey, coffee, and forest spices through inter-regional trade, and the high demand these products attracted elsewhere in the region, not only contributed to the establishment of forest-based gathering as a livelihood option among the local rural producers but also provided important stimuli for the incorporation of Kafa into more powerful political entities in the wider region.

While Menilik's conquest effectively transferred the land rights of the nobility to the new rulers, the need to placate the subjects necessitated the co-option of the local opinion formers - members of the upper clan Kaffecho. Thus, the indigenous social structure informed the patterns of resource tenure that evolved in the early days of the post-conquest period. With the increased centralisation of the administrative arrangements and the enhanced popularity of Kafa as a unique source of highly prized forest goods, there came into existence stringent land laws that necessitated land registration. These measures extinguished customary group rights and community control and marginalised poorer segments of the local communities. To this extent the experiences in Kafa sits well with that of other parts of Africa where formal land titling severely curtailed the access rights of indigenous land users (Platteau 2000). At the same time, vacant lands and hitherto open access forests became state property, the local population enjoying *de facto* use rights. This was as much a consequence of the limited monitoring capacity of the government as a reflection of the indispensability of forest-based production activities at the local level.

Government tenure did not, however, last long as a dominant form of forest right. The growth in the export value of forest goods such as coffee, as well as the increased dependence of the government on the elite for its survival, led eventually to the government acceding to the economic interests of the privileged few through the allocation of private forest rights. This aggravated the process of land alienation begun earlier and impinged on the forest use rights of the indigenous communities. The specific features of the Kafa forest production system had their own influence on the manner in which landlord-tenant relationships were played out in terms of access to forest products. In areas where forest coffee dominated, the new claimants opted for a commercially-oriented forest product use, thereby denying local farmers-turned-tenants any direct access to the resource. On the other hand, the limited exposure of the new forest owners to forest-based bee keeping forced them to enter into sharecropping arrangements with local farmers to generate this additional benefit the forest provided. Thus, farmers in non-coffee endowed areas had a wider pool of *de facto* forest use rights than those in forest coffee rich localities. As a result, on the eve of the 1974 revolution, forest resources in highland Kafa in general, and in the case study areas in particular, had been subjected to a range of property rights systems including private tenure, state tenure, and customary tenure.



All in all, while the kinship factor permeated throughout the history of Kafa in instituting customary tenure principles in forest access, the state was an important organ in allocating differential forest rights to a range of private actors in the Kafa of post WWII Imperial Ethiopia. Faced with an unsympathetic formal resource tenure system, the principal channel open to local communities for participation in the production of commercially valuable forest goods, such as honey, was through concluding sharecropping agreements in bee keeping. As is shown below, these principles, which informed forest access in pre-revolution Kafa, have also persisted to influence the current state of affairs.

#### **11.2.1.2 Post-1975 patterns of forest access**

Since the promulgation of the land reform decree in 1975 all land resources in Ethiopia have become under the direct administration of the State. This provides the legal context within which forest resources have been accessed. However, the decree has been subject to local interpretations and, in the case study areas, it has been implemented in ways compatible with local notions of fairness and entitlement. More fundamentally, the land reform has been conceived locally as a means of redistributing agricultural land. The absence of specific directives concerning the utilisation of forests has also reinforced this view. The law dealing with village forests came into being only five years after the land reform decree. In the meantime, grassroots authorities implemented the land reform decree in ways compatible with resource endowments, local priorities and the interpretations of the PA leadership of the time. The upshot of this has been a differential participation of the PA as a provider of forest tenure, ranging from direct involvement to a complete dissociation in forest allocation.

Peasant Associations that participated in forest allocation continually identified ingenious ways of addressing the forest needs of their constituencies. In general, these grassroots authorities considered the following variables in the allocation of forestland to interested households: proximity of residence of households to village forests, ability of households to engage in forest-based gathering activities and their perceived need for forest goods. While, on the other hand, in localities where PAs shrank from any forest allocation responsibility in the early days of the *Derg*, local people have been relying on a range of informal forest access mechanisms, chief amongst which is customary access. The principles informing customary forest access in the case study areas fit well with those reviewed in Chapter Two. They include geographical proximity to the resource, proven track record of use, and ancestral claim of ownership. A combination of kinship factors and common ancestry was also behind the designation of forest areas as *Dejo* venues, hence as sacred groves.

Similar to experiences in other parts of the developing world, customary access in the case study areas also allows secondary rights to those who could not, by reason of descent or



recency of household establishment, lay direct claim to village forests (cf. Fortmann 1988). Indeed the resultant flexibility of the customary tenure system engendered something akin to what Peters (1987) termed as overlapping rights. This has spatial (e.g. ease of collection of NWFPs away from the domestic domain), temporal (e.g. ease of fuelwood collection during the dry season), and product-based (e.g. subsistence-oriented collection of forest goods) dimensions. These three manifestations of secondary rights could also be observed in respect of the generation of a single forest benefit. For instance, primary right holders could allow others to collect spices (a case of product-based secondary right) during the post-harvest season (temporal perspective) provided that it is undertaken in areas away from the major production domain of the right holders (spatial dimension).

It should be appreciated that the customary access principles and practices have withstood the political turmoil and highly intrusive rural programmes to which the countryside has been subjected for well over two decades now. Short of a major government re-organisation of the rural scene, there is no *a priori* reason to expect a breakdown in the above village-bound and kinship-oriented principles that sustain traces of customary forest tenure in the case study areas. The tenacity of customary resource access systems in the developing world is a widely reported phenomenon (see Delville 2000; Platteau 2000).

The above notwithstanding, both the formal and the informal forms of forest access have had an in-built bias towards older households. However, there are a number of traditionally upheld mechanisms that have ensured that younger households or individuals have also benefited from the local environmental resources. To start with, the local culture encourages the young to look for vacant forest patches or forest trees and involve themselves in bee keeping, and a sustained involvement in this undertaking enables them to develop a recognised claim of access to the same in perpetuity. Moreover, it is not uncommon to find that parents grant trees for forest-based gathering purposes (so-called *Wejoo*) to their sons when they come of age as well as in anticipation of their continued support in forest and food farming activities. Access to forest trees is also an inheritable right. All these contribute towards the bridging of intra-generational inequities in forest access.

Both *Wejoo* and inheritance practices have a distinct male bias, a practice informed by gender stereotypes in the household division of labour for forest goods production. In the same vein, divorce settlements deny women access to forest resources and this is rooted in local notions of woman's entitlement to forest resources as seen by male arbitrators. Neither is there an adequate legal or administrative infrastructure that could rectify the situation. Consequently, most female-headed households have only secondary rights to village forests. Women in male-headed households have a marginal role in decisions regarding household production of forest goods, the major exception to this being junior wives in a polygyny who



accept lowly household status in return for relative independence in their control over their part of household resources, including forest goods. Polygamy, however, is in the minority.

The other informal forest access mechanism is share cropping. In part due to a heavier involvement of the formal CBOs (e.g. PAs) in the allocation of forest holdings in some of the study localities and partly because of the enforceability of historical claims to the use of forests/trees, an increasing proportion of younger households have no direct forest access. Consequently, one observes a resurgence of share cropping as an important means of securing forest access. At least three reasons could be advanced for the persistence of this institution as a means of forest access. Firstly, the uneven distribution of skills in the generation of such forest goods as honey and wood products means that some tree right holders of necessity require a share partner to realise the economic values out of their forest resources. Secondly, the need for timely accomplishment of coffee collection also necessitates involvement in share cropping. Finally, a cultural stigma associated with the marketing of NWFPs, such as buckthorn and spices on the one hand and their increased commercialisation on the other, has prompted right holders to opt for share cropping arrangements. In all cases, however, sharecropping partners have close affinal, spatial or marital relationships. Thus, the experiences of share cropping in forest products can be explained in terms of the "efficient community hypothesis" enunciated in the context of marine fisheries (Platteau and Nugent 1992: 409).

The future role of share cropping as a means of forest access is contingent on (a) the lack of success in enforcing statutory forest laws and (b) the internal economic organisation of the local communities. The first factor refers primarily to the practice of share cropping in wood processing activities which are legally untenable (Section 9.3); hence, a vigorous pursuance of the letter and spirit of the forest law is likely to go a long way in discouraging people from participating in the wood trade. On the other hand, the issue of local economic organisation (item 'b' above) is relevant for share cropping in NWFPs. In this case, the future role of share cropping is contingent on the way in which the product-specific factors that necessitated the establishment of share cropping evolve over time. These are examined below.

The direct involvement of children in the marketing of spices and condiments which some households prefer to be handled as share cropping products indicates that with increased monetisation of the rural economy the drive for financial capital is bound to crowd out the social capital justifications sustaining share cropping. The Boserupian thesis, which has gained a wide currency in varying settings, also points to the fact that often intensification comes from additional labour inputs and that population growth makes it feasible for the adoption of such innovations as multiple cropping (see Boserup 1990: 13). As regards coffee collection, the ubiquitous nature of the skill it entails coupled with the progressive diminution of forest coffee holdings, as a result primarily of the workings of family-centred access



mechanisms, it is unlikely that share cropping will continue to have any role as a means of access. Moreover, given the surge of interest in coffee domestication it is highly conceivable that increasing number of households will find the cultivation of own garden coffee more attractive than the socially looked down upon activity of shared coffee collection.

On the other hand, in those activities such as bee keeping where the lack of the requisite skills and expertise necessitates share cropping, there is a strong likelihood that such practices will persist in one form or another in the foreseeable future. This is because the climbing of trees for hanging the cylindrical log beehives on high level branches of trees requires some degree of bravery and skill, which are unevenly distributed traits. Although there could be alternatives for the existing bee keeping practice, extension interventions that are expected to bring about system-wide changes in agricultural technology are yet to be geared towards such forest-based activities.

The various forms of locally concluded forest access arrangements have over the years been undermined by the imposition of outside realities. In particular, the rural agrarian policies that successive Ethiopian governments charted had varying levels of negative influence on the traditional forest access rights of the local inhabitants. In the case study areas these ranged from state farm expansion to resettlement to private agriculture investment in forest fringes and to demarcation/re-demarcation of state forest areas amidst an intensely farmed agricultural landscape. As far as local interests go, the above are reflections of state or policy failure: not only did the associated policies have little regard for local realities but also no corrective action was taken to ameliorate the effects of the policies after the event.

Some of the negative effects of these policies have been undone with the downfall of the *Derg* regime. A good case in point is the reclamation of settler allocated forests by the indigenous people. At the other end of the spectrum is the expansion of the Wushwush Tea Estate and the recently initiated private agricultural investment ventures that impinge on local people's access rights irretrievably or have the potential to do the same. As regards state forest demarcation/re-demarcation, there are indications that the process has contributed not only to the instability of forest tenure at the local level but also aggravated the unenviable condition of state-community interactions in forest tenure establishment. At the root of these interventions is the unbridled position of the state as the owner of all land resources and the tradition of central planning and policy making.

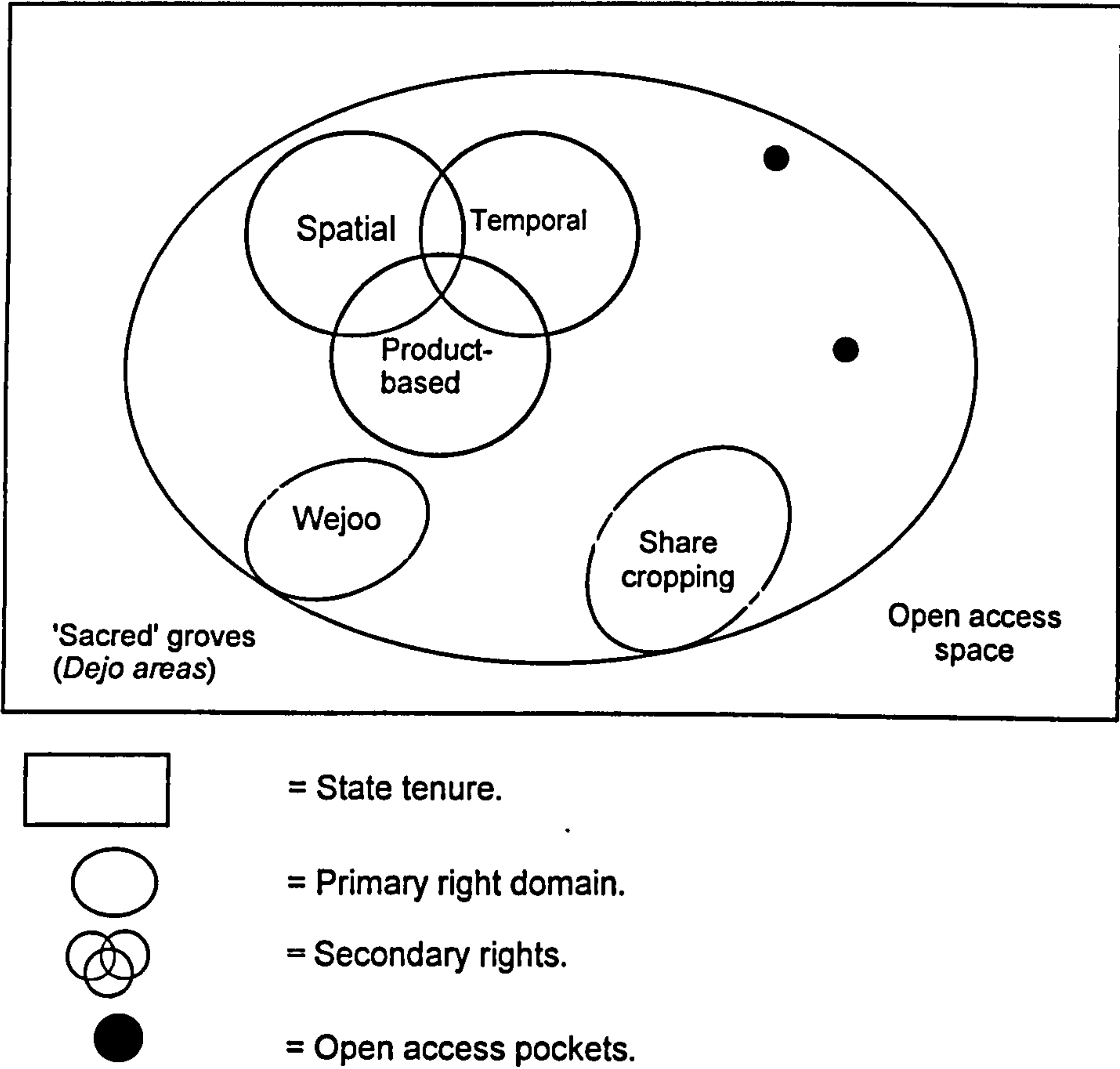
Lack of official recognition of locally tailored forest access rights as well as the doctrinaire implementation of rural policies that had a bearing on forest tenure have weakened the credibility of customary claims to forest resources, thereby contributing to the creeping of open access and unsustainable exploitation of village forests. Good cases in point in this regard include the practice of using Manjos for forest clearance purposes prior to cereal

cropping and the illicit wood poaching activities that both the Kaffecho and the Manjo are involved in.

11.2.1.3 Summary and conclusion

The contemporary patterns of forest access discussed above can be conceptualised diagrammatically (Figure 11.1). It is to be recalled that all the different forms of local forest access discussed earlier have been pursued and claimed successfully despite a formal claim of tenure by the state and the existence of restrictive forest legislation regimes (see Appendices 2.3.4B and 2.4.4B). The actual experience adds credence to the relevance of the 'mixed tenure' perspective in characterising patterns of resource access in the Third World (Section 2.4.1).

Figure 11.1: Mixed tenure in practice: forest access in the case study areas



The primary right domain (Figure 11.1) refers to the locally enforceable forest use rights that individual households access through the intermediary of formal CBOs, customary means and/or through inheritance. A greater part of the space has been allocated for the primary right domain, because the bulk of village forests in the case study areas have recognised individual users. Forest fringes outside this domain are exploited as open access benefits.



Moreover, most *Dejo* ceremonies are undertaken outside individually claimed forest areas, and the occasional wood theft and intrusion that take place in these areas gives them a semblance of open access resources (see Section 9.2), hence the interspersion of *Dejo* areas with open access ones (Figure 11.1).

The primary right domain is the single most important spatial niche where product-specific open access and a range of locally concluded access arrangements thrive. As regards secondary rights, it should be noted that, they could be realised either simultaneously or serially in forest locations that otherwise have primary right holders, hence the overlaps. The other forms of local forest access are *Wejoo* and share cropping, where the grantee and the share tenant, respectively, consult the primary right holder in the management of the forest goods production process. Thus, the circles representing *Wejoo* and share cropping cannot be free standing ones, but rather are conceptualised as having links with the larger spatial domain from which they branch out. Nevertheless, these channels provide opportunities for the youth (*Wejoo*) and other skilled farmers (through share cropping) to reap forest benefits that would otherwise have necessitated direct access.

Central to the issue of tenure creation through production participation (e.g. share cropping) is the prevalence of an inward-looking local organisational culture and a production system run as much by social considerations as by economic ones, a system akin to Hyden's (1980) "economy of affection" or Scott's (1976) "moral economy". To this extent the findings of the present study enrich the conceptual bases of the literature on tenure creation through the elaboration of the role of labour investment. As observed in Chapter Two, this explains the process only in terms of sustained labour expenditure on open access or state tenure domains. In this connection, it is worth noting that, the literature on informal access scarcely considers the possibility that forests could be subjected to share cropping as much as farming fields are. As a result, the role of share cropping as a viable access mechanism has been little documented (Platteau and Nugent 1992: 409), an endeavour the present research has attempted to redress.

To conclude, in as much as the formal CBOs in charge of overseeing the land reform process *provided* natural resource tenure, local farmers employed a combination of adaptive strategies that enabled them to *create* access to forest benefits. These mechanisms evolved against all adversities, such as the institution of *Kebele* and state forests, which were by and large associated with state tenure in land resources. Interestingly, the state has not made any use of the resource ownership title it gave to itself in ways that could establish it as a legitimate resource owner in the eyes of the local people. In other words, for rural people it takes more than legislation to recognise the state as a direct stakeholder in local environmental resources. This, in a way, is suggestive of the fact that, as far as local people go, tenure cannot exist *independently* of use. Conversely, all the different forms of forest use

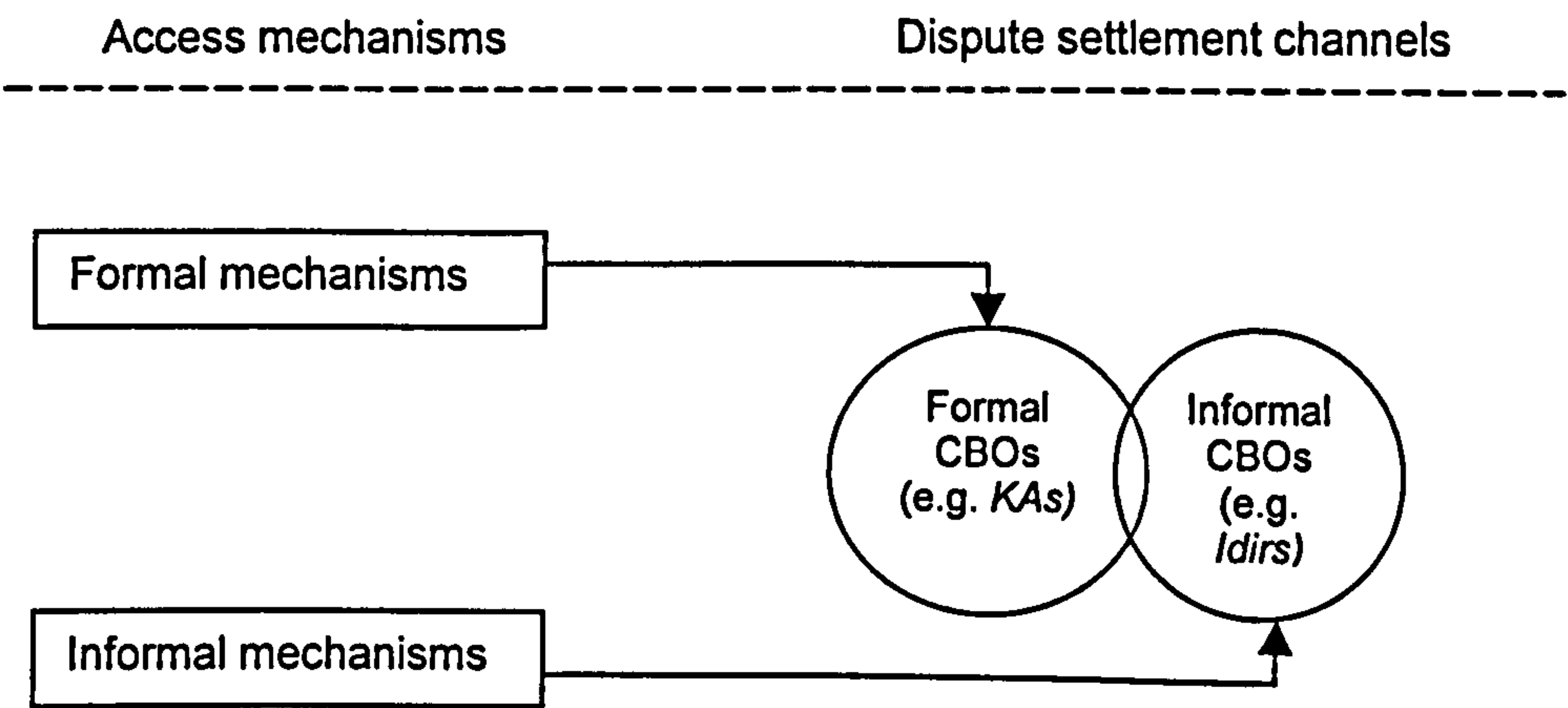
rights discussed above, locally enforceable as they are, have been made possible without formal governmental recognition, and hence fall short of the requirements of *tenure in formal thinking*: a case of forest use *without* tenure. Yet, in *local thinking* the absence of the state from the local forest use arena has led to the likening of customarily upheld use with tenure. Given the strained state-community relationship with respect to land resource allocation (Sections 7.4 – 7.7) and of agricultural development interventions (Section 7.9.3), for local people, the invisibility of the state as a strong claimant of “its” forest tenurial rights could be thought of as representing a case of benign neglect. An important issue worth pursuing in this regard is how to reconcile the state’s position as an overall resource owner and local people’s concern for security of forest use right, a matter addressed in 11.3 below.

### 11.2.2 Local organisations and tenure enforcement

A fuller understanding of the system of forest tenure in place also necessitates a closer examination of the range of actors entrusted with the responsibility of tenure administration and an assessment of their respective efficacy. In this regard, the research pointed to the absence of local organisations that deal exclusively with inter-household forest access conflicts in the case study areas. While there has always been a tradition of settling such conflicts at the local level, these have all along been undertaken by CBOs and traditional institutions that also handle other aspects of community management.

Currently, local organisational preferences for tenure enforcement follow the institutional bases for tenure provision (Figure 11.2).

**Figure 11.2: Access provision and dispute settlement channels**



Thus, conflicts surrounding formally sanctioned forest access rights are adjudicated in the KA system, while those established through customary principles tend to be resolved through informal community networks, chief amongst which is the village-wide *Idir*. The type of evidence at hand also has a bearing on the choice of local organisations for resolving tenure conflicts. The more concrete the evidence the greater is the propensity of local people to take



the matter to the *Kebele* Social Court. In short, as far as the role of local organisations in forest tenure enforcement goes, there is no one-to-one relationship between type of resource use offence and the adjudicating body. This notwithstanding, the *modus operandi* of the KA system in respect of protecting the forest access rights of its subjects is very much informed by traditional notions of forest use rights and conceptions of mutual trust. This sits well with the operational rules of the *Idir* system. Consequently, one observes synergy between formal and informal organisations in the management of conflicts at the local level. Such a working relationship also reflects a marriage of convenience. In as much as the KA system, which is organised at a larger spatial scale, needs the insider views and grassroots touch of village *Idirs*, so *Idirs* look to the KA structure for legitimacy and official backing.

Both the *Kebele* authorities and the *Idirs* have often discharged their duties within the broad parameters of the local culture that looks down upon Manjos and unfairly treats women. Local cultural influences were especially pronounced in informing KAs' attempt at enforcing statutory forest laws. A good case in point here is the more severe treatment that politically weaker segments of the local communities (e.g. Manjos) get in the *Kebele* Social Court arena with regard to penalties for wood sale activities. In contrast, influential Kaffechos and urban-based interest groups, who mastermind wood poaching, and local carpenters are often insulated from the long arm of the law (Section 7.10.1.2). On the other hand, as has been illustrated in connection with KA compliance with forestland requests for private investment purposes (Section 7.9.3) and forest demarcation activities (Section 7.10.3.3), these entities tend to switch sides to the powerful when discharging specific government directives. Neither are *Idirs* immune from the sorts of operational failures that afflict formal CBOs. For instance, the disregard that *Idirs* display towards the settlement of outsiders, who are known to pursue unsustainable forest livelihoods that would cause inter-household tenure conflicts in their vicinities, is suggestive of complacency in organisational behaviour. Moreover, *Idirs* or *Idir*-appointed elders are the principal actors behind the often lop-sided decisions that deny divorced women direct access to land resources including bee keeping holdings (Section 8.5.3.3).

The above point to the limitations of traditional community structures and patterns of societal thought to fulfil modern day expectations, a matter several writers have alluded to (Hilhorst 2000). However, in analysing working relationships among CBOs the present research has gone beyond the formal-informal dichotomy on which the discourse on tenure analysis is based (see Section 2.4) and has shown how these different types of organisations interact.

### **11.2.3 Forest utilisation and the access-livelihood nexus**

The research has established that forest resources in the case study areas support the production of food crops, provide a venue for the practice of traditional spiritual ceremonies



and engender livelihood diversification and intensification. The significance of forest resources for livelihood diversification derives from the importance of forest goods in meeting direct household consumption and household cash income needs. Urban demand for forest goods has been a particularly important spur for the involvement of a range of households and individuals in the production of NWFPs such as honey, coffee, spices, and condiments and in the commercial exploitation of wood resources. Indeed, the perceived rise in the market demand for forest goods has been at the heart of the process of NWFP domestication, which in this context is considered as a sign of sustainable forest livelihood intensification. At the same time, however, the growing urban demand for wood coupled with weak law enforcement capacity has contributed to a creeping of short-termism in the use of village forest resources, which falls short of the requirements of sustainable livelihoods.

The research has underlined the centrality of access to natural forest areas in the maintenance of forest livelihoods and addressed the access-livelihood nexus from the perspective of ethnicity, gender, social group status, and 'wealth'. In this regard, the capital assets approach is found to provide a useful framework for synthesising the research findings (see Section 2.5.1 and Figure 3.1). The research identifies eight types of capital assets that are of direct relevance in characterising the access and livelihood dimensions of the empirical findings. In so doing, the research added two more types of capital assets, namely 'health capital' and 'spiritual capital', to the ones identified in the literature (see Rakodi 1999).

Health capital refers to the medicinal and nutritional importance of forest resources to the local population. This classification takes out the 'nutrition' aspect of health capital from 'human capital' (see Section 2.5.1). The categorisation of 'production skills' and 'nutrition' under human capital was found to be a limiting one, as this is thought to confuse a *means* of livelihood (i.e., skill) with an *end* (consumption). The supposed medicinal importance of some of the plant foods as well as the similarities in the access regime governing their utilisation were thought to be sufficient enough reasons to categorise the benefits derived from forest foods and plant medicines under the rubric 'health capital'. While, on the other hand, spiritual capital underlines the culture-bound significance villagers attach to selected forest areas in the organisation of the *Dejo* ceremony.

Also, the six types of capital assets known in the literature have been contextualised to reflect the realities of the forest production system in the case study areas. These include the capacity of the resource base to sustain the production of a wide range of forest goods (natural capital); opportunities for resource access through ancestral claims and other family-centred mechanisms (social capital); intra-community differential access resulting from the involvement of PAs and their functional equivalents in the allocation of forest use rights (political capital); the skills and expertise that households command in the generation of the different forest benefits (human capital); the cash income significance of forests (financial



capital); and the production equipment in use (physical capital) in the course of forest production.

Evidently, social, political, and human capital designate the three principal channels through which forest resources are accessed. The research has established that livelihood concerns are the overriding factors that prompt people in the study areas to establish forest use rights and stake their claims through the medium of local CBOs. In this connection, financial, health, and spiritual capital can be thought of constituting forest livelihood outcomes.

Against the above backdrop, in what follows, the access-livelihood nexus across the different sample categories is assessed and a summary of the deliberations is given in Table 11.1. (Expressions such as 'high', 'low', etc. used in Table 11.1 to characterise the resource endowments of the different household groups are all relative and have to be seen in conjunction with the deliberations that follow.)

In general, owing largely to the reorganisation in local forest access rules and their limited forest production expertise, settlers play a limited role in the local forest economy (Table 11.1). Coffee production/domestication is the only activity where most settlers figure as prominently as the indigenous households. Within this context, the comparatively higher livestock/oxen endowment of settlers (see Section 6.4.3) indicates that their livelihood priorities are in the mixed farming operations that suit their cultural training and background.

**Table 11.1**  
**A summary of the access-livelihood nexus by household category**

Capital assets	Household category				
	Settlers	Female-headed households	Kaffecho male		Manjos
			'Rich'	'Poor'	
Natural capital ('richness' of forests accessed).	Not applicable	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Social capital:					
• Access backed by ancestral claims;	None	Few	Many	Few	Many
• Access through <i>Wejoo</i> ;	None	None	None	Some	Few
• Use of secondary rights.	Limited	High	Limited	High	Limited
Political capital (privileged access through CBOs).	Past: high Current: nil	None	Some	Some	None
Human capital (forest prod'n skills and expertise).	Limited	High	High	High	Very high
Physical capital (wood and NWFP processing tools).	Fairly basic	Fairly basic	Fairly basic	Fairly basic	Fairly basic
Financial capital (forest cash income).					
• Overall	Negligible	Low	High	Low	High
• Relative importance	Negligible	High	Moderate	High	High
Health capital (reliance on forest food/medicines).	Negligible	Limited	Limited	High?	Very high
Spiritual capital (participation in <i>Dejo</i> ).	None	None	High	High	None?

At the other end of the spectrum are the Manjos, who are the most heavily forest dependent community groups (Table 11.1). This was shown to be the case in terms of the extent of Manjo involvement in forest food collection, the range of forest goods Manjos sell, as well as the order of magnitude of the cash income they generate from these undertakings. Doubtless, the workings of traditional social perceptions and associated resource tenure conventions that segregate the Manjos to the forest arena play a role in this. Besides, Manjos are particularly noted for their skills in forest production activities (human capital), a type of asset Manjos use to undertake effectively their own forest production and/or to attract share cropping partners particularly in apiculture (Section 6.2.5). On the other hand, the limited involvement of Manjos in food crop farming arising from their inability/indifference to invest in some of the key production factors such as oxen (Section 6.4.3) contributes to the preponderance of forest income as a source of their household cash income.

As regards health capital, Manjos, as a group, are more reliant on forest foods and medicines than any household category (Section 9.2). Given that Manjos are excluded from the *Dejo* ceremony (Section 9.2), they could be thought of as relying less on the acquisition of spiritual capital from the forest resources. However, given their forest domicile, their heavy dependence on a range of forest products for their survival, and their use of the forest domain to bury the dead, Manjos could have their own way of deriving spiritual benefits from the forest discreetly. This is an issue the research did not explore at length.

With reference to the Kaffecho, richer community groups are endowed with what informants characterised as extensive forest holdings, hence satisfactory levels of natural capital (Appendix 7.2). This in most sub-*Kebeles* has been acquired through ancestral claims and related familial networks. The converse holds true for poorer households, including female-headed ones, as many households in these groups do not have a direct claim to forest access. Indeed, the *Wejoo* form of forest access, which is noted for the limited extent of resource endowment it bestows on the user, typifies the poorer (male-headed) households. As regards female-headed households, inheritance is their major form of institutionally recognised access, but this applies only to a small proportion of them.

At the same time, however, societal norms and practices entitle needy households to access forest products from village forest areas through a variety of secondary right mechanisms. Yet, forest benefits acquired in this way, such as spices and palm leaf products, tend to fetch lower market returns than products obtained from institutionally recognised access sources. Even such a livelihood profile seems not to be guaranteed in the future. From a dynamic perspective, the growing domestic and export importance of forest spices, particularly Ethiopian cardamom, might prompt local people to reconsider the customary basis of their use and start establishing stronger territorial access, an outcome believed to affect adversely the livelihood basis of the poor. As Boserup (1990) argues agricultural intensification



stimulates the emergence of private property in land through, among others, a "gradual change of custom" (19).

The role of political capital as a mechanism of forest access among Kaffecho households has been very limited and seldom showed a bias towards any single household category as such. The other crucial aspect of access acquisition among the Kaffecho pertains to human capital. This, of course varies from one individual to another; however, the Kaffecho as a people are noted for their knowledge of forest-based gathering activities (Section 4.3.3 and Appendix 4). The ubiquity of forest production skills has been an important variable in enabling particularly those with no or little social capital/political capital to realise forest benefits within their milieu. A good case in point in this regard is the role share cropping plays in enabling non-tree right holders to benefit from forest-based activities that also generate higher incomes. Most of these households belong to the younger generation and were less endowed with agricultural resources than the respective share renters. It should as well be recalled that the bulk of the share cropping in the case study areas is given to bee keeping, which as argued earlier, has been and continues to be a permanent feature of the local forest production system. Thus, the claim that the poor are denied the advantages of market opportunities for forest products because of lack of access (see, for instance, Arnold and Townson 1998: 3) seems untenable in the context of the case study areas. Market opportunities and hence livelihood diversification and intensification objectives of farmers also spur the process of NWFP domestication (a manifestation of human capital at work), thereby helping the poor circumvent the hurdle that institutionally provided access rights placed on pursuance of forest-based activities.

The nature of physical capital in use has little, if any, effect on the way the different household groups harness their natural capital, as no social group employs any superior production technique or equipment to those used by others. Forest-based operations practised in the case study areas are little more than gathering activities, with product processing limited to drying of coffee/spices using rudimentary techniques (Appendix 11.2.3). Neither of these activities has benefited from agricultural extension interventions.

In terms of the forest livelihood outcomes of the Kaffecho the following can be noted. Unlike the State, which claims tenure without use, the primary reason for local people staking forest claims is to use it, and use it in the production of mostly tradable forest goods (e.g., honey, coffee, spices, etc.). As a result, the extent of overall forest cash income (financial capital) local people generate is a reflection of how well they are endowed with the different types of capital discussed above. In this connection, the findings of the research are in broad agreement with experiences reported elsewhere in the developing world: unequal access to forest resources means that the rich acquire a greater amount of forest cash income than the poor (see Section 2.5.3.2). Yet, the poor, including female-headed households, realise a

greater portion of their cash income from forest-based activities than do the better off community members, thereby signifying the critical importance of local environmental resources to the resource poor. The explanation for this rests with the limited access of the poor to key agricultural resources such as oxen (Appendix 7.2; Section 6.4.3) and, in the case of female-headed households, to their shortage of farm labour as well (Section 6.2.4). It is instructive to note that, households who have adequate forest holdings, particularly for bee keeping purposes, make use of their natural capital to get access to the human capital of poorer households with the view to generating forest cash income (financial capital), thus illustrating the interchangeability of capital assets (see Section 2.5.1).

It should as well be noted that, given poor marketing infrastructure and low-return marketing practices, which includes borrowing against coffee/honey and early product sale, NWFP producers have been unable to benefit from the market system. Given that some of the above marketing practices are most used by the resource poor (see Section 10.5.3), it is clear that these groups are the hardest hit from the lop-sided outcome of the exchange process.

Another feature of the forest livelihood outcome of the Kaffecho pertains to health and spiritual capital. As shown earlier (Section 9.2) the nutritional/medicinal values of forest resources is by and large wealth-neutral, because (a) among the youth, who are noted for forest food collection, this undertaking is a rite of passage; and (b) dependence on forest medicines is a widespread phenomenon permeating the social structure. This does not of course rule out possible *quantitative* differences between the rich and the poor, as the latter are likely to show a more pronounced dependence on forest foods and probably on forest medicines than the former. On the other hand, the inspirational values of forests as exemplified in the *Dejo* ceremony is a practice frequented by most Kaffecho men, irrespective of economic standing. The realisation of both types of capital assets has been frustrated, however, by competition from other land use options, which in the case of *Dejo* is also a consequence of its denigration by institutional religions.

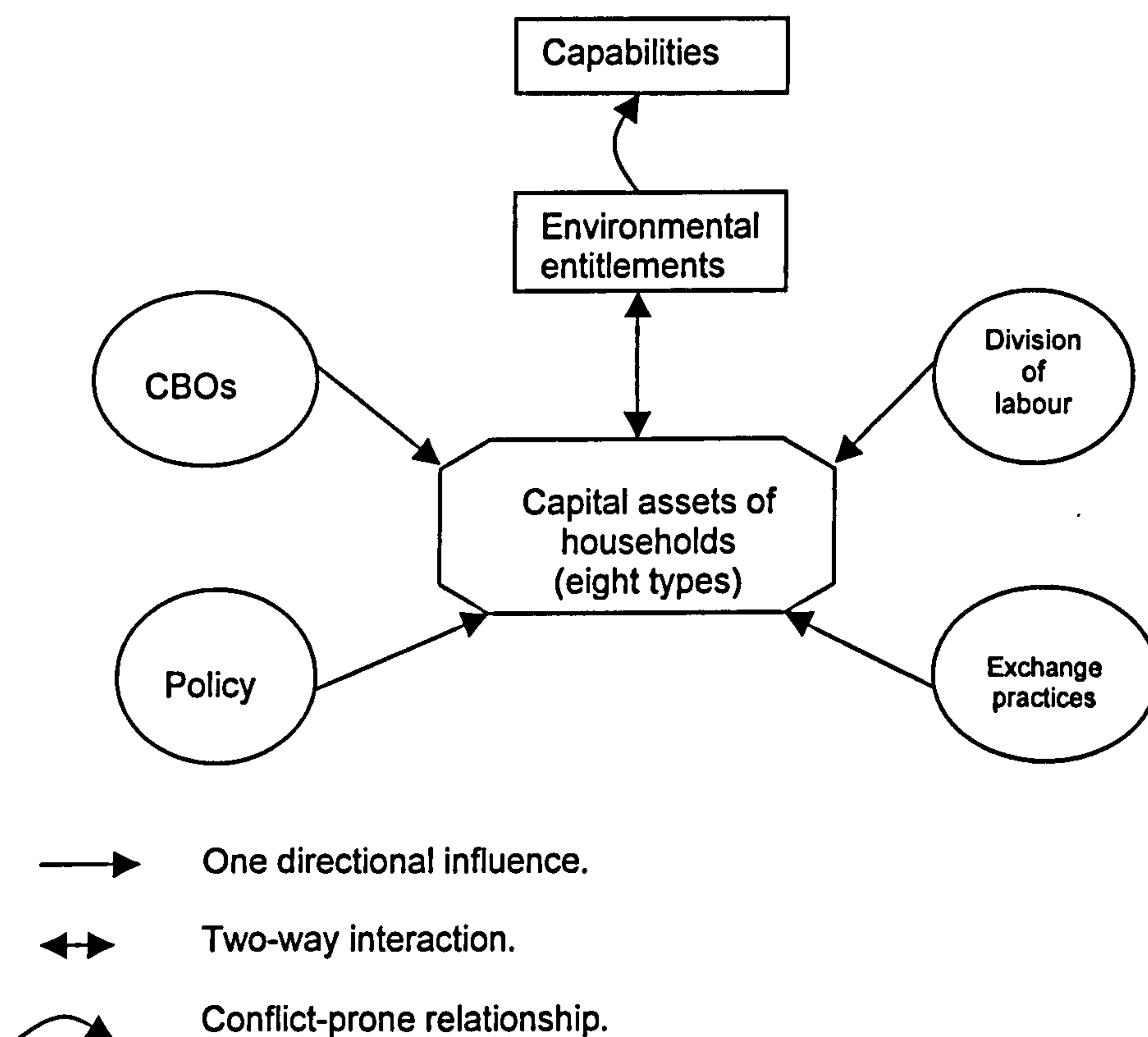
In summary, local people combine a range of capital assets that they access through a myriad of right-based channels and production conventions to generate diverse forest benefits. In this process, a total of eight different, but interdependent, capital assets have been identified. Taken together, they represent the set of environmental entitlements accruing to the individual households concerned (Figure 11.3).

A number of factors influence the way forest access is established and forest livelihoods are realised. Chief amongst these are: the operation of CBOs, the culture-bound division of labour in forest production activities, the exchange practices, and non-conducive State agricultural policies. In particular, gender stereotypes influence the way traditional CBOs operate in the settling of intra-household conflicts. Likewise, the household division of labour



militates against women claiming direct access to forest resources. On the other hand, the efforts farmers exert to enhance non-destructive forest uses, such as the generation of NWFPs, have not been supported by appropriate agricultural extension and other measures that would enhance the economic *and* cultural functions of forests. These point to the limited role of public policy and practice in helping local people realise their environmental entitlements.

**Figure 11.3: Capital assets and the access-livelihood nexus**



Moreover, an examination of how the poor command effective control over the fruits of their labour, particularly in the exchange process, points to a number of constraints that limit the return they could expect from traded forest goods. From the above it follows that, a fuller realisation of environmental entitlements arising from the forest production system and their translation into livelihood capabilities (as defined in Section 3.5.1) has been constrained by a range of factors that need serious policy attention (see Section 11.3 below).

#### 11.2.4 Local forest management experiences

Having looked at the different angels of the local level forest use system, it is now time to draw together the different threads of the research and examine the forms of management that the forest system exhibits and to point out its drawbacks so that context-specific management modalities can be devised. The analysis in this section adapts McCay's (1995)

model of 'property rights and governance systems' (see Section 3.2) and Oakerson's (1992) framework for CPR analysis (see Section 3.3.2.2) to the situation in the case study areas.

#### **11.2.4.1 The evolution of governance regimes in village forest commons**

The discussion on forest legislation across the three forms of government in Ethiopia has shown that, despite divergent state ideologies, there has always been a tendency for direct state intervention in forest management activities. Particularly in the post-1975 period direct management of forests has been envisaged through the creation of a state forest territory as typified in the demarcation/re-demarcation of the "Bonga State Forest" (see Sections 7.5 and 7.10.3). These, however, have been pursued with less than satisfactory organisational commitments. Consequently, forests have become state-managed only in name. Ironically, the Ethiopian State has always had effective representations at the grassroots level. Suffice here to note the land-related functions discharged by the *Chikashum* structure in Imperial Ethiopia, the PA under the *Derg*, the KPSC during the post-*Derg* transition, and the KA from the mid-1990s onwards. This coupled with the dominance of formal tenure (as exemplified in the private tenure system under Imperial Ethiopia and state tenure during and after the *Derg*) might have militated against the evolution of group-based indigenous management systems which otherwise are the hallmark of CFR management in many parts of the developing world.

The analysis of the historical tenure experiences has indicated that the institution of private tenure in forest resources particularly during the post-WWII period has led to the emergence of market-based governance. Such was the case, for instance, when owners of forest coffee land pursued commercial production of coffee in response to the growing external demands for this commodity. Moreover, the practice of forest tree lease, which private owners in the Imperial period entered into with bee keeping farmers, could be viewed as a market-oriented tree management arrangement. This had the effect of realising the flow of economic benefits that the resource afforded without compromising the vitality of the forest stock. Nonetheless, the existence in some localities of absentee forest owners with no adequate representation at the grassroots level meant that the associated resources had been free for the taking by any villager, a situation referred to in the literature as "*laissez-faire*" management (McCay 1995: 97). On the other hand, although during the Imperial era some forest patches remained as state property, their local custodians leased them to local people so that the resources could be used in the production of relatively high return forest goods, such as honey.

It is interesting to note that as far as governance of village forests is concerned, the *Derg* policy of land nationalisation had in practice a broadly similar effect as that of the private property rights regime it supplanted. More pointedly, access granted by formal CBOs as well as by those claimed via customary principles enabled claimants to manage their forest resources in accordance with their livelihood objectives, which as noted in Section 11.2.3, had



a high exchange orientation. At the same time, trees that did not show any mark of sustained labour investment were treated as open access benefits that could be 'managed' as wood poachers saw fit. In some sub-*Kebeles* there was a move to control patterns of utilisation of tree resources in bee keeping on a PA-wide level (Section 7.3.5).

The contemporary state of forest management at farmer level also shares a number of features from the situation in the previous periods. These pertain to the continued exchange-orientation of forest goods production as well as open access exploitation of both wood and some non-wood items. However, the changing political and economic situations have had their own effect on the extent to which forest resources have been viewed at the local level. For instance, *Idirs* in some villages have taken moves in the direction of regulating bee keeping activities in village forests, an act prompted not so much by the desire to effect proactive forest management but by a reactive one of forestalling illicit forest use that became endemic after the downfall of the *Derg* and a loosening of government control of the countryside. Such a collective arrangement was observed among villages near to major towns but was conspicuous by its absence in remoter villages. This in a way points to the varying influence that contextual factors can have on the degree to which even proximate villagers are organised to manage CPRs. The involvement of the *Idir* system in village level forest protection vindicates the validity of Ostrom's (1999) "prior organisational experience" (see Table 3.4) in initiating a collective action of some kind. This, however, constitutes the 'supply' side of the argument. Indeed, the confinement of the above experience to 'problem areas' has meant that demand side factors are as important as the existence of institutions in inducing self-organisation, an issue given little attention in Ostrom's analysis.

The above discussion could be summarised using the insights gained from the review of the literature on property rights and governance systems (cf. Table 3.1, Section 3.2) (Table 11.2).

**Table 11.2**  
**Property rights and forest governance systems in the case study areas**

Period	Property right	Management orientation			
		<i>Laissez-faire</i>	Market	Communal	State
Imperial era	Private	X	XX	NA	NA
	State	NA	XX	NA	NA
<i>Derg</i>	State	X	XX	X	V
Post- <i>Derg</i>	State	X	XX	X	V

XX = Main feature; X = Secondary feature; V = Weak; NA = Not applicable.

Evidently, over the years *laissez-faire* and market-orientation have been the main characteristic features of the local forest management system. This is despite considerable differences in the nature of the formal property rights in place. It will be recalled that state property in the Imperial era had a transient nature, as it applied only to forest patches which had not yet come under private tenure. In the intervening period these forest patches were under the direct control of local notables. On the other hand, state tenure during the post-

1975 period has had a much wider degree of applicability and this underpinned the ideology of the state. From the above it follows that there is more to governance than what the formal dimension of property rights suggest. This observation also sits well with McCay's (1995) analysis where, as discussed in Section 3.2, differences in property rights systems may not always lead to divergent resource governance regimes. In the context of the present research, aside from property rights, such factors as locally recognised efforts in forest use, the value of forest products harvested, and the existence and/or effectiveness of government forest protection endeavours have their own bearing on the character of the management regime in place.

The above provides a comparative view of property rights vis-à-vis governance systems in a temporal perspective. However, a more complete understanding of the current state of forest management and its outcomes demands a systematic assessment of the forest production system against established conceptual templates used to analyse similar CPR processes, an issue deliberated on below.

#### **11.2.4.2 The forest production system in the context of CPR organisational analysis**

Given the current importance of the forest domain as the main source of wood extraction, bee keeping, and spice collection, and in view of the crucial role that village forests play as sources of planting materials used in NWFP domestication, it is safe to argue that forest products in the case study areas are realised as CPRs. Hence, the contemporary forest management arrangements in the case study areas could be defined systematically using insights from Oakerson's (1992) framework, which, as described in Section 3.3.2.2, has four sets of themes that relate to the nature of the resource, the decision making format, the mode of resource use, and the impact on users and the resource base.

With reference to the *physical and technical attributes* of local forest resources, the research has established that the resource base supports a range of activities pursued to satisfy subsistence needs (e.g. gathering of wild food and plant medicines), spiritual requirements (e.g. *Dejo* ceremony), and cash income needs (e.g. marketable products). As the access analysis has shown, community members have village-bound individual access to village forests and that these same conventions are used to exclude those outside the residential community. To this extent the resource base permits jointly beneficial use. However, the widespread practice of market-oriented wood production activities using the cheap chain saw and simple hand tools, as well as the involvement of both genders and virtually all able-bodied household members from all wealth categories, poses a real danger for sustainable forest use in the future. This, therefore, is the most important *limiting condition* (*à la* Oakerson 1992: 44) for the maintenance of the resource base, a fact which any future management regime should strive to address. An examination of what Oakerson regarded as



*decision-making arrangements* and *patterns of interaction* provide the essential explanations for these forms of subtractive behaviour to which the forest resource base in the case study areas has been exposed.

One of the commonest features of village forest use in the case study areas is the absence of a regulatory community structure. There are however accepted 'norms and production practices', if not exactly *collective choice rules*, from which 'operational procedures' (not strictly *rules*) defining CPR use regimes are derived. Good examples of these include the imperative of locating charcoal burning pits away from apiary sites, co-ordination of honey harvesting schedules, and the necessity of getting the consent of right holders in exercising secondary rights during major forest product harvesting seasons. At the same time, however, individuals exercise their own discretion in pursuing destructive forest uses in locations where some of the major NWFPs are not vigorously pursued. In short, the co-ordination of forest use activities is as much voluntary, as culturally sanctioned, and the use rules in operation define people-people interactions and are *not* meant to deal with the dynamics in people-forest relationships. In this arrangement, CBOs are employed to adjudicate over intra-community forest tenure disputes and invoke cultural values and history of resource use as the bases of their decisions. While, on the other hand, exclusive state control over all land resources and a lack of official recognition of local people's forest use rights mean that forest protection and rule enforcement have been shouldered by courts of law and the state bureaucracy, chief amongst which is the MoA system.

As outlined in Section 3.3.2.2 *patterns of interaction* in the commons reflect the nature of the resource and the institutional structure governing its use. Generally, in the case study areas, traditional access rules and production practices instituted to forestall tenure conflicts have been well observed and respected. Petty offences and intra-community conflicts, surrounding the observance of forest product related operational rules, have been successfully resolved through a network of CBOs. To this extent one observes a *co-operative strategy* being upheld in the management of NWFPs. As regards wood products, however, the high urban demand for such items as woodfuel and planks on the one hand and weak law enforcement capacity on the other appear to have rewarded a *free-riding* behaviour.

Formal CBOs, namely the KA, which have been entrusted with ensuring the implementation of government directives including the forest legislation, opted for a generous interpretation of their mandates befitting local short term interests in a manner analogous to Cleaver's (2000) notion of "approximate compliance" (see Section 3.5.2). This is fundamentally a reflection of the inadequate organisational commitment on the part of the government to see through forest legislation and to address forest management issues. This becomes all the more glaring when compared with the budgetary, personnel, and policy attention given to the food farming sector. Organisational attempts to redress this situation through state forest

demarcation/re-demarcation ended up introducing additional elements of tenure instability and this was accompanied at best by a semblance of co-operation by farmers who are skilled in appeasing professionals and resort to active, if clandestine, resistance at worst.

The effect of the above characteristic features of the forest commons in the case study areas could be looked at from the perspective of what Oakerson (1992) regarded as *outcomes*. These, it should be recalled, have *efficiency* and *equity* dimensions.

Efficiency issues can broadly be assessed in terms of the two main aspects of forest use in the study communities: wood and non-wood uses. The multiplicity of local and urban interests in wood resources, ambiguities in forest laws, lack of formal recognition of local people's forest claims and ineffectual forest protection regimes have contributed to the onset of short-termism in forest production objectives and opportunistic behaviour on the part of local residents to maximise returns to their local forest resources through the sale of wood items. These, coupled with the general progressive decline in the stock of regional and sub-regional forest resources, point to the prevalence of inefficiency in the forest management system. From a dynamic perspective, the association of certain social groups, such as Manjos, with commercial wood production, and the latter's dependence on this undertaking for meeting even their survival needs, raises questions about the long term viability of forests as village commons. In this regard, poor wood marketing arrangements and the position of wood sellers as price takers could be regarded as additional factors accentuating commercial wood harvesting.

On the other hand, the widespread use of share cropping in NWFP harvesting and/or marketing is indicative of local communities' interests in maximising efficient non-destructive forest uses. Even so, as long as the ground floor is exposed to open access exploitation and resource use competition there will always be a degree of inefficiency in the way NWFPs are realised.

Equity pertaining to the local forest management system was looked at from access provision and tenure/rule enforcement perspectives. As regards establishment of access, it is clear that both quasi-formal mechanisms and customary principles discriminate against the younger generation. The latter mechanism also has an inherent bias against women securing forest access. These outcomes should, however, be seen against the in-built income distribution effect and hence a degree of equity that the institution of sharecropping introduced into the forest access landscape. On the other hand, the selective application of government tenure rules by formal CBOs tends to reward the privileged few in exploiting village commons with impunity, a not so equity-enhancing procedure.



In conclusion, the contemporary state of local forest management is much less formalised than any of the traditional CPR management experiences reviewed in Section 3.3.2.3. The system of local forest management in place is more of an NWFP management arrangement that draws inspiration from the antiquity of forest production practices and owes its persistence to the significant current economic importance of NWFPs. Similar to traditional group management experiences referred to in Section 3.3.2.3, the courses of action individual users follow and the cultural/organisation sanctions influencing this behaviour in respect of NWFP activities result in jointness of use and locally acceptable patterns of interaction. With minor exceptions, NWFP use boundaries tend to overlap with residential boundaries - the village. Although the forest commons are fiercely regulated at a household, and at times individual, level, village-bound organisations have a role in setting the broad parameters of forest use and in adjudicating over conflicts.

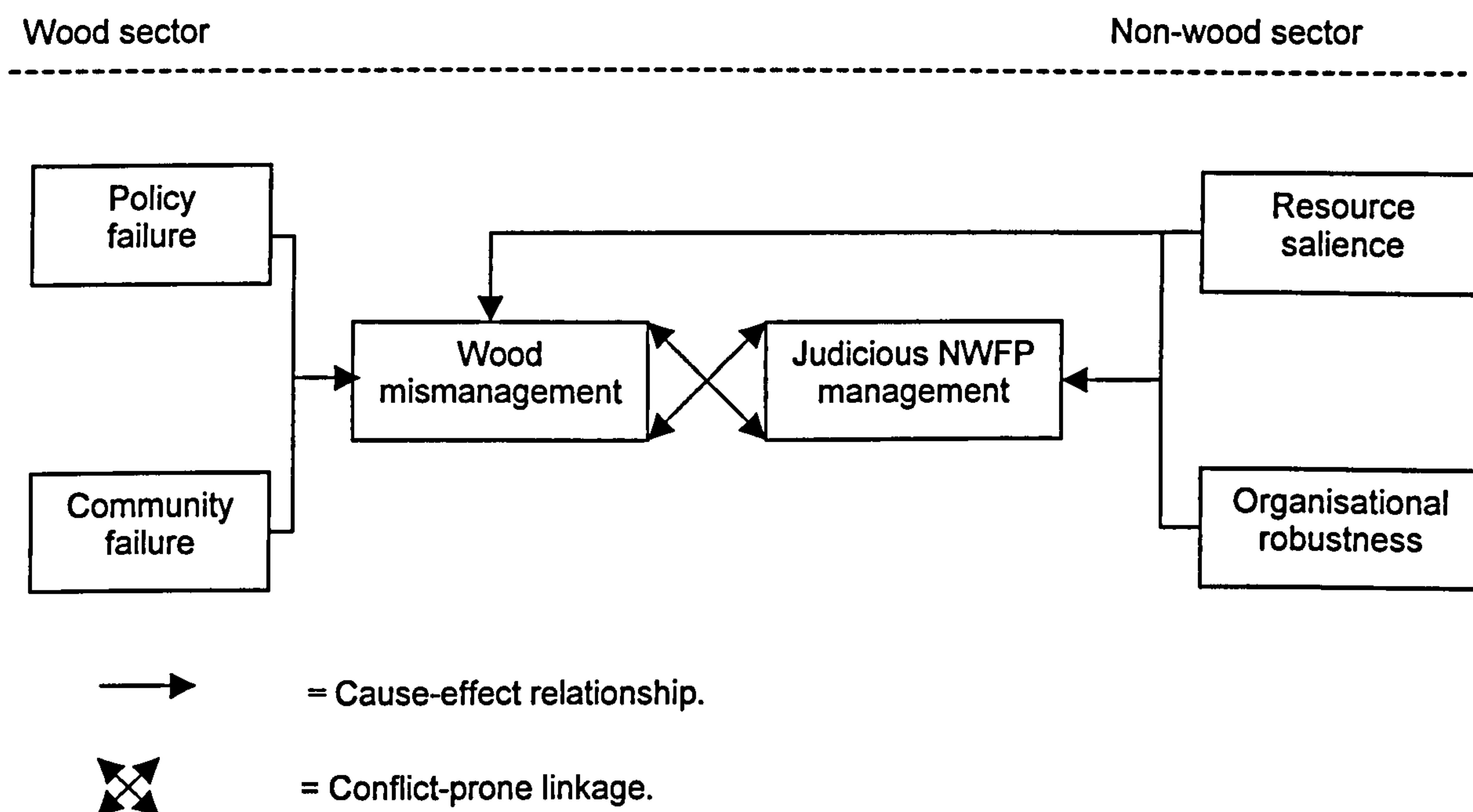
As the above analysis underscored in contexts where group property arrangement is not formalised and where private rights are as pronounced as common concerns, the concept of 'rules' as enunciated in Oakerson's framework tend to be limiting in application. Instead, more attention has been given to practices and social norms that provide a framework for individual actions.

#### **11.2.4.3 Evaluating the local forest management system**

The system of NWFP management in place mirrors the various resource- and user-related attributes that, as discussed in Section 3.4.1, are believed to enhance success in CPR management. The most pertinent ones include 'spatial extent', 'salience', 'trust', 'autonomy' and 'prior organisational experience'. In the context of the case study areas these pertain, in that order, to the correspondence of village of residence with area of forest use, the considerable importance of NWFPs as cash income sources, the co-operative ethos in share cropping and in NWFP harvesting, the credibility of NWFP access and use conventions, and the age-old practice of settling tenure conflicts at the local level. These characteristic features of the local non-wood sector are represented, following Ostrom (1999), by 'resource salience' and 'organisational robustness' (Figure 11.4).

However, the *laissez-faire* nature of wood exploitation (regarded as 'wood mismanagement' in Figure 11.4) contradicts other equally important attributes identified earlier. For instance, the substantial involvement of a range of skilled carpenters and their apprentices in illicit timber production is an anathema to the requirement of 'feasible improvement' as it inculcates a higher discount rate in forest use, thereby dampening community conservation ethos. These can have a detrimental effect on the current practice of judicious NWFP use and could ultimately thwart the prospect of effective forest management.

**Figure 11.4: Conflicting tendencies in local forest management**



The fact that local wood production practices are not benign to the environment and the indifference of CBOs to these endeavours could be taken as reflections of community failure. Indeed, such organisational behaviour tends to deride the otherwise robustness with which local organisations mediate village-wide access conflicts in accordance with objective realities. More fundamentally, however, external bodies whose task is to guarantee sustainable forest use have failed in either ensuring tenure security or spearheading locally-suited forest management interventions. As the experience of successful planned co-management regimes has shown, a reassessment of such policy failures goes a long way towards rectifying some of the drawbacks of the system of NWFP management in place and the scourge of wood mismanagement threatening the stability of the system.

### 11.2.5 A summing up

Over the centuries the indigenous natural resource tenure in Kafa had continually been altered in tandem with the changing political fortunes of the region. Some of these changes, particularly those that instituted private property in land following the conquest process, have had profound impact on patterns of local forest access. On the other hand, the measures that put all land resources in the hands of the Ethiopian State were also expected to have far reaching consequences on local forest access rights. However, the ambiguity of land laws concerning village forest resources as well as the weak implementational capacity of the government led to a more locally tailored interpretation of the pronouncements. Subsequent land policies had, however, a destabilising influence on forest access rights.



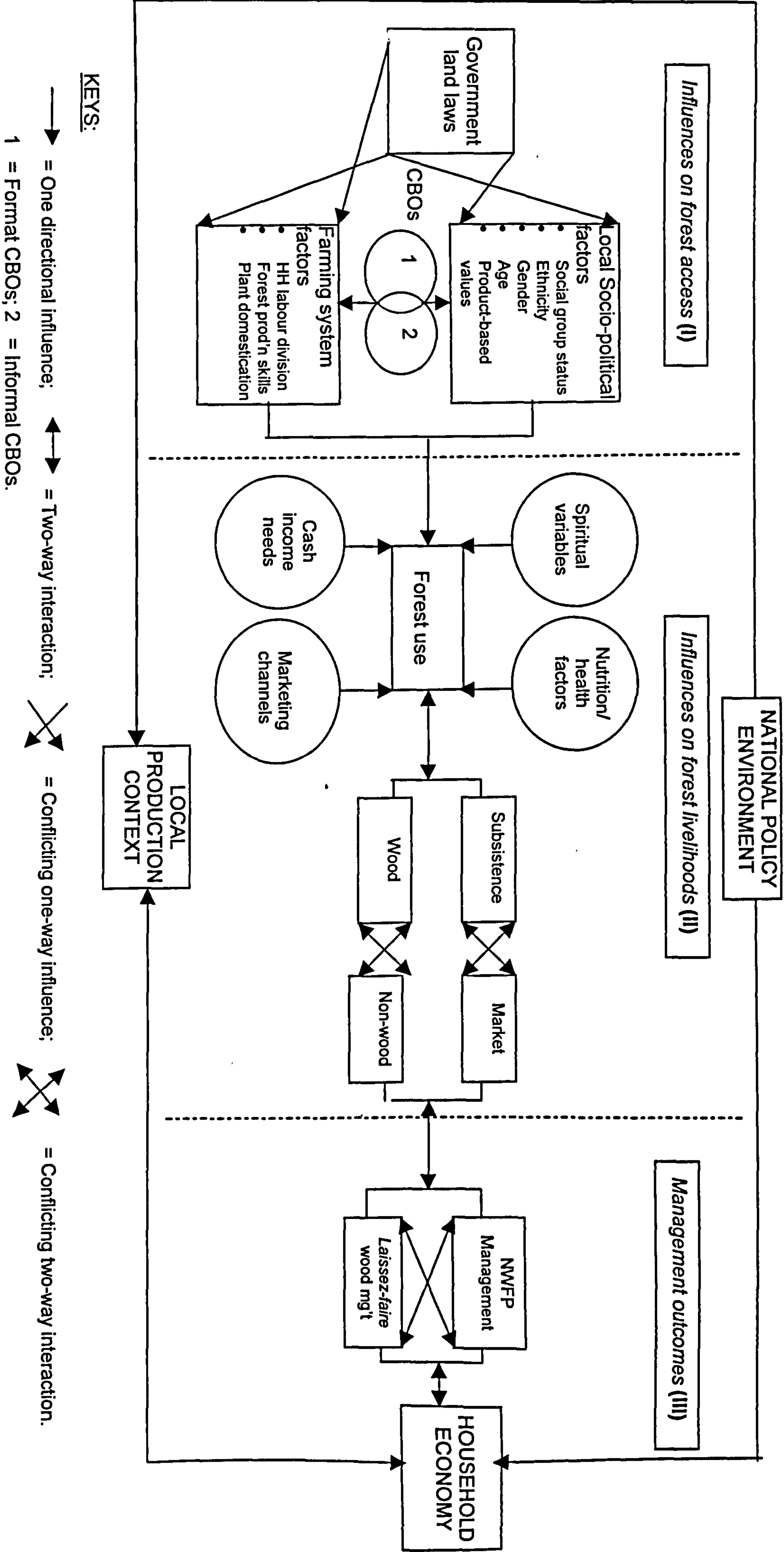
The above notwithstanding, some important attributes of the traditional tenure system have persevered and continued to shape the way the new forms of forest tenure operate. The major ones include the continuity of notions of customary forest access, patrilineal descent, the broader importance of kinship as an instrument of forest access, and the tradition of establishing forest access through share cropping and plant domestication. Disputes arising from the establishment of locally concluded access arrangements are mediated by and settled in a system of CBOs that also manage other community-wide affairs. Figure 11.5 shows the various influences on forest access (Block I). In particular, this portrays the incongruence between government land laws and most of the factors engendering local forest access.

Forest livelihood concerns are the driving forces behind the endeavours local people make to access forest resources and maintain their rights over the same (Block II of Figure 11.5). In this regard, the diagram identifies a host of livelihood considerations that influence forest livelihoods. It also portrays the fact that forest livelihood maintenance is marred by tensions between subsistence needs and ethos on the one hand and the imperatives of generating cash income on the other. The pursuance of forest livelihoods is also beset with conflicting objectives that are expressed at the activity level, the most glaring of which is the negative impact of unregulated commercial wood harvesting on current and future judicious use of NWFPs.

Against the above backdrop two patterns of forest management that have the potential to negate one another are discerned: prudent NWFP management at one end and *laissez-faire* wood 'management' at the other. Given the preponderance of forest production activities in the local agricultural system these management outcomes have important influences on the performance of the rural household economy. The level and organisation of the household economy in turn shape the forms of forest livelihood strategies the household will pursue in the future, hence the two-way interaction stipulated in Figure 11.5 (Block III).

The experiences summarised above point to gaps in the forest access-use-management continuum that need to be filled in light of realities on the ground and the theoretical and empirical lessons of experience the research draws, a task addressed in the next section.

Figure 11.5: A schematic summary of the major research findings





## **11.3 Implications for policy and practice**

### **11.3.1 Introduction**

On the basis of the research findings summarised above this section recommends broad courses of action that need to be pursued in order to bring about livelihoods-oriented sustainable forest management in the context of highland Kafa. It is hoped that, these thoughts will also have wider operational significance in other forested areas of the country that share similar experiences in forest access and where forest products are critical to the maintenance of the household economy.

### **11.3.2 Policy implications**

Direct access to forest resources in the case study areas exhibits observable inter-generational and gender inequities. Yet, a number of traditional production practices and access mechanisms are in place to ensure that non-primary right holders also benefit from local environmental resources. It seems that, despite growing landlessness, the increased market values of forest products, and state ownership in land resources traditional conceptions of access are still valid and that these serve to regulate intra-community use patterns and exclude outsiders from village forest commons. These facts have not been recognised officially however, and farmers find themselves powerless in the face of external agents and influential insiders who lay claim to and/or vandalise village forest commons.

Land tenure analysts point to the relevance of weighing the vitality of traditional arrangements before contemplating state intervention in the land system (Bruce *et al.* 1994: 254). In the context of Sub Saharan Africa there is an emerging consensus regarding the need for a "pragmatist and gradualist approach" to tenure reform that buttresses the adaptability of indigenous tenure, enhances local coping strategies and "relies as much as possible on informal procedures at local level" (Platteau 2000: 71-72; see also Adams *et al.* 2000: 149). Given the general fairness of the forest access regime in the case study areas a tenure reform that embodies the spirit of the above contentions will go a long way towards ensuring forest tenure security. It should as well be appreciated that, over the last three decades, the Ethiopian rural scene in general and its land system in particular have seen enough turmoil to make 'revolutionary' alternatives anchored on such populist considerations as inter-generational equality of access to land resources an unwelcome prospect. Neither is there any guarantee that such changes will be implemented satisfactorily and their effects monitored rigorously.

As pointed out in Appendix 2.4.1A, the status of rural land tenure in Ethiopia is a highly contested issue and the debate is polarised in terms of private versus state ownership of agricultural land with little or no reference to the fate of rural common pool resources such as grazing areas and village forest commons. Either way, there is a concern that areas and populations where CPRs constitute important livelihood resources may lose out the most from the continued operation of the current form of state tenure in land or from possible policy changes favouring the privatisation route. The limited exposure of the country's elite and its policy making machinery to CPR-supported farming systems (see Section 1.4) and the various obtrusive measures that have been taken against CFRs in rural Kafa warrant this assessment.

In view of the above, it is proposed that first and foremost policy makers should recognise formally and unambiguously the existing forest use rights of local people in the country's forested regions in a manner analogous to the recognition accorded to farmland. This has to be complemented by informed technical support to forest-based agricultural operations. In this regard, policy consideration should be given to the role forest agriculture could play in the country's poverty reduction strategy in general and the regional food security programme in particular. These measures will put an end to the hitherto governmental practice of viewing forest-based agriculture as a mere source of tax revenue (see, for instance, Section 4.4), and will be taken as a government endorsement of the importance of forest agriculture as a livelihood strategy and a way of life. It should as well be recalled that such an approach will go a long way towards redirecting agricultural production in a way consonant with the comparative advantages of the forested regions of the country. In these regions annual crops are least suited activities because of the substantial deforestation that cropland expansion came to be associated with (see Section 4.3.2) and the soil loss that grain-based farming entails (see Section 6.3.2).

As regards inter-generational inequities in access to forest/tree resources, it is expected that they could continue to be bridged through the operation of family-centred channels and by a formal recognition of forest use rights which will create the incentives necessary for own forest production through plant domestication and/or via share arrangements. In the mean time, communities should be encouraged to put in place locality-specific ways of addressing intra-community resource access inequities. With reference to gender imbalance in primary CPR use rights, however, remedial actions have to be devised methodically. To start with, effort should be exerted to popularise the implications of the country's land laws and of the Women's Policy for women's direct access to village commons. Perhaps the most fruitful policy popularisation area is through organising discussions and debates about the land rights of divorced women. To this end, local elders could be targeted and made aware of the legal and policy issues surrounding divorce settlements. At the same time, the process should enlist the support of the intended beneficiaries in a participatory manner and should be



anchored on and respond to their demands for change. At the end of the day, ensuring the resource rights of women is as much a question of altering the societal attitudes through gradual processes of public education and information as that of promulgating issue-specific practicable policies and monitoring their effects.

In short, the above recommendations for intra-community access to village forest resources put faith in local informal processes; and, in the case of women, advocate for a more effective pursuance of existing government policies. While, on the other hand, the thoughts on forest use rights entail a reappraisal of the country's draft forest policy, which it is to be recalled, envisages most forest areas to be put under direct state administration (see Appendix 2.4.4B).

Given the significant attention which forests in Kafa have attracted from conservation professionals (see Section 4.4) it is conceivable that the draft policy, if ratified, could be made applicable in full force to most forest areas in the region. While the drive for the establishment of protected areas of one form or another is a desirable measure, the location of such schemes in and around widely cultivated food farming domains may be questionable. In this regard, a middle ground could be found in modifying the location of establishing state forests. Instead of the hitherto practice of territoriality, i.e. demarcation of contiguous forest areas, and the blanket prescription of state forest delineation as intimated in the draft forest policy, a *tenure niche* approach could be employed in the designation of state forests. A *tenure niche* is "[a]n area with a distinctive tenure arrangement, usually related to the particular use to which the land is put" (Bruce 1993: 13). In this regard, the lead agency responsible for state forest establishment, the MoA, should learn much from the experiences of EARO with respect to the latter's establishment of selected blocks of forests as *ins-situ* coffee preservation pools. The EARO has concentrated on pristine forest areas that were deemed appropriate for the specific objectives of the organisation (see Section 4.4 and Appendix 5.1.2B).

A reappraisal of the draft policy is also justified on the grounds that it stipulates JFM as a panacea for the problems of forest degradation in the country. Indications are that the Indian experience has provided important insights into the prescription of JFM for the Ethiopian reality. Yet, contrary to the Indian experience where the Forest Department has been a highly organised body with a strong presence in forest management arena, forest resources in Ethiopia have by and large been accessed and utilised by local rural communities without much interference by the Ministry of Agriculture. Hence, for all intents and purposes natural forests are seen more as locally owned resources than government ones. Seen in this way, the draft forest policy is an attempt at *recreating* government tenure through the JFM short cut and, if implemented, is likely to further destabilise the local access network. The alternative, of course, is to work in line with the access experiences of the farming community who are

ultimately the custodians of the resource and whose interests most co-management models profess to uphold.

It is, however, recognised that in situations where forest resources constitute the major means of survival and where forest products command high market demand, the ease of entry that the proposed forest use right regime allows has the danger of endorsing unsustainable forest use practices that could engender forest depletion (see Section 2.5.3.4). Thus, the 'rights' for forest use advocated above have to be accompanied by community-wide 'obligations' in forest conservation. Specifically, the stakes for judicious forest utilisation are so high that in forest areas where the state recognises residents' use rights they should be encouraged to organise themselves locally and manage, in a sustainable manner, village forests as group property resources. The case for a formal treatment of village forest resources as commons, against privatised benefits, rests on a number of grounds, chief amongst which are the following. (i) The dependence of households on a diverse range of forest products that may not necessarily be realised from one location; (ii) the amenability of co-ordinating harvesting schedules in, among others, bee keeping operations; (iii) the ease of exercising secondary rights; (iv) the possibility of overseeing individual uses to match ecosystem requirements; and (v) the existence of village-based organisational experience and communal ethos in local level conflict management. Against this background, the following section discusses possible local organisational arrangements for forest management.

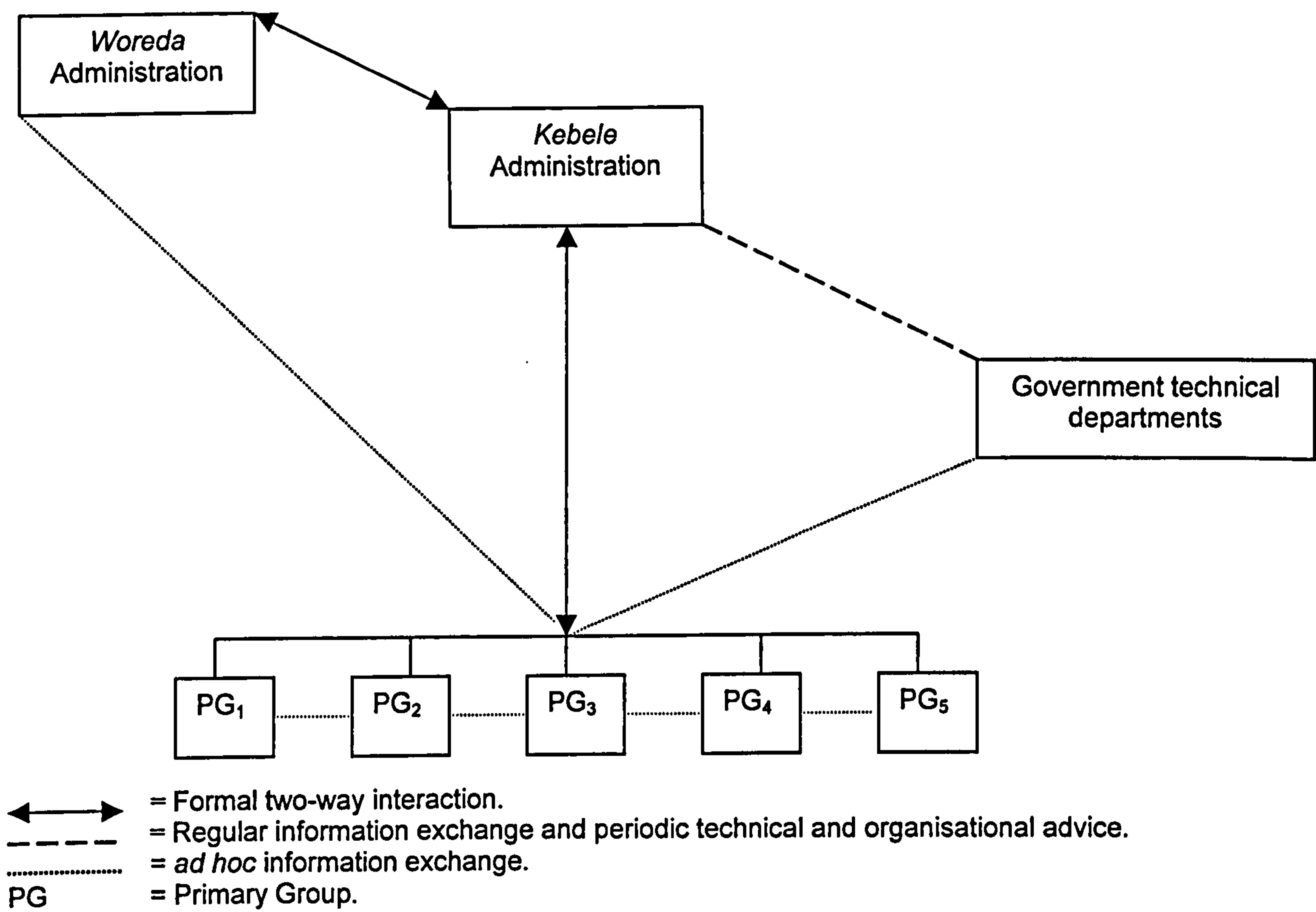
### **11.3.3 Implications for local level forest management modalities**

As argued earlier (Section 11.2.4.2), there are strong reasons to believe that forests in the case study areas will continue to be utilised as CPRs. Moreover, the access analysis has shown that, with minor exceptions, the concept of a residential community is the basis on which forest-people interaction is ordered. In this respect, the village has a well-defined, closely-knit population and spatial territory, and villagers often rely on the *Idir* for most community management activities. As the experiences of well functioning CPR regimes has shown, it is essential that forest management endeavours tap the existing stock of local management expertise through creating an administrative environment that promotes judicious forest use in ways compatible with current livelihood concerns of forest villagers.

It is, therefore, proposed to cast collective forest management endeavours at the village level (Figure 11.6). In other words, the village could be made to represent the basic unit, or the *primary group* (PG) with which all essential management functions including rules of use and exclusion as well as monitoring activities are entrusted. The constituency of the primary group could be any *legitimate* user of the village commons and other appropriators (e.g. share cropping partners).



Figure 11.6: Proposed local organisational arrangements for resource management



The specific organisational form that will have to shoulder local forest management responsibility has to be decided in a participatory manner. No matter how high the local importance of cultural institutions may be caution should be exercised not to unduly overburden them with tasks of forest management planning and administration. It is important that the involvement of these institutions in resource management endeavours be weighed, among other criteria, against the possible effect that this would have on the credibility of the institutions themselves. Likewise, the temptations for instituting uniform structures across the board have to be resisted. Experiences in micro-level forest conservation endeavours among three widely differing communities in central Ethiopia have shown that when given the opportunities, local people decide on organisational alternatives that are far from monolithic in structure (Yihenew 1996a). In this particular case, the preferred organisations for the task of forest protection ranged from the PA structure to *Idirs*, and to a 'hybrid' organisation composed of PA and *Idir* leaders.

It should be emphasised that use rules in primary groups should not in any way impinge on resource-enhancing experimentation that individual forest users may wish to undertake. In view of the detrimental effects of current wood production practices, however, the primary

group should strive to institute mechanisms that would check commercial wood production. For instance, fiscal measures that would help the PG benefit from systematically monitored local woodfuel sales to the urban market could be considered as an option. In this regard, the type and quantity of trees felled for commercial wood production purposes could be used as a basis for a progressively structured local user fees that would have the objective of enhancing efficient wood utilisation and creating a disincentive for greater involvement in the wood trade.

As Figure 11.6 shows, it is essential that village level groupings have a direct and two-way interaction with the KA. This not only ensures some degree of legitimacy in the activities of PGs but also goes a long way towards protecting the unit from external pressures and in resolving possible inter-PG conflicts. The organisation of the KA both as a development, as well as a judiciary, organ at the grassroots level is expected to expedite the proposed working relationship. In this connection, a systematically worked out KA - PG operational relationship could be of vital importance with respect to enforcing the statutory forest law in general, and the seizure of illegally felled trees and processed wood items in particular. One way of improving organisational efficacy in this regard could be to ensure that each of these units benefit directly from the disposal of the tree products seized, instead of the hitherto practice of DoA-led law enforcement and fund utilisation (see Sections 4.4 and 7.10.1.2). The sense of belonging that such a devolved arrangement is expected to enlist among forest villagers could also contribute to the build up of credible evidence that law enforcement agencies so badly need to base their decisions on identified culprits (see Section 7.10.2).

On the other hand, PGs need to be provided with the necessary technical and organisational support. These could range from NTFP-based agricultural extension to information management and to "civic skills", i.e., "knowledge of how co-operatives, local government and national government function" (Todaro 1994: 388). The relatively high degree of literacy characterising the case study areas (Section 6.2.3) is an asset that development partners should take cognisance of in dealing with PGs. More crucially, however, the proposed village-based institutional arrangement for forest management could stand to benefit from the existence of a schooled agricultural labour force that the progressive geographical expansion of formal educational opportunities over the last quarter century help created (Dessalegn 1994b: 4-5). It might also be noted that attempts at applying formal knowledge in agricultural problem solving could reorient the perceptions of the more educated youth who otherwise tend to look down upon traditional forest-based activities.

As far as the current forest livelihood interest of villagers is concerned, consideration should be given to possibilities of using the Co-operatives Law to broaden the mandates of PGs and help them deal with other livelihood enhancing activities as well. As demonstrated in Section 3.4.2, community forest management could also combine business interests. It should as well be recalled that, in the case study areas, non-farm employment, particularly those based



on the internal dynamics of the rural sector are very limited. This underscores the need to make effective use of the potentials of the different agricultural enterprises, including forest-farming activities, all the more essential. In this regard, effort should be exerted to ensure that intra-community resource access inequities are addressed methodically and gradually. To this end, concepts of co-operation and fairness could be invoked from the local culture so that marginal groups such as women and the youth could get preferential treatments in the various forest-based schemes in which the PG wishes to be involved.

On the other hand, the decentralisation of government operations (see Appendix 2.2.1E) has the *potential* to provide, in a cost-effective manner, the support PGs expect from the local government. In this regard, experience has shown that in order for local-level forest management arrangements to benefit from devolved governmental authority, local level bureaucracy has to be organised in a democratic and accountable manner. Otherwise, as a close observer of the Indian JFM experience notes, “[a]ttempts at devolution from above often end up being subverted by entrenched bureaucratic interests” (Sundar 2001: 2018-2019). Finally, the system of decentralisation in place could be put to greater use through organising *Woreda* (or any other appropriate supra-PG) level forest pressure groups whose members should be elected democratically from among the pertinent primary groups. This is expected to have the advantage of co-ordinating the actions of individual PGs, facilitating the sharing of inter-PG experiences, and above all, could serve as a local voice for forest concerns in matters of PG-Government and PG-business interactions.

## **11.4 Theoretical reflections on CPR analysis and management**

### **11.4.1 Introduction**

The empirical findings synthesised earlier and the policy and management implications identified above provide useful insights into the relevance of several concepts and analytical categories that could gainfully be incorporated into the discourse on CPR analysis and management. The rest of this section consists of three parts. First, the discussion introduces concepts of change and continuity into the purview of CPR analysis. Second, the discourse on resource management is enriched giving particular emphasis to the types of conceptual considerations that the co-management approach needs to give in its deliberations on local community processes as well as on external development actors. Finally, the section concludes by providing a diagrammatic summary of the discussion.

### **11.4.2 Change, continuity and common property theory**

One of the most frequently made observations in the research pertains to the perseverance of past patterns of behaviour in the local forest production system as exemplified in the workings

of traditional access mechanisms, rule enforcement practices and management experiences. What makes the tenacity of such age old practices particularly worthy of deliberation here is the realisation that they have continued to operate despite the range of radical socio-political reorganisations through which Kafa has traversed.

The experiences of the case study areas have shown the following three interrelated characteristics of the outcome of policy implementation as it relates to the local forest access and use system. (i) In some respects policy changes have taken root, i.e. been translated into practice. These range from the effective privatisation of coffee forests areas in the Imperial era to the preferential treatment of settlers in forestland allocation and to state forest re-demarcation. (ii) In certain other areas, tradition has altered the way change has been designed. A case in point here is the involvement of formal CBOs in allocating village forest commons to individual households. (iii) In still other spheres of the system, the forces of change have failed to penetrate into the deeply embedded behavioural patterns and practices of the rural society. One such an instance is the continued claim of individual ownership of village forest areas on grounds of prior occupancy and ancestral use right. The current importance of village level organisations in settling tenure conflicts could also be cited as another example. Underlying these outcomes are the varying ability of the government machinery to monitor policy implementation; the divergence of policy pronouncements with local realities; the strength of local bonds and networks; and the precedence local people give to meeting livelihood objectives in line with resource endowments.

The parallel existence of traditional and modern conceptions informing resource use arrangements is not unique to the forest system in the case study areas (see Section 2.3). In fact, in the context of the Third World, the resource tenure systems and the management practices that have evolved from them could be understood in terms of the twin concepts of *change* and *continuity*. These concepts have obtained wide currency among development anthropologists researching pastoralism and the strong survival instincts of pastoralist ways of life (see Goldstein and Beall 1991; Hogg 1993). The perspective within which these two concepts have been used in academic writings have strong resonance with the present deliberations. While change refers to the *transformation* sought through introducing new legislation and working procedures, continuity pertains to the powerful influence of *tradition* on the current and future course of events.

It is to be recalled that the "tragedy of the commons" paradigm is anchored on the dangers of the persistence of traditional CPR use systems, with little consideration of their potentials for reform (Hardin 1968). While, on the other hand, its antithesis, the "comedy of the commons" approach, saw salvation in *change*, that is in altering the governance system in favour of group management (McCay 1995). In this approach, the limitations that the law or planned introductions of rules and procedures could have in respect to changing behaviour appear not



to have been adequately considered. In sum, preoccupation with the above perspectives has the danger of picturing an existing system in terms of either of the two polarised management outcomes. An alternative perspective that would evaluate all the influences and counter influences of traditionally upheld systems and introduced schemes could perhaps result in not one, but several, management outcomes which may not necessarily fit into the 'tragedy'/'comedy' dichotomy.

In the context of the case study communities, *changes* in the property rights structure, coupled with weak implementational capacity at grassroots level, led to wood mismanagement (or a *laissez-faire* form of management). At the same time, however, despite the series of legislative measures, the centrality of livelihood interests in NWFPs has led to a more judicious utilisation of the forest sub-system in accordance with traditional local conceptions of tenure and authority, an outcome that sits well with the concept of *continuity*. Seen in this way, the local forest management stage blends scenes of tragic and comic elements, an outcome that, continuing with the tradition of common property theory nomenclature, could be characterised as *tragicomedy*. In the realm of drama, "[t]ragicomedy sees the evil, the corrupt potential of humanity, the danger; but refuses to accept that it must triumph" (Hirst 1984: 122). As far as the thrust of the research goes, the efforts local people exert to enhance household NWFP activities in the face of such self-inflicting adversities as clandestine involvement in the wood trade are believed to warrant the use of the above metaphor.

However, as *tragicomedy* is not merely a 'mongrel' mixture of tragedy and comedy, but rather is a genre of drama that is subject to rigorous analysis (Hirst 1984), common property theory should give due attention to the conditions under which the *tragicomedy of the commons* comes into being. As the present research shows the multiple uses that the forest ecosystem affords ('jointness of use'), the longstanding livelihood importance of some of these uses, and the institutional failures vis-à-vis forest protection were at the root of the divergent outcomes of the forest production system. Given the applicability of 'jointness of use' in a wide range of CPRs, it may be that some forms of utilisation could endanger the sustainability of the resource while others could be pursued sustainably in the light of the endowments of the same resource system. Thus, the concept of tragicomedy could be employed to characterise management outcomes in more resource systems than just in CFRs.

In tragicomic CPR situations, as in the 'tragedy of the commons', both livelihood and conservation interests demand that measures be taken to bring about comic effects, that is to say prudent resource management. On the whole, the alternatives advanced in the "other land reform" or the "comedy of the commons" approach has contributed immensely to resource conservation and livelihood maintenance (see Section 3.4.2). However, in order for

this approach to have wider applicability, empirically ascertained elaboration of its conceptual underpinnings becomes all the more necessary.

### **11.4.3 Looking for 'other elements' in the "Other Land Reform"**

#### **11.4.3.1 Introduction**

As noted in Section 3.3.2.3, Bromley (1989) conceptualised the issue of addressing the management of CPRs in the Third World in terms of instituting "the other land reform" (867). Subsequent writers have dwelt on the theme extensively and broadened the subject matter employing concepts and categories drawn largely from development administration and organisational theory. These approaches have been criticised for their excessive institutional focus (see Section 3.5.2). Some analysts have also highlighted the practical problems with implementing co-management in different contexts and challenged the sustainability of such schemes. The furthest CPR analysts have gone in terms of widening the scope of co-management is when they argue for the application of co-management approaches in all village CPRs (Section 3.5.2). It is therefore fair to state that the critical literature is not as illuminating regarding the sorts of *other* conceptual considerations that CPR analysis ought to have given so that its application in a diverse range of situations can be enhanced and resource management is made to contribute to overall socio-economic development. The following sub-sections attempt to address these and related issues.

#### **11.4.3.2 Social differentiation and CPR management theory**

The major preoccupation of mainstream common property theory has been one of identifying desirable resource and user characteristics for collective action (Section 3.4.1). As a result, much of the analysis in the comedy of the commons paradigm has been directed towards assessing opportunities for resource management in homogenous social and resource system settings that entail minimum transaction costs (Cleaver 2000). However, as the present research has illustrated (see also Section 2.4.2), in the developing world intra-community gradation of access to rural common pool resources such as village forests is more of a rule than an exception. Under such circumstances, the task of CPR professionals is to come up with parameters by which successful resource management could be recorded among highly stratified communities and divergent interest groups as well.

The starting point for such an exposition should be an appreciation of the context of social inequality within which CPRs are accessed. This in turn helps to acknowledge the hierarchy of use rights that prevails in a given CPR system and to devise mechanisms by which the different classes of resource users are also involved. For instance, in the context of CFRs and communities where access shows observable inter-generational dichotomy and other



forms of access-constraining cleavages, individuals who claim access through invoking secondary rights as well as through such provisional channels as familial grants and share cropping could be seen as *resource stewards* and hence relevant forest conservation partners. CPR analysts define stewardship as "... leaving something in as good or better condition than found or put into one's care, and in managing something for more than personal gain" (McLain and Jones 1997: 8). Thus, *stewardship roles* could be employed as a conceptual vehicle to bring to the purview of CPR analysis individuals having a material interest in the resource system in question without necessarily possessing any *direct* right of access or being insiders to the geographical community within which the resource is found.

In general, the multiplicity of interests that this perspective helps to accommodate is expected to result in high transaction costs arising mainly from increased co-ordination efforts. In reality, however, the scale of management envisaged and the role entrusted to the particular resource management organisations have important bearings on the extent of transaction costs involved.

#### **11.4.3.3 Management scale and local organisational forms and functions**

One of the major issues of conceptual and practical interest pertains to the scale within which 'the other land reform' could be made operational. This is especially important because the dominant CPR discourse places great faith on community involvement in resource management. Yet, several researchers have underlined the problematic nature of the concept of *community* and that the manner in which communities are defined determines the stream of benefits accruing to the local people. In general, the theoretical literature puts forward two contrasting views. Most co-management regimes have been constructed around "residential communities", whereby *community* is understood in terms of residential proximity to natural resources (Hobley 1996; Murombedzi 1999). Such an approach has, however, been criticised for marginalising non-resident groups who often have strong use-claims, and it is argued that this should give way to a "communities-of-place" perspective (see McLain and Jones 1997). In short, the issue of who constitutes *community* appears to be polarised into geographical and social communities (*à la* Brown 1999). The present research has shown the importance of territoriality in defining forest use rights. At the same time, the existence of institutional stakeholders such as the *Ibedegoda*, the incongruence, in certain places, of administrative and forest use boundaries, and the precedence of familial ties over spatial proximity in the recruitment of share cropping partners, point to the relevance of taking on board the 'social community' stance as well.

Therefore, it seems that the challenge facing CPR management practitioners is to find organisational structures that could mediate the two concepts of community in such a way that all the relevant stakeholders of a given resource system are both represented and

involved in its management. (The local level organisational arrangements discussed in Section 11.3.3 have been conceived with this in mind.) The specific forms which these organisations take is an empirical matter; but, Ostrom's (1999) criteria for assessing the robustness of local organisations for resource management appear to have been vindicated in different contexts (see, for example, Berglund and Nilsson 1997; Hobley and Shah 1996). The absence of *organised* community-based forest management in the case study areas means that an assessment of the virtues of these criteria in the present research is a misplaced effort.

However, the deliberations on the synergy between formal and informal CBOs point to the fact that common property theory needs to acknowledge the potentials of inter-CBO working relationships in mediating geographical and social communities. However, this has been a neglected area of empirical research and theoretical exposition. On the other hand, the operational links between the *Idir* and the KA in tenure enforcement underline the fact that, in reality, local organisations are not insulated from government influences. Indeed, in the context of the present research, central to the well functioning of the CBOs has been their capacity to turn the weaknesses of the larger political environment and the administrative loopholes therein into opportunities for local level organisational action. Seen in this way, wishing away government intervention in the workings of local organisations appears to be an unhelpful proposition. But, this is precisely what underpins Ostrom's (1999) concept of "organisational autonomy" and its upshot "robust organisations" (*cf.* Section 3.4.1). In the light of this, it may be necessary to give credence to the *capability of CBOs to work through established systems* as an indicator of assessing organisational robustness.

The discussion on local organisational involvement in forest access establishment and enforcement has also shown that CBOs, including informal ones, have well defined organisational and management structures, which they use in a wide variety of decision making arenas. This, and the critical behind-the-scene roles played by village *Idirs* in sanctioning the involvement of elders in dispute settlement (see Section 8.6.2), underscores the importance of constituted bodies in community management affairs. To this extent, Cleaver's (2000) critique of common property theory concerning the attention it gives to "formal manifestations of association" and her defence of "community meetings" as the main avenue for decision making seem untenable. However, the overall tone of her criticisms, which is the unwarranted emphasis common property theory gives to rigid rules and structures (see Section 3.5.2), provides useful insights into querying the workings of planned CPR organisations in general and their mandates vis-à-vis their constituent elements in particular.

Often, planned co-management regimes have elaborate CPR use rules that aim at protecting the resource system by at the same time meeting certain of the prescribed community needs.



These rules promote monolithic practices that tend to stifle individual experimentation and innovation (à la Lees 1993: 109) in the use of CPRs. In other words, inherent in the “other land reform” approach is a temptation to re-organise the commons under group property rights, with all the possible disincentives that this may create on individual/group-wide initiatives. Such a weakness has its roots in the way the commons are conceptualised in the academic literature. According to Brox (1990), the issue of maintaining “the open, accessible character of the commons” (234) by at the same time regulating resource degradation is a riddle common property theory has failed to unravel.

Given the existence of mixed tenure in most forest commons of the developing world, it is highly conceivable that a variety of locality-specific forest production practices prevail, which can be an anathema to the institution of rigid use rules with which planned co-management arrangements have come to be associated. As the research findings have shown, farmers in the case study areas have instituted locally acceptable access conventions and undertake individual-led production activities (e.g. plant domestication) and group-based cultural functions (e.g. *Dejo*) in village forest commons. An appreciation of these elements of the forest system goes a long way towards co-opting farmers in context-specific co-management arrangements.

In light of the above, it is necessary that the robustness of CPR organisations should also be assessed in terms of the extent to which CPR organisations accommodate, in their use rules, eco-friendly individual initiatives as well as cultural functions. To this effect, CPR design principles should recognise explicitly the possible importance of non-material and passive service functions of resources, such as the inspirational value of forests, as independent factors facilitating self-organisation in CPR management. Likewise, CPR management practitioners should go beyond dwelling on permissible NTFPs and revenue sharing, in their deliberations on benefits accruing to communities from co-management arrangements (*cf.* Table 3.5, ‘key components’), and start advocating for the inclusion of other uses of the forest system in any local management planning process.

The above is not a wholesale justification for leaving traditional practices and patterns of access claims unaltered, but an argument for perspective and balance. Given that the secret behind the perseverance of traditional resource access and management practices is their capacity to respond to felt community needs (both material and spiritual), attempts at improving resource governance regimes through the use of the “other land reform” perspective demands a careful diagnosis of current practices and the influence of past experiences on the same. Writing about competing philosophical debates and their relevance for development in Africa, Messay (1999) observes that “... retrospective will, rather than exclusively forward-looking attitude, is the way to change” (15). This is also the spirit within which the following deliberations need to be looked at.

#### **11.4.3.4 'Packaging' co-management: insights from share cropping experiences**

In their work on the policy research process, Garrett and Islam (1998) underlined the importance of an apt presentation of research outputs to the end user, the policy makers, a task they termed as "packaging" (10). A social innovation of the co-management type also needs appropriate packaging if it is to be internalised into the everyday world of the intended beneficiaries. More broadly, the issue of involvement and representation in a community-oriented resource management arena, as indeed in any other societal endeavour, has to be informed by people's own experiences and, from the perspective of policy communication, is best served by a local grounding of the planned changes. In this respect, the concept and operational modalities of share cropping could provide important insights into modelling forest co-management schemes.

True, some analysts have drawn conceptual parallels between agricultural share cropping and Joint Forest Management systems, and this is anchored on the remarkably similar input and output sharing features involving resource owners and its custodians (Kant and Nautiyal 1994: 253-254). However, these authors failed to appreciate the analytical relevance of share cropping in informing co-management arrangements. Central to this oversight has been the conceptualisation of share cropping as an exploitative arrangement made between two decidedly unequal partners in a marriage of convenience, and not as an attempt to forge partnership in a mutually beneficial manner, a view supported by the present research.

As the empirical evidence has testified, share cropping in forestry does not always take a market like form and there are considerable welfare considerations surrounding the conclusion of share cropping. Likewise co-management could be presented as a variant of share cropping, where the resource owner (usually the state as a land or tree owner) enters into an agreement with local people to share forest benefits in accordance with the contributions of each party for the upkeep of the resource. The experience of share cropping in bee keeping has shown that share renters in forest production activities consider their share partners as capable resource managers and the task of share renters is to provide the requisite labour and/or material assistance as determined jointly. By implication, in situations where there is a genuine interest to reverse the prevailing lop-sided relationship between rural people and grassroots personnel in forest co-management arrangements (see Section 3.4.2), a re-conceptualisation of academic-laden subjects with local level experiences will instil a degree of sensitivity into processes of extension facilitation. This, of course, should not be thought of as a piecemeal consideration, but rather should permeate the operational principles governing peasant-professional interaction, an issue considered below.



#### **11.4.3.5 A perspective on administrative action**

The deliberations in this section centre on the need for common property theory to re-examine the importance it attaches to policy. This has been looked at from the perspective of the policy making process as well as the ability of policy to guide practice in the intended direction.

As observed in Section 3.4, policies encouraging popular participation and decentralised administration are considered essential preconditions for the success of community-based resource management endeavours as conceptualised in the “other land reform” thesis. Indeed, almost all of the well-functioning co-management regimes reviewed earlier (Section 3.4.2) benefited hugely from the spur they received from favourable nation-wide policies. For that matter, due in large measure to the influence of such international deliberations and action groups as the Rio Conference and the Conservation Strategy movement, in most of the Third World there are already policy frameworks and strategies necessary to set in motion people-centred resource management already exist (for a profile of such policies in Africa, see Wood 1997). It appears, therefore, that ‘lack of policy’ is no longer a major stumbling block in the initiation of participatory resource management strategies.

Therefore, in order for common property theory to inform patterns of resource management regimes in accordance with present day realities it needs to unpack the notion of “the larger regime” (see Table 3.4) into meaningful categories. One such element could be gleaned from the empirical literature on state-society relationships in resource management, which underscores the importance of “shared ethnic background and environmental culture” between government officials and local people in the framing of workable resource management policies (Banks 1999: 310). By implication, common property theory should query the policy making process in terms not only of the existence of a policy document professing decentralisation and grassroots involvement in resource management, but also the training background of professionals, the extent of institutionalisation of government decision making, and the tradition of implementation of government orders. As intimated in Section 11.3.2, the discordance in state-community relationship pertaining to forest agriculture in Ethiopia has been ascribed at least partly to a lack of familiarity of its policy-making apparatus with the workings of CPR systems. Yet, the country has the necessary macro-level framework for putting in place participatory resource management processes (see, for example, Appendix 2.4.3).

At the other end of the spectrum, the emphasis given to the "larger regime" in co-opting local people for collective action seems to overstate the ability of policy to influence practice. This, in the main, stems from a generous assessment of the capacity of the state in the Third World to see through policy implementation. As the research findings have shown, there is a dearth of implementational capacity at the local level; and, consequently, policies are liable to be misconstrued in accordance with local level power politics and administrative convenience. In short, the excessive focus on legislation aspects of policy seems misplaced. Rather, more fruitful results could be achieved through assessing the potential for a broad range of other activities that come under the rubric *policy*. One such element is administrative action, which encompasses issues pertaining to working procedures and behavioural patterns of state-peasant communication.

In this regard, the issue of enhancing the technical capacity and accountability of field personnel has been given little theoretical consideration in CPR analysis. As could be deduced from the effort put into the theoretical exposition of CPR design principles and robust organisations, the focus of CPR analysis has been more on CBOs than on their counterparts in the government bureaucracy. Whatever interest the latter attracted in common property theory, it is subsumed under the notion of "the larger regime" (see Section 3.4.1). Besides, given that NGOs are becoming permanent features of the development landscape in the Third World, the issue of professional-peasant interaction, accountability and transparency in the activities of external agents should as well apply to these actors. Such moves are likely to go a long way towards encouraging local self-organisation and in enlisting a more forthcoming attitude on the part of local people in respect of furthering the ideals of co-management arrangements.

#### **11.4.3.6 Beyond management: co-management at the service of development**

As the empirical results of the research have intimated, interventions that enhance the productivity of the CFR use system have the potential to address the livelihood concerns of resource users. Thus, in the context of land-based CPRs the effectiveness of the "other land reform" demands no less complementary measures than those advocated for improving the performance of *land reform*. The latter, analysts agree, include *inter alia* pro-poor production and marketing support (see, for example, Okoth-Ogendo 2000: 130). In line with this, in countries and regions where industrial development is in its infancy and rural agricultural activities constitute the mainstay of the society, a closer scrutiny of the potential of the rural sector as a possible development catalyst becomes of utmost importance. In particular, attention should be given to undeveloped enterprises within the rural sector, and in forested regions this resource should as well be considered as an engine of local economic development.



In this regard, insights could be gained from a study of the literature on regional science, which is noted for its advocacy of resource-based economic opportunities as a means for setting in motion local/regional development (see, for example, Veit *et al.* 2001). It is however, recognised that such a market-oriented approach may go contrary to the ideals of resource conservation. Suffice here to note the spur market forces and forest product commercialisation have on resource depletion (see Section 2.5.3.4). These point to the need for identifying a theoretical perspective that helps establish conceptual bridges between co-management and local level sustainable development. It is in this connection that the adoption of the notion of “the sustainable community” as an organising concept is thought to enable the “other land reform” approach to go beyond ‘management’ concerns.

*The sustainable community* is a concept frequently employed by planners and policy makers in their quest for operationalising sustainable development in urban milieux (Bridger and Luloff 1999: 380). The relevance of this concept to the resource management-rural development arena rests on its flexibility to embrace environmental concerns, development objectives and social relationships among local communities. According to Bridger and Luloff (1999) manifestations of a sustainable community include “economic diversity”; “self reliance” (which entails “development of local markets and local production” as well as “greater co-operation among local economic entities”); and “protection and enhancement of biological diversity and careful stewardship of natural resources” (381). In operationalising the concept of the sustainable community, CPR analysts could obtain useful insights from the wide pool of theories in intra-regional development planning where a synchronisation of territorial aspects of development with inter-sectoral linkages and horizontal co-ordination are duly emphasised (Conyers 1985; Friedmann and Weaver 1979).

Against this background, a reorientation of the “other land reform” approach from its current rights-based resource management preoccupation towards development ideals contained in the notion of “the sustainable community” would warrant using the epithet ‘reform’. Unlike in the 1980s and early 1990s where the notion of the “other land reform” had enjoyed novelty, over the last decade governments throughout the Third World have found it in their political interest to uphold co-management (see Section 3.4.2). This coupled with the recent surge of interest in poverty alleviation strategies (Appendix 2.4.5A) are believed to make the task of tuning co-management objectives to wider local level sustainable development goals an opportune undertaking.

#### **11.4.4 Major conceptual considerations in CPR analysis: a synthesis**

The sets of theoretical reflections discussed in Sections 11.4.2 and 11.4.3 point to the need to bolster the analytical categories employed in CPR analysis and to broaden the conceptual dimensions of resource management outcomes. Moreover, the deliberations underline the

desirability of CPR analysts to assess the implications of their enquiry for local level development and the tenets of the sustainable community. These issues, which are summarised in Figure 11.7, are expected to provide the principal conceptual factors that an empirical study of CPRs ought to consider bearing in mind the findings of this study.

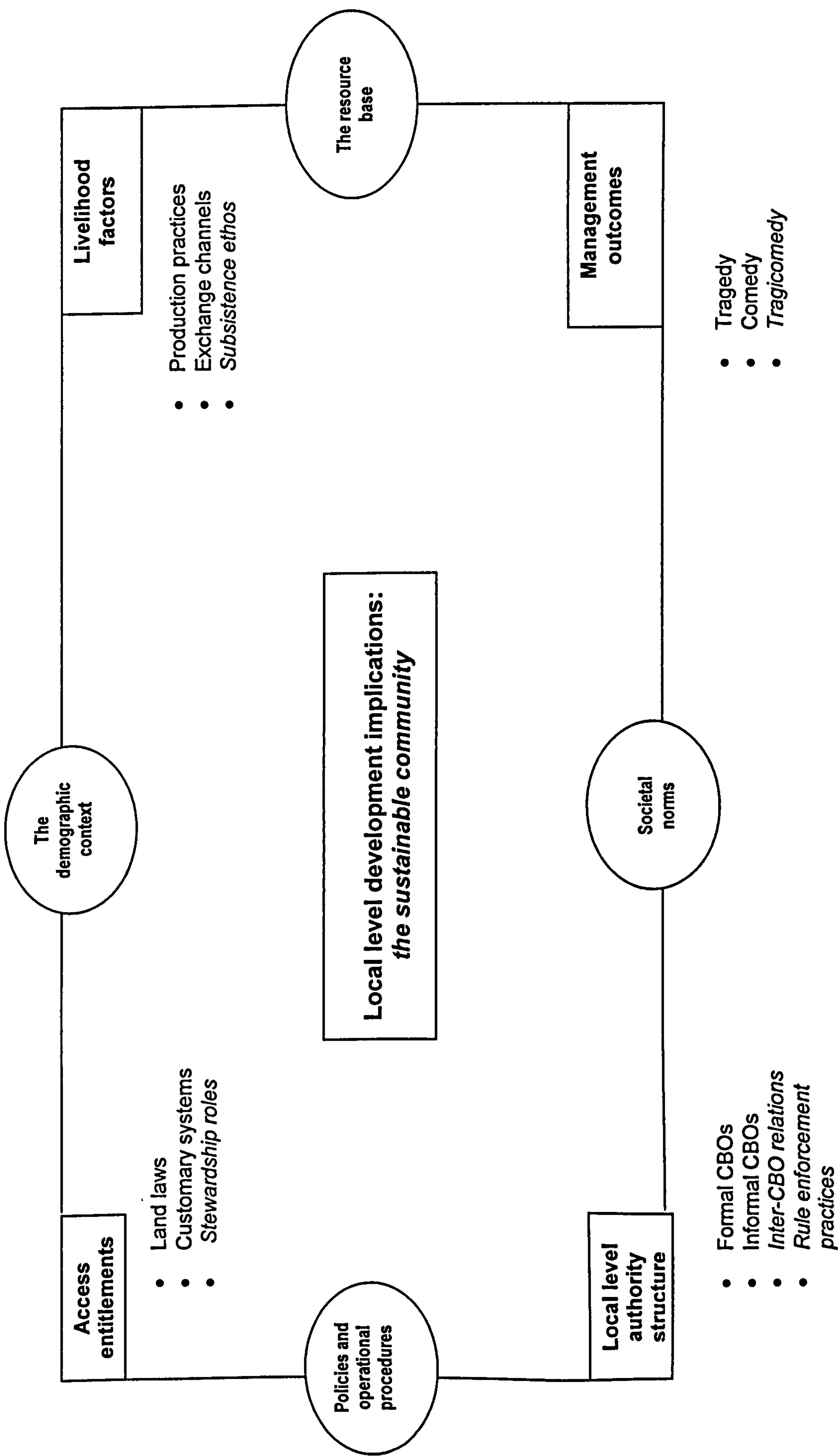
The desire for reorienting CPR analysis towards local level development is symbolised through placing the concept of 'the sustainable community' at the centre of Figure 11.7. This end goal is surrounded by the four sets of issues that CPR analysis is known to deal with. These relate to the expanded version of those outlined in Figure 3.1 and include (i) access entitlements, (ii) livelihood factors, (iii) local level authority structure, and (iv) management outcomes. From the empirical experiences deliberated earlier, human activities in CPRs are thought to be influenced by a range of 'system-wide factors' including (a) the policy environment and associated organisational culture, (b) demographic variables, (c) cultural factors, and (d) the nature of the resource base itself. These have been placed in proximity to those constituent parts of CPR analysis on which they are thought to have the greatest influence (Figure 11.7).

As regards the access dimension, the analysis has shown that within the context of mixed tenure (see Section 2.4.1), the emphasis that common property theory places on property rights should be extended to encompass *stewardship roles* as well. These are roles played by resource users who may not have direct or primary access rights. Inequities in resource access could be reflections of a number of demographic variables at work, including inter-generational gaps and differences in ancestral origin, as well as differential impacts of land laws on households at different stages in their developmental cycle. The pertinence of 'stewardship roles' to CPR analysis is an offshoot of the importance which the research attributed to production-based access arrangements, such as share cropping. Seen in this way, the term 'access entitlements' was thought to be a more appropriate terminology than the more legalistic one of 'property rights' or 'bundle of rights' (*cf.* Figure 3.1).

The research has also validated the relevance of organisational structures and associated rule configurations around which both access analysis and resource management models are organised. Insights from the research findings also point to the importance of deliberating on the extent of synergy among community-based organisations involved in resource access mediation and management. This is conceptualised in terms of *inter-CBO relations* and *rule enforcement practices* in Figure 11.7. Finally, the research has underlined the necessity of viewing the access provision process and the workings of the local level authority structure within the general context of the policy environment *and* the specific tradition of peasant-professional interaction (termed as 'policies and operational procedures' in Figure 11.7).



Figure 11.7: Major considerations in CPR analysis: a development orientation



The issue of livelihood maintenance has always been the centrepiece of access analysis and an objective upheld by co-management arrangements. Yet, in both the theoretical literature dealing with the factors facilitating self-organisation as well as in the empirical literature on planned forest co-management arrangements, the concept of livelihoods is confined to certain prescribed material needs of local people. Even so, as some critics underlined (Brox 1990; Lees 1993) it is doubtful that CPR analysis has shown flexibility to take on board the full range of production practices that CPRs allow. The present study brought to light the importance of taking cognisance of the interface between natural forest areas and individually initiated activities such as NWFP plant domestication. Moreover, the deliberations here call for a widening of the livelihood variables to include a people's *subsistence ethos* that the physical characteristics of CPRs also nurture. In this connection, useful insights could be obtained from the attempt at broadening the conceptualisation of forest livelihood assets through the use of 'health capital' and 'spiritual capital' (see Section 11.2.3).

According to the mainstream literature on the commons, the drive for livelihood maintenance results in a CPR use scenario that could lead either to the ruin of the commons or their judicious utilisation (Figure 3.1). However, based on the empirical data, the research has shown that livelihood imperatives could have differential influence on the outcome of the CPR use system, effects that could defy easy categorisation. This line of reasoning led the research to the discussion on the *tragicomedy of the commons*. It is, therefore, believed that CPR analysis stands to benefit from a re-conceptualisation of the possible management outcomes of CPR use scenarios. The resource management outcome of a given CPR system is influenced directly by the extent of emphasis a society gives to the ideals of resource conservation ('societal norms') and the spatial and ecological context within which this is exercised ('the resource base').

To date, the focus of attention of the commons theory has been on 'management', on the conditions under which resources could be managed in such a way as to maintain the flow of benefits through conserving the available stock of resources. Judging from the various co-management programmes and strategies, common property theory must have had a perceptible impact on the policy arena. Yet, throughout the developing world, CPRs such as natural forests co-exist with widespread poverty and deprivation, and the need for a problem-oriented and a resource-based development strategy demands that CPR management be tailored to also contribute towards economic progress with the ultimate objective of creating sustainable communities. It is, therefore, incumbent on CPR analysts to guide their analysis with the objective of deriving implications for local level development. Perhaps this necessitates acquisition of methodological and analytical insights from the regional planning profession.



## 11.5 Chapter summary

The research has demonstrated that over the decades the resource tenure system in Kafa has continually been shaped by changes in the agrarian policies and resource management strategies of the central government. In most cases, however, these changes have seldom been accompanied by the requisite organisational commitments to see them through. Moreover, not only has forest legislation been ambiguous in content, it has also been oblivious of the centrality of forest-based agriculture to the livelihoods of the local population. As a result, traditional systems of access principles that entitle individual households to a primary right holding position (such as kinship, prior occupancy, patrilineal descent, and residential proximity) permeate the structure of contemporary forest access despite the formally state tenure status. These findings not only add credence to the 'mixed tenure' perspective alluded to in Section 2.4.1 but also substantiate the relevance of customary tenure principles outlined in Table 2.1. The research findings have also concurred with the widely held view that these customary channels are responsible for intergenerational and gender inequities in resource access. The analysis has also elaborated on the literature dealing with secondary rights through providing three interrelated dimensions in which these rights could be conceptualised (namely, spatial, temporal, and product-based). This in turn has shown the socially embedded character of village forest access despite the pre-eminence of individually-defended access claims. Perhaps a more significant finding of the research relates to the importance it attaches to share cropping as an enduring principle of access to CFRs.

The factors that permit the co-existence of formal and informal means of forest access have also contributed to the persistence of traditional CBOs alongside state sponsored ones. This network of CBOs has mediated the local access provision and dispute settlement processes. At the same time, the research has identified the limited attention these organisations give to conservation of the forest resource base, because their primary concern is one of deliberating on intra-community resource use conflicts. Moreover, the analysis has shown that state-community interactions, as exemplified in government attempts at forest use/protection, are played out through these entities. Finally, the research has highlighted the significant influence of cultural factors and values on the types of decisions CBOs take and the important balancing act these organisations perform in adjudicating over intra-community tenure disputes as well as in discharging government directives. To this extent the research findings augur well with the emerging view that considers institutions (so-called rules of the game) as flexible practices embedded within social relations (see Section 3.5.1). In general, studies aimed at examining the role of local organisations in the resource management arena are known for a differential assessment of organisations based on either hierarchies and vertical interactions (Uphoff 1986: 11) or the degree of official legitimacy accorded to them (Blunt and Warren 1996). Thus, the observations made in the present research regarding the



interdependence of local CBOs, which was made possible through studying horizontal linkages of local organisations, is believed to enrich the literature on organisational analysis.

In its deliberations on the access-livelihood nexus, the research applied Rakodi's (1999) capital assets perspective to livelihood analysis (see Section 2.5.1) and came up with a total of eight forestry relevant capital assets. Some of these were acknowledged to be access-engendering resources, which are distributed unevenly across the different household categories, while a few others represent forest livelihood outcomes. A closer examination of the more measurable of these outcomes, namely financial capital, showed a heavier dependence of the resource poor on forest resources than the rich. This is in broad conformity with the empirical literature on environmental cash income sources (see Arnold and Townson 1998; Cavendish 1999). Moreover, the research's nuanced approach towards the study of agricultural income sources established the heavier dependence of the Manjos, a despised social group, on forest resources than other sections of the case study communities. The latter also complement their forest farming operations with plough-based mixed farming activities. The importance of forest resources to Manjo cash income is at least partly attributed to their socially-ascribed role of woodfuel sale. Thus, unlike most of the empirical findings reported in Chapter Two (see Table 2.2), where the data requirements were met through generalised sample selection, the present research underlines the importance of complementing economic considerations with social variables in the selection of community members for household income study.

As the access analysis underscored, forests are utilised in accordance with household-oriented forest access principles. This, coupled with the considerable livelihood importance of NWFPs across the different household categories has led to judicious, if market-driven, management of NWFPs. On the other hand, largely because of poor policy enforcement and community level vested interests there is also a widespread practice of commercial-oriented illicit tree felling. While the former enhances the chances of users deriving benefits jointly, the latter represents a case of subtraction of others' benefits. In this connection, the twin concepts of tragedy/comedy of the commons were thought to be inadequate to characterise the divergent management outcomes noted above, hence the coinage of the term tragicomedy to describe the situation in the case study areas. Such a conceptualisation is also believed to aid analysis in similar other situations where CPRs are subject to contradictory use regimes and where the organisational basis of tenure enforcement and resource use is characterised by ambivalence and indifference.

There is a dearth of formal group forest management activities in the study areas. Given the CPR nature of local forest use as well as the paramount importance of local organisations in mediating the forest use scene, it was thought appropriate to assess the local forest management experience using Oakerson's (1992) framework (Table 3.2). With the exception



of certain limitations, this template was found to be a useful analytical device. The most limiting aspect of the framework relates to 'rule' definitions, which come under Oakerson's 'decision-making arrangements' (46). In particular, owing to the individualised nature of forest use rights in the case study communities, the research thought it necessary to replace 'operational rules' by *procedures*: the specific types and sequence of tasks individual right holders undertake in village forests are determined not so much by specific sets of rules as by what appropriators deem necessary. This also applies to the involvement of secondary right holders and share cropping partners in the generation of forest benefits. Thus, CPR analysis stands to benefit from the broadening of the above operational rules to also take account of *stewardship roles* played by non-primary right holders. By the same token, the absence of any off-take regulatory mechanism in the utilisation of village forest commons points to the inappropriateness of using Oakerson's other term 'collective choice rules' (47). Indeed, day-to-day forest utilisation, that is the operational procedures referred to above, is informed by *production practices and social norms*, the latter constituting the rephrased version of collective choice rules.

In short, a re-orientation of the said variables in Oakerson's (1992) framework in line with the ones suggested above could introduce an element of flexibility and hence could ensure a wider degree of applicability of the template at large.

An assessment of the local forest management experience against Oakerson's (1992) 'patterns of interaction' underlines the useful role played by local organisations in bringing about a 'co-operative strategy' in NWFP management. As noted in Section 11.2.4.3, taken as a system, CBOs in the study localities could be regarded as well-functioning if not 'robust'; yet, the circumstances under which these entities operate could provide lessons for the discourse on robust organisations. For instance, while 'organisational autonomy' may be a virtue, in practice CBOs operate under a varying degree of government interference. As the empirical experience from inter-CBO working relationships underscored, in examining the extent of robustness of organisations, CPR analysis needs to also take on board the issue of 'organisational adeptness' in tailoring macro socio-political developments to local realities.

Although the absence of a group-based forest management system most characterises the forest production scene in the case study areas, there were instances where problems of forest intrusion prompted village communities to organise using their village *Idirs*. The use of an already existing CBO for the task is indicative of the importance of Ostrom's (1999) 'prior organisation' as a motivation for self-organisation (see Table 3.4). However, this was only a necessary, but by no means sufficient, condition for the initiation of collective management action, thus underlining the need to include the option of 'threat' or 'external pressure' as an additional variable in any deliberation on self-organisation. More crucially, the occurrence of external threats against local environmental resources and the limited governmental attention

that the resultant local efforts attracted are essentially symptomatic of a general lack of commitment to forest-based agriculture on the part of decision-making authorities. As intimated earlier, such behaviour has been ascribed to the incongruence between the value systems of policy makers and those of forest farmers. Against this background, it may be worthwhile for CPR analysis to factor in explicitly such issues as 'the cultural and training background of professionals' in its deliberations on variables contributing towards self-organisation (see Table 3.4, "the larger regime"). In this regard, in as much as ethnicity engenders a particular environmental culture (see Banks 1999: 310), formal training or exposure might contribute to the erosion or rejuvenation of such an acquired set of values.

Finally, a reading of the literature on CPR analysis ascribes sound resource management as the ultimate purpose of discourse. Brown (1999) is one of the few analysts who also saw the instrumentality of co-management arrangements for facilitating the "... processes of governance" in the Third World (30). The present research develops this argument further: given the economic importance of most CPRs and their potentials for setting in motion rural agricultural development on the one hand, and the depth of poverty surrounding these resources on the other, perhaps it is time that CPR analysis reorients its objective of enquiry towards assessing options, not just for management but also for local level socio-economic development.



## **12. Conclusions**

### **12.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a reflective overview of the research process and its findings (Section 12.2) and outlines issues for further empirical study (Section 12.3).

### **12.2 Reflections on the research process and its outcomes**

The research set out to examine forest access experiences of farmers and the contribution of forest-based activities to their livelihoods in six forest communities of rural Kafa in southwest Ethiopia. The overall goal was to draw out operational implications for resource management in the Ethiopian context and to identify the conceptual ramifications for the discourse on resource analysis and management.

The historical and socio-economic nature of the research subject matter entailed extensive fieldwork and reliance on a range of quantitative and qualitative information sources. The background analysis has shown that Kafa is a highly tradition bound and hierarchical society, and those features have a bearing on the data requirements of the research. These, coupled with the population admix that government settlement strategies have facilitated, as well as the differential intra-community impact land laws have had, necessitated the generation of data from a spectrum of the study communities, including young household heads, rich and poor, women, Manjos (who are low status groups), and settlers.

The discussion on field data collection experiences was placed within the context of the literature on social research methods. In this regard, the study established that success in a fieldwork programme is contingent by and large on the establishment of rapport with the subjects of study in a culturally sensitive manner. In addition to respectful conduct in the field, an important aspect of the rapport building process has been the two-way sharing of comparative information that the researcher initiated with the different categories of informants. Short of this and related proactive measures, it was understood that research tools, however imaginative they may be, could not ensure the generation of reliable data. For instance, field experiences point to the fact that PRA-type group discussions may not always be as powerful a mechanism in the acquisition of sensitive information as they are purported to be in the literature (*cf.* Chambers 1997). However, the research is a testimony to the rich wealth of information that could be marshalled from the use of traditional 'verbal' methods such as interviews, as these tend to go in consonant with local people's cultural training. Moreover, the discussion pointed to the mutually reinforcing character of the data obtained from combining methods, and that there was nothing inevitable about the generation of

contradictory information when an array of different methods is used (cf. Abbott and Guijt 1997: 30).

The broader themes of the research as well as the analytical perspectives employed in the study are informed by the literature on natural resource tenure establishment and household level forest use in agrarian systems. Moreover, the study draws on the discourse on management regimes in common pool resources. These have been complemented by an assessment of the different strands of legislations and country-specific organisational experiences that have had varying influences on past and present tenure practices and are likely to shape future developments concerning resource tenure and management. The need for reviewing government policies and strategies was predicated on the realisation that in Ethiopia land resources have for the most part been in the hands of the State which is also a key player in rural agricultural development activities.

Drawing on these insights, the research deliberated on the various attempts at imposing outside conceptions of tenure and forest management on local people. On the basis of this, the nature of state-community interactions in forest access provision and tenure enforcement was characterised as more one of strife than synergy. The research has also identified a range of locally tailored forest access mechanisms, such as family grant (*Wejoo*) and share cropping, and examined their differential inter-household impacts. While these access channels are far from perfect, it was observed that they fill an important gap in terms of the allocation of village forest commons among the indigenous groups which could otherwise have been in a state of limbo on account of the ambiguity of the associated land laws. Sustaining the local tenure picture are state-sponsored (formal) and locally initiated (informal) community-based organisations, which are found to have symbiotic relationship in shouldering their individual, and at times overlapping, responsibilities concerning the mediation of intra-community resource use conflicts.

The research has also underlined the fact that access claims among farmers are closely intertwined with utilisation. Yet, forest benefits derived from institutionally recognised and closely staked areas tend to have a higher degree of marketability than those accessed through a variety of secondary rights. In general, however, forest resource utilisation revolves around meeting subsistence needs and cash income requirements. While the range of forest benefits accruing to the study communities shows marked variations across household groups, overall, forest products constitute an essential aspect of people's livelihood resources. However, the analysis on activity-specific forest use practices has shown that some aspects of household forest use, such as wood production, are more detrimental to the resource base than others (e.g. NWFPs). In view of the significant commercial orientation of wood production, the destabilising influence this has on locally upheld forest access conventions, the weak law enforcement capacity at grass roots level, as well as the



dependence of some sections of the local communities on this activity for their survival, the research has characterised the wood utilisation scene as a case of resource mismanagement. The research has juxtaposed this with the historical and current importance of NWFP activities in the local agricultural production system, the eco-friendly nature of their acquisition, and the tight institutional principles underpinning their utilisation.

The discussions on the parallel existence of formal forest tenure along with customary access conventions and those on the continued importance of traditional forest-based agriculture, despite the progressive expansion of commercial wood production activities, have established the concepts of change and continuity as relevant cross-cutting issues. Such an understanding helps to elaborate an operational modality of local level forest management that advocates formal recognition of farmers' forest use rights as well as a system of management reinforcing judicious forest use practices. The twin concepts of change and continuity were employed to query the adequacy of categorising forest management outcomes into the 'tragedy'/comedy' dichotomy (*cf.* McCay 1995). Indeed, on the basis of the contradictory tendencies characterising the use scenarios of village forest commons, the research advanced the need for adopting the term 'tragicomedy' to describe this situation and the management outcomes in other similar CPR contexts. The research findings have also formed the basis for the deliberations on conceptual issues aimed at enriching the literature on CPR analysis that deal with access channels, organisational structures and policy making processes. Finally, the research sees a potential for CPRs as assets around which location-specific sustainable development endeavours could be organised, hence its advocacy for a reorientation of CPR research.

All in all, the deliberations on local forest access channels and forest-based livelihoods enabled the research to put forward operational and conceptual issues that are of relevance to forest management and local level development under mixed resource tenure regimes where customary systems and traditional forest agriculture play key roles.

The above should as well be viewed against the background in Ethiopia where there is a dearth of research dealing with the subject matter of the present study. Rural development and/or environmental management-oriented research in Kafa have had a dismal record. Thus, the study is believed to represent an original contribution to academic discourse in aspects of forest tenure and use in this forested region. In the scheme of things, the research had to rely on primary sources of data even for some of the background information on aspects of historical tenure and forest production practices, because these were not available from usual sources of information such as higher educational institutions (in the form of theses) and/or from agricultural research centres (as research reports). This has stretched the limited logistical resources at the disposal of the researcher and confined the geographical coverage of the case study sites to contiguous communities. Even so, as the

research has documented, there are important inter-community differences in the way people access their local forest resources. It is highly conceivable that a comparative study of tenurial issues across widely differing communities within highland Kafa could have thrown more light on context-specific adaptive responses of local people to state tenure impositions.

As regards forest livelihoods, the focus of analysis was largely on marketable goods, although forests provide a range of products and services that may not necessarily be mediated through markets. Moreover, the analysis of the cash income contributions of marketable forest goods hinged on small sample of households selected through non-probability means, although attempt was made to relate group-specific findings to the characteristics of the wider community from which the different sample households have been chosen. On the other hand, the forest production practices that the research dealt with were limited in scope as the interest was one of identifying farming system factors that contributed to forest access and management. Indeed, given the antiquity of forest-based gathering activities in the region, it is highly probable that a much wider pool of local production practices, than those assessed in the research, informs the farming system. In short, there is considerable room for empirical research on forest tenure and management in Ethiopia's most wooded areas.

As pointed out in Appendix 2.2.2A, the two western Zones of SNNPRS, i.e. Kafa-Sheka and Bench-Maji Zones, account for over a fifth of the country's natural forests. Moreover, Kafa and its environs have attracted a multiplicity of conservation as well as agricultural investment interests. These point to the need for a more rigorous analysis of the development potentials and the environmental significance of the region so that appropriate resource use and conservation policies could be devised and the effects of on-going interventions evaluated. Such an endeavour, if properly executed, could also contribute to the theoretical literature on forest use systems. As regards the preferred mode of research, one concurs with Brown (1999), who argued that efforts aimed at establishing acceptable modalities of forest management demand in-depth studies into a range of social and historical processes affecting the natural resource use system and "... the required understandings are not necessarily ones that can be purchased cheaply or rapidly" (29).

### **12.3 Recommendations for further study**

In the light of the research findings, the following issues have been identified for further research. These consist of country-specific themes (Section 12.3.1) as well as topics of global application (Section 12.3.2).



### **12.3.1 Themes for further empirical studies in Ethiopia's forest areas**

**Forest access and group management experiences in western SNNPRS.** These areas are inhabited predominantly by a diverse range of ethnic groups of indigenous descent who are known for their espousal of a range of farming systems that are suited to their natural environment, although this could be influenced by the patterns of interactions they had with the northern regions (Sutcliffe 1992). Thus, an understanding of people-forest interactions in southwest Ethiopia stands to benefit substantially from a region-wide assessment of past and current patterns of forest access and an investigation of traditional forest management structures and processes. Given the heterogeneity of the areas constituting the western SNNPRS, the research is bound to provide valuable information if undertaken in three or four selected locations. For a start, the type of issues the present research has explored could be used to frame the research objectives. However, in order to ensure comparability and cross learning it is proposed that a broadly similar template, such as a modified version of Oakerson's (1992) framework, could be used to direct the field research and organise the analysis. In this regard, consideration may be given to incorporating Ostrom's organisational analysis into the above framework.

**Local values of forest goods and services.** Central to the design of resource-based agricultural policy is an understanding of the interests people have in, and the values they attach to, their local environmental resources. The present study has shown the significant cash income contribution of forest goods to rural households. It is, however, recognised that a fuller understanding of the livelihood importance of forest goods and services demands the use of a more representative sample size, and, above all, inclusion of a wider range of forest goods that are produced to meet local people's direct subsistence, cash and other objectives. There is a burgeoning literature dealing with methods of local environmental resource valuation that could be consulted in the formulation of the specific research issues and fieldwork procedures. One such an empirically tested approach has been pioneered by IIED (1997), which drew on local people's knowledge and combined this with economic and ecological analysis. In conducting research in the theme under discussion, it is necessary that similarly designed studies be carried out in a couple of locations so that experiences could be shared and results compared. Launching such a research project in the areas where the proposed access-oriented studies are to be undertaken could expedite the learning process.

**Traditional forest-based agricultural practices.** Registering, documenting and evaluating local forest-based production practices would go a long way towards ensuring the imparting of knowledge from one generation to the next and in facilitating inter-and intra-community exchange of experiences in the production and utilisation of forest goods. Such a study should aim at informing (a) the national agricultural research system so that synergy is

created between local farmers' knowledge and the perspectives of the professionals, and (b) the agricultural extension system in operation (PADETES) so that locally tailored extension packages could be devised. Given the variability of traditional production practices across space and social categories (Richards 1980: 184-185) and the selective inter-community borrowing of production practices (Philips and Titilola 1995: 4), it might be necessary to undertake the proposed study in varied locations and among diverse actors. One approach could be to select research areas in accordance with the degree of proximity to main roads and/or major urban settlements with the view to identifying a cluster of localities that range from the remotest areas to urban hinterlands.

### **12.3.2 Issues for applied research in the global context**

The deliberations on the research findings also point to the need for a cross-cultural empirical research on the following issues.

**Local organisational experiences in CPR access and management.** The literature on CPR access underlines the near universality of mixed tenure in the developing world, but it is unclear whether tenure enforcement and management activities also display a mix of organisational forums. The thrust of the proposed research here pertains to understanding the nature, modality and extent of inter-relationships between formal and informal CBOs in mediating local access to and/or managing CPRs in different cultural milieu and CPR contexts. Such a comparative work would help strengthen existing knowledge on the desirable qualities of local organisations.

**Relevance of co-management schemes to decentralised planning.** The mainstream CPR literature puts great faith in the positive contribution that decentralised administration and decision-making are bound to have on co-management (Ostrom 1999). However, in situations where both decentralised development and resource co-management are practised, and this has been a common occurrence (see Section 3.4.2), the likely two-way relationship that could exist between co-management and decentralisation seems not to have been appreciated. It is highly conceivable that the wealth of practical experience that co-management arrangements generate could have the potential to reinvigorate the operations of the decentralised planning machinery through providing important methodological insights into community involvement and resource sharing practices. Thus, empirical studies are needed to assess the opportunities for integrating co-management experiences into the planning machinery so that synergy between natural resource planning and the decentralisation agenda could be realised. Such an undertaking should also be seen as an important ingredient in the quest for redirecting the focus of CPR analysis towards the ideal of creating sustainable communities.



All in all, the studies proposed to be undertaken in the context of Ethiopia's forested regions, as well as those identified for comparative global assessment, share a common philosophy, which is livelihood amelioration through prudent environmental management. This is in line with the various international deliberations that helped put environment as an integral theme of development. Also, research into the above themes goes a long way towards redressing the existing information gap concerning the livelihood and the institutional aspects of forest governance.

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