

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF  
GRADUATE STUDIES.**

**FARMER HERDER CONFLICT OVER  
NATURAL RESOURCES IN NORTHEAST  
ETHIOPIA.**

*THE CASE OF QUOWET WEREDA IN NORTH  
SHEWA ZONE OF THE AMHARA NATIONAL  
STATE.*

DEPARTEMENT OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL  
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES.

BY: ATKILT DANIEL

ADVISOR: BELAY TEGENE ( PROF.)

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Farmer herder conflict over natural  
resources in Northeast  
Ethiopia.

*The case of Quowet wereda in North Shewa  
Zone of the Amhara national state.*

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## KEY TERMS

Conflict

Natural resource degradation

Natural resource scarcity

Resource competition

Land tenure

Quowet ( Kewet) wereda

Farmers

Herders

Pastoralism

Land use change

Conflict resolution

## **ABSTRACT**

*This study on Farmer-Herder conflict attempted to explore one area of the problems of local development, which is local instability. Conflict hampers local and national development by mainly affecting rural agro-pastoral productivity. Especially in conflict prone areas where the conflicts are of higher magnitude, the livelihoods of the producer communities are threatened to greater extents.*

*This study, on the highland-lowland transition zone of Northeastern Ethiopia, and particularly on Quowet Wereda of North Shewa Zone, has explored the nature and causes of the conflict in the study area. The prime assumption at the beginning of the study was that as in many semi-arid areas where natural resource scarcity dictates the relationship among farmers and herders sharing a common production zones, the major cause of conflict in this area would be resource scarcity. The study also revealed that natural resource scarcity, coupled with other factors like tenure and boundary regulations, was found to be the inherent cause of conflict between farmers and herders. The conflict in the study area was found to be of higher magnitude both in terms of recurrence and intensity, which worsens with the aggravation of resource scarcity in the absence of sustainable conflict resolution.*

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1. Background of the problem**

Ethiopia has an estimated population of more than 60 million and a total surface area of 1,104 square kilometers. Agriculture is the major sector of the economy and about 85% of the country's population lives in rural areas. The country's dependence on subsistence agriculture (consisting of 43.3 % of its GDP and 85% of total employment)(CSA 2002) left it vulnerable and failed to feed its citizens. Consequently, widespread poverty in Ethiopia has become its main feature both in the rural and urban areas. Poor economic growth, low technological base, periodic drought and famine, and internal conflicts and displacement have continued to exacerbate poverty in the country (Yohannes, 1996: 31). These and other complex factors have resulted in a slowdown in the economic growth of the country, which in turn resulted in deterioration of the living condition of its people.

The countries agricultural communities are farmers (both who are dominantly cultivators and those who practice livestock raising in addition to cultivation) and pastoral producers. Both agricultural producers are currently facing several challenges of resource scarcity and degradation, which is resulting in a decline in their productivity and are threatening their livelihoods.

Farmers largely rely on the fragmented plots and rainwater as input to their production. Apparently the peasant land holdings sizes have been subject to successive redistribution in the current and past governments that currently about 65.11% of the total farmer households in the country have less than one hectare of land at their disposal (CSA, 2002). With an increase in peasant household sizes, accelerated erosions and rain shortage currently peasant households are facing increasing food shortages in many parts of the country.

Pastoralists rely on open rangeland resources to access feed sources for their livestock production. However due to a number of factors like range land degradation, weed encroachments and animal plagues, increased livestock and human populations, and increasing land use competition from farming (both peasant farming and investment in commercial agriculture), are resulting in resource base shrinkage and as a result they are facing decline in their productivity and their livelihood is increasingly becoming threatened. For instance a study undertaken in 1998 on the feed resources status of the *Afar* region indicated that the feed situation of the region is deficit by 795,697 tons per year (Irwin 2000).

The increase in the pressure resulting from resource degradation and scarcity is aggravating the situation of competition between farmers and herders in the highland-lowland transition zone. In the areas where the two production systems interact both communities are increasingly considering the option of expansion to each other's holdings. The lack of clear land tenure policy is also causing a number of impacts on the perceived ownership status of both communities, which contributes to competition and conflict. Boundary demarcations, which divide producer groups from their traditional resource bases, are also aggravating conflicts. For instance recent land area distribution during the regionalization of the *Somali* and the *Oromia* regions, in the 1990's has led to the intensification of conflicts between the *Borana Oromo* and various *Somali* clans in *Liben* and *Arero Weredas* (Ben Irwin 2001).

As a result conflicts are getting recurrent and intensified in many parts of the country. Even though currently there are no systematically gathered and compiled information on the occurrences and magnitudes of such conflicts on the national levels, the prevalence of reported cases of conflicts in almost all the regions of the country testifies to this fact. The government is responding to the problem by initiating regional conferences on the problems of conflict as well as conflict resolution options. As part of these initiatives the ministry for regional affairs had recently (May 2003) organized a panel discussion forum in which several

scholars presented their research findings on the problem of conflict in the country. Various non-governmental and international organizations are also increasingly responding to the problem especially by initiating and financing research projects on the issues of conflict and conflict resolution options. However it seems that there is a lot to be done in the area with regard to policy reforms and research on various natures and causes of the problem of conflict in the country.

## 1.2 Statement of the research problem

The core problem to be analyzed in this study is the problem of conflict between crop farmers and livestock herders in a selected study area of *Quowet wereda* in North *Shewa* (northeast Ethiopia), with a particular focus on 3 peasant associations in the western part of the wereda. These peasant associations are found at altitudes between 1000-1200m, which can be categorized as is a semi arid zone, (see Winrock International 1992, for climatic zoning), with annual average rainfall of less than 900mm. The area is typical of a highland lowland transition zone bordering the *Semurobi-geleálo* wereda of *Afar* region.

Several scholars are coming to the general consensus that farmer-herder conflicts are increasing both in terms of recurrence and intensity in semi- arid Africa and the horn region (Roger Blench, 2001 also Karim Hussien 1998). Most of them also agree that resource scarcities coupled

with institutional factors like tenure uncertainty are the causes behind the general trend of increase in conflict occurrences. The same is true for the situation of farmer –herder conflicts in Ethiopia, as analyzed by several scholars, for instance, mentioning the case of *Boran* pastoralists and their neighbors (John Helland, 1999 also Irwin, 2000) and the case of *Afar* pastoralists and their neighbors (Karim Hussien1998:45). However when we come to specific cases there seem to be some limitations in the methodologies of data collection to arrive at conclusions as to whether conflict has increased in specific case areas. For instance, Karim Hussien (1998: 46) conducted postal survey to assess the situation of conflict in Ethiopia and reached on erroneous conclusion, which states, “...farmer-herder conflicts has actually been stable or even *decreasing* in the last twenty years,(between) Afar herders and their neighbors(farmers) in North *Shewa* region of Ethiopia”. However the practical reality is quite different from such assertions. Even when we consider factors only such as proliferations of arms purchase, increased shrinkage of distances between farmers and herders due to expansion of both production systems, and increase in recurrence of drought incidences over the past twenty years we can generally expect a trend of increase in occurrences and intensities of conflicts. For instance, if one compared the types and numbers of weapons on the hands of the conflicting parties twenty years ago to the current states of possession of several automatic and semi automatic weapons in considerable amounts,

one can simply predict an increase in intensity and recurrence of present day conflicts. Obviously the misguided conclusions are attributed to the methodology of data collection, which, in this case, was postal survey conducted on third party observers with varied degrees of access to information on the issue.

Conflicts between farmers and herders, in the study area and in similar areas elsewhere, occur mainly because of the apparent scarcity of natural resources on the zone of production they co-habit and on the differences in their production styles, which makes them increasingly vulnerable to competition. Many scholars, such as Scoones (1994), argue that farmer-herder conflict is likely to be most acute in the semi-arid zones (500-700mm average rainfall per year)\*, which falls between the arid lands where only livestock based production systems are possible, and more humid zones that can support crop-livestock production systems.

In such zones of transition from humid to arid areas in Ethiopia increased settlements and expansion are inevitable. This happens due to the increase in population, on the one hand and resource degradation as well as scarcity, on the other hand. Rapid increase of population

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\* There are differences among scholars about the classifications of climatic zones as Arid, Semi-Arid or Humid etc... In this study the relative situation of rainfall on the transition zone in the Ethiopian situation is considered as a general reference than taking a particular reference to certain classifications.

gradually lead to change in land use patterns with herders tending to prioritize mobility and opportunistic resource use (Toupet 1975:463) and farmers expanding cultivation and livestock grazing on formerly open access grazing areas. In addition to these, overlapping and ambiguous regulations regarding access rights over land and other resources as results of uncertain tenure and impractical boundary demarcations also aggravate the situation of competition. This situation happens due to the increased realization by producers of the vulnerability of both production systems in situation of accelerated resource degradation and scarcity.

Conflicts once they occur and become the dominant forms of relations between the producer groups, co-operative forms of interactions will gradually cease to exist. This situation will further worsen the conditions of vulnerability of both producer groups. This happens because of the aggravation of scarcities due to the prevalence of risks to share common resources and due to the break down of the symbiotic mutual exchange relations that used to exist and contribute for mutual welfare. In addition to these, conflict induces new costs to production as a result of the shift of human and financial resources from production to conflict.

Local sustainable development in conflict prone zones of production will be hampered due to of the above-mentioned factors. Sustainable development, among other things, requires the prevalence of peaceful co-

habitation of producer communities. It is only through cooperation that local communities could implement sustainable common pool resource conservation and management strategies. In addition, stable and harmonious communities are only the ones that are able to be resilient and creative to respond to environmental stresses and sustain their livelihoods rather than those, which are frustrated by the circumstances in their localities. Therefore farmer-herder conflict is one major area of problem of regional and national economic development.

The prevalence of recurrent conflicts in the highland-lowland transition zones in Ethiopia, and more specifically on the western part of Quowet wereda lowland areas, calls for attention of researchers to embark upon a study project for a multi-factor analysis and diagnosis. In addition, current debates on land tenure and boundary demarcation measures, in relation to their practicality to match with the diversity of production systems, need to be tested on specific study areas.

However, as of the preliminary observation of this researcher, the following problems seem to be prevalent in the area contributing to lack of a comprehensive understanding of the problem.

- There is an apparent lack of sufficient research knowledge over causes and consequences of conflict over natural resources,

- There seems to be lack of adequate initiative to embark upon extensive research on diverse aspects of socio-economic and environmental problems of farming and herding communities,
- Among the sample of major research activities on the case area and on the topic of resource conflict, there seems to be inadequate emphasis on assessment of the impacts of relevant factors like demography, institutional factors like land tenure and environment degradation,
- The strong relationship between the problems of food security, pastoral productivity and conflict over resources seem to have been given inadequate attention.

Accordingly, the researcher believes that a detailed study in this area will be significant to fulfill the apparent information gaps. It is also the belief that this study could be helpful by providing some insight for further studies in the area.

### 1.3. Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study is to analyze the impacts of different factors like tenure arrangements, population pressure, environment degradation etc.. , on aggravating competition and conflicts over natural resources and the impact of these on regional and local development. The study will also attempt to examine current efforts of conflict management

and stress on the need for multidimensional aspect of development intervention for conflict management.

More specifically, the paper has the following objectives

- To assess the magnitude of the conflict in the study area,
- To analyze the impacts of resource scarcity on prevalence of conflict in the study area,
- To analyze factors like resource degradation, population pressure, land tenure and regional boundary demarcations that are assumed to have facilitated or aggravated scarcity of resource in the study area,
- To recommend an integrated development intervention strategy in order to alleviate the problems of conflict in the study area.

#### 1.4 Research hypotheses

- A. The inherent cause of conflict in the study area is resource scarcity
- B. The conflict in the case area gets more intense and highly recurrent over time with increasing resource scarcity and failure of the state to realize effective intervention.
- C. Conflict to a large extent and directly affects pastoral and agricultural productivity and food security.

D. Resource alienation affects the perception on ownership as well as the use value of the resources in question to the extent of resulting and/or intensifying conflict.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Different perspectives of resource conflict**

The most logical starting point to review the theoretical discussions on the subject of farmer herder conflict is to see general frame of references given on the area as the boundary of the study. This frame of reference is basically set by the discussions on the essence of the issue under investigation, which is conflict, and subjects of investigation which are farmers and herders.

Conflict is taken as a form interaction between the two parties in conflict. However the differences rest in the fact that some adhere to the notion that conflict carry a negative, destructive, connotation. Authors such as Grimbel et.al(1995), cited in Karim Hussien(1998),are identified with such approaches since they try to view conflict as a separate notion to what they called "trade-offs". According to them trade-offs represent the different interests of different stake-holders or as a conflict of interest between actors which (unlike conflict) can be managed to achieve positive outcomes

On the other hand, others argue that conflict is a form of interaction, which should not necessarily be taken as a negative interaction. They further argue that conflict can be a form of interaction between actors

and a form of communication to stake holders of its causes, consequences and remedies for positive results like new instantiations, new rules empowerment development intervention etc...(Mathieu 1995B, Bradury et al 1995 Delaloy 1993:7 also swift 1996)

When we come to the definition of the study subjects the attempts to clearly separate and define farmers and herders in to two distinct groups is still a difficult task. Some argue that increasing environmental stress that have undergone decades ago has resulted in homogenization of production in semi-arid Africa that both production systems are mixed to day that they can both be called agro-pastoralists. (Zuppan 1994, Diallo 1995)

However authors like Gallis (1975:185-190) and Wolde Michael (1995) tried to classify farmers and herders in to multiplicity of categories depending on the degree of sedenterization of populations and relative importance of cultivation and livestock keeping to their livelihoods. Common classifications as summarized by Woldemichael (1995) are

- *Nomadic pastoralism* : farmers who depend largely on animal production for their livelihoods, have no fixed residence due to the need for mobility to search for grazing and water resources, and practice cultivation only as a supplement to livestock raising.

- *Transhumant pastoralism* : farmers who practice both livestock raising and crop cultivation, who follow a particular movement with their herds over fairly regular routes, but maintain a “home area” where they settle for part of the year.
- *Agro- pastoralism*: farmers who gain their livelihoods from crop production and animal husbandry in about equal proportions, live in semi-permanent settlements, and supplement farming activities as required.
- *Sedentary farmers*: farmers living in permanent settlements gaining their livelihoods mainly from crop cultivation, with domestic animals providing supplementary income.

The above-mentioned classifications are essential indicators of the dynamic status of producers over time as a coping mechanism to environmental stress to sustain their livelihoods. However I would like to stress on the need to have distinct dichotomizing of the identities of the two interacting groups. With this in mind I agree to the recognition that the terms “herders” and “farmers” are not static and that there are varied degrees and combinations of cultivation and livestock rearing within the categories.

A review of related literature also reveals two major perspectives regarding the concept of Farmer-Herder conflict. The first of these perspectives notes that relations between farmers and herders have always moved between cooperation and cooperation or conflict, (Gallais 1995,Cited in Hussien 1998), this perspective seem to imply the existence of natural balance and a role for external institutions to shift the pattern of relations from conflict to cooperation. (Vanderlinden, 2000). The second perspective sees conflict as becoming a predominant form of farmer-herder interaction and a concern of development research and practice, and environmental scarcity is promoted as a main explanatory variable for the ever-increasing trends of conflict in semi-arid Africa.(Hussien citing Swift,1996; Adams and Bradbury 1995)

## 2.2 Different approaches to the study of farmer-herder conflicts

With in the agreed scope of the problem of farmer herder conflict there are different approaches to the study of the problem. This positive development is basically the result of the multi-disciplinary perspective endeavors to the study of the problem due to pooper attention it deserved. The following discussion is a summarized review of the discussions by Karim Hussien (1998) on some of the different approaches.

conflicts in semi-arid Africa also show that conflicts are increasing despite acceleration of democratization and empowerment in Africa.

The historical and anthropological approach also fails to explain the current trend of increasing conflicts among farmers and herders and even among herders with common historical and cultural backgrounds. The anthropological approach also fails to adequately rationalize the increasing trends between farmers and herders in Africa while ethnic identities are largely intact.

This study follows the resource scarcity approach with its own place context and an attempt to contribute additional relevant factors from the expected findings of the study within the boundaries of the approach. In addition some of the approaches also are found to be relevant in supplementing and better explaining the resource scarcity approach. For instance the livelihood security approach gives a crucial explanation about the psychological aspects of the conflicting parties in reference to competition and alienation, inherently caused by resource scarcity, as proximate causes of conflict. Increasing scarcity logically threatens livelihoods of both producer groups to develop the psychological states for conflict.

Tenure debates also explain aggravating factors of conflict, which initially is caused by scarcity. The stakeholders and marginalization of herders approach are essential to analyze consequences of farmer herder conflicts and conflict resolution options.

## 2.3. Empirical studies on semi-arid Africa and Ethiopia

### **Cases on semi-arid Africa**

Among the different researches done over conflict in semi arid Africa a quick review of few works demonstrate how acute the issue of conflict is and how diverse the causes are. According to Richard Moorhead (1998), conflicts in the Niger River delta (Mali) occur both between herders and non -herders and between groups with in the herding community itself. As the delta has become drier farmers in the area have begun to cultivate deeper parts of the delta and they even cultivate the stock routes leading to the flood plains. Herders in the delta take damaging crops and other measures of conflict out of the frustrations that cultivators are overtaking their grazing areas.

Mohammed Zeidane(1998) also discusses how, In the case of Mauritania ,traditional pastoralists find them selves in conflict with farmers who wish to plant crops in traditional grazing areas and who prevent livestock from gaining access to water pools. Lack of intervention by the

frustration is compounded when the government allocates land to people the pastoralists consider to be outsiders with no customary rights to the land. This has caused tribal conflicts in many instances like when the west savanna project was partly established on Ma'alya tribal land, which has been allocated to the Rezeigat.

Kisemba Mugerewa (1998) argues that in Uganda population pressure and the scarcity of land leading pastoralists to transform to ranching and sedentarianism is one of the major causes of conflict. In addition a refuge settlement skims of the government like in Gukenja and Isingiro counties in Mbarara district and commercial ranching as well as creation of national parks and game reserves are few of the major causes.

Lane Charles (1998) summarizes the cases of Kenya and Tanzania in which he argues that in Tanzania private investment as in the form of allocating rangelands to commercial agriculture is found to be the dominant cause behind conflicts. And in the case of Kenya conflicts are attributed to the combination of the above-mentioned causes. A different scenario with regard to conflict in Kenya is the prevalence of conflict among tribal communities in northern Kenya and their neighboring counter parts manifested basically in the form of cattle raiding.

## **Empirical cases on Ethiopia**

When we come to the Ethiopian situation we even found out that due to recurrent draught and resource degradation as well as due to the intensifying role played by state's inefficient policy measures and administrative decisions, almost in most areas where herders and farmers are forced to compete for resources, there has been various types and levels of conflict.

To begin with, John Helland (1999), is one of the writers whom we can identify with the tenure debates approach to conflict study since he basically focuses on issues of land tenure in Ethiopia from a pastoral context. In his case studies on the *Borena* pastoral community, he analyses how the insecure community land tenure system is increasing land alienation and threatening the *Borena* survival as pastoral groups. He also adds the significance of change in the political ecology process as the predominant reality depicting the relation of the *Borena* with their neighbors.

According to him the *Borana* have lost the best of their land to the expanding agriculture. In addition, the ecological process of bush encroachment affects approximately 40% of their former grassland. As a result, he remarks that they are forced to compete and be in conflict with their neighbors ( Helland, 2001 : 62 ).

Ayalew Gebre (2001) discusses the relation of conflict the *Karrayu oromo* pastorastoralists have with their neighbors. His argument mainly falls in the category of the marginalization of herders approach since he traces the historical roots of conflict among the *karrayu* and their neighbors, as it had been the result of the policies of the Imperial state's commercial agriculture expansion, like that of the *Nura-era* plantation. With regard to the relations between the *karrayu* and their *Arsi* neighbors he observed that the traditional balance of interaction between them which used to be manifested in the form of both cooperation and conflict is recently transformed into relation of recurrent conflicts as a result of the increasing scarcity, which is leading them into competition and conflict.

He further remarked that the main reason for scarcity of resources and resulting competition, as far as the *Arsi* are concerned, is the expropriation of large part of their grazing land for the *Nura-Era* Plantation. As a result they were forced to move into the traditional territory of the *Karrayu* who have, themselves, lost some of their former grazing land to the *Matahara* sugar Plantation and the Awash Park. Thus the encroachment of the *Arsi* onto the *Karrayu*-controlled pastoral resources could hardly be tolerated in view of the remaining resource base, which was on a consistent decline. According his observation, the

situation was further aggravated by the recurrent droughts that had hit the region on numerous occasions. (Ayalew Gebre, 2001: 244-255)

The *Karrayu*, are also in conflict with the *Afar*, the *Ittu oromo* and the *Argoba* according to Ayalew . Even though the intensity may vary with the cases the underling cause in most of the cases is resource scarcity.

Bule Edjeta (2001) also observed the situation of the above-mentioned case area in a similar manner. He explains the change in the historical trend of conflict between the *Karrayu* and their neighbors as being from the culture motivated conflicts to conflicts as a result of increasing resource scarcity. He remarks that before the displacement of the *Karrayu* for the *Methara* sugar plantation, 30 years ago, war and conflicts were waged for the sake of cultural beliefs like a pursuit of collective or individual fame and display of brevity. The conflicts in those periods were not as highly recurrent as they gradually became, "...The *karrayu* count only 12 of such wars" then. However after their displacement and the shrinkage in the resource bases the styles and aims of conflict changes into conflicts for control of resources. Such conflicts were highly intense as well as recurrent. " ....clashes could easily occur on daily basis between individuals, groups or a larger ethnic identity". As a result he stated that the *Karrayu* tell countless wars with their *Afar*, *Argoba* and *Arsi* neighbors. (Bule Edjeta , 2001:75,76)

In a historical perspective Maknun Gamaldin(1993) traces the causes of conflict between the Afar pastoralists and their Oromo-Isaa counter parts as well as the central government to the subsequent measures leading to the resentment and alienation of the Afar as a result of expansion of commercial agriculture in the Awash valley area.

Also according to Getachew Kassa (2001), conflict in Northeastern Ethiopia among the *Afar* pastoralists is more or less attributed to the combination of some of the factors mentioned above. A case study by Getachew in the *Amibara* district in the middle *Awash*, provides good examples of how shrinking resource base and scarcity intensifies inter and intra- group competitions as well as conflict among pastoralists &, farmers and pastoralist groups over questions of access and tenure rights to land and land resource managements. The study even asserts that as the result of this, "... the Afar existence as a pastoralist group is being threatened more today than any time in the past". (Getachew ,2001: 105-6)

David Turton (1989 & 1994), in his study on the relation of conflict between the *Mursi* and their neighbors emphasized on the relevance of defending and constructing socio-political identity of one ethnic group against the threats of dominance and extinction posed on it by its

alienation in his previous studies. However, in this study he also rendered a vital perspective on the significance of resource scarcity and the role of the state in controlling and allocation of resources as causes or “catalysts of conflict”. According to him scarcity remains a harsh fact of life in the horn due to the meager natural resource endowment He explains that “...The bulk of (the horn) region is lowland and has an arid regime with an average precipitation rate less than 500mm and a moisture index of minus 40 to minus 50. Soil and climatic conditions set a high water requirement for cultivation whereas in Europe a mean annual precipitation of 750 mm is sufficient enough for most crops, it is insufficient in the horn”. Scarcity according to him makes conflict inevitable since pastoral production requires mobility and as a result the horn has never been a peaceful zone (Markakis 1994: 218-219).

Conflict between settler farmers and indigenous herders as a result of resource scarcity and multiple factors behind the scarcity was well explained on a case study by Assefa Tolera (1995), where he analyzed the relation of conflict between the *Amhara Wolloye* farmers and the *Oromo* transhumant herders in *Aarro Addis-Alem kiramu* Area, of *Wellega*. In his study in the case area he concluded that the rational behind the settlement of the *Wolloye Amhara* farmers is scarcity of arable land and land degradation in their original settlement areas. Assefa and Cherenet (1988, cited in Assefa) also attribute the settlement of the *Wolloye Amhara*

degradations. His work contained detailed analyses how environmental vulnerability of producers coupled with external factors like the policy environment will eventually cause and aggravate conflicts between and among producer communities.

## **Lessons from the cases**

The general observation that can be deduced from the above case studies on conflicts in Ethiopia is that even though different groups of scholars have applied different categories to the analysis of conflict as one form of inter ethnic relations, almost all of them agree to different extents that increasing scarcity of resources coupled with the role of institutions like the state are significant factors behind escalation in the first place and diversification of the nature of the conflicts.

However there is one important conclusion we should draw, as far as analyzing different cases of conflict in Ethiopia is concerned. This is the fact that in parallel to the diversity of the production systems, the population profiles and the different roles played by local (indigenous) and state institutions; the nature and causes of conflict escalations varies with the geographic and administration differences of the various case areas in the country. Accordingly one or the other approach may apply asymmetrically for analysis of the situations in different areas.

Accordingly we can wrap-up the above observation with the following points: -

1. In areas of the country where different ethnic groups are brought under one local administrative region the quest for political dominance in the form of representation on administration and, as a result the desire, mostly of the elites, to gain political control could dominate all other causes for conflict. This situation is more apparent in the south and western Ethiopia where the condition of the different communities is more explained by high population density and sharing common political administrative region. In such cases the political ecology approach such as the inter-elite competition model would be the most preferable explanatory theory of the situation.
2. In vast pastoral areas where population density is low, land is relatively fertile and the pastoral production system does not manifest permanent settlement and where the state has allocated parts of these areas for expansion of agriculture, conflicts are the results of resource alienation and herder marginalization. As a result the nature of conflict in those areas takes the forms of herder-to-herder, herder-to-farmer and, also herder-to-state in different extents. Such situations are best explained by the marginalization of herders approach.

3. Finally in areas mostly adjacent to former farmer settlements where gradual settlements took place as a result of push factors in the former farmer settlement areas, and in areas where state initiated settlements of farmers took place; farmer-to- herder conflicts over natural resources dominate. In these areas the major cause behind the escalation of conflicts is increasing scarcity of land and other natural resource. For such areas the resource scarcity model is the most preferable one.

This study (as pointed out in the statement of the problem, section 1.2.,) focuses in analyzing farmer-herder relations in gradual farmer expansion and settlement areas in Northeast shewa on the case area of *Quowet wereda* in the *Amhara* administrative region and its neighboring wereda of *Semurobi-geleálo*, in *Afar* administrative region.

The study focuses on analyzing of relationship of conflict between the gradually expanded and settled farmers and the herders in the area. Therefore it is believed that the difference in the two production systems of sedentary farming and mobile pastoralism, as well as the natural resource condition in the area, are the major determining conditions of the relation between the groups. Accordingly the resource scarcity approach is selected as the basic analytical model to the study.

The resource scarcity approach dictates the necessity of incorporating factors that explain the nature and degree of the resource scarcity in a case area, factors that transform a certain degree of scarcity in to becoming a cause of conflict as well as factors that dictate the behaviors of the conflicting communities to take actual measures of conflict.

Therefore, the researcher has identified the following variables as the major components for analyzing the conflict among farmers and herders in the study area based on the resource scarcity approach;

- Natural resource scarcity- *Inherent cause of conflict*
- Population pressure & natural resource degradation- *Factors contributing to prevalence and aggravation of scarcity*
- Land use change measures- *a factor which is the result of scarcity and leads the two communities to compete for more resource*
- Competition & alienation- *induced behavioral conditions of the interacting communities, which are preconditions for conflict.*

Accordingly the following conceptual framework is designed to the study based on the backgrounds provided in the literature review.

### **3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Definition of Terms and Concepts**

The following definitions are given for conceptual terms, which were not hitherto sufficiently defined in the context of the study and are regarded essential to clarify. Accordingly;

Conflict: - is the prevalence of different violent clashes between or among different communities resulting casualties, disruption of production and hostilities. Conflict is a phenomenon demonstrating the dimension of relationships between the conflicting parties and creates an event of precedence.

Natural resource degradation: - is the qualitative and quantitative decline of a certain resource reducing its use value to different extents. It is a result of undue natural and artificial stress making it change its texture in undesirable dimensions.

Farmers:-in the context of this study farmers are those who are dominantly engaged in crop cultivation and have a specific area of settlement. Although crop cultivators usually supplement cultivation with livestock rising to different extents, the designation 'farmers' in this study basically refers to peasant cultivators who have specific land plots and fundamentally consider crop farming as a basis to their livelihoods.

Herders: Are those agricultural communities who are engaged in livestock production and employ mobile herding strategies over open rangeland resources. Although there are different extents of mobility

among herders, the designation 'herders' in this study basically refers to pastoral producers who are not sedentary in any manner and consider livestock rising as a basis for their livelihoods.

Resource alienation:-is an externally induced act of deprivation of certain production groups of benefiting from a given resource which they consider is theirs.

Use value of a resource:- is a previously perceived output of a given resource which is a function of its natural qualities. Use value is not a constant factor and depends on production style of producers and extent of use as well as relative change in its quality and quantity.

Conflict prone Zone: Is a geographic Zone of habitation of different production groups who has actual and potential manifestations of conflict among and within the groups.

### 3.2. Conceptual framework for the study

In this study conflict is analyzed in reference to different types of hostile clashes between farmers and herders as a result of resource scarcities. Accordingly this research tries to analyze the state of affairs of a *conflict prone zone* by assessing the situation of the interplay of these factors leading to resource scarcity and the prevalence and intensity of conflict in the study area.

Scarcity of resources in the study area is mainly a function of population pressure and resource degradation. Rapid Population growth leads to pressure on natural resources, and subsequent degradation and scarcity of resources. Resource scarcity gradually leads to land use change manifested in the form of expanding cultivation or grazing in to areas hitherto utilized for different production purposes. Change in land use by producers aggravates resource scarcity due to increase of demands to accesses more of the land or water resource for a given production strategy (i.e. either cultivation or grazing).

This phenomenon leads mainly to two kinds of induced behavioral changes, reflecting in the relationships between the producers and the producers and the state or higher authorities. These behavioral traits are *competition* and *alienation*.

Competition is the function of scarcity manifested in the form of adversarial claims for resources. This phenomenon represents the actual measures taken and/or intentions held by producers to acquire more land or water and to actually prevent others from using those.

Alienation is a reverse scenario or a response behavior of those who believe that they are prevented from benefits of the resources they consider is theirs or 'no one's ' in particular (common pool). Alienation is

a feeling of deprivation resulting from the perception of losing a resource base for survival by external actors.

Competition and alienation are the functions of resource scarcity, which further are aggravated by the actions of local or national governments in the forms of artificial boundary establishment and enforcement, tenure systems and actual policy as well as administrative decisions on appropriation of resources.

Border demarcations give *defacto* and *dejure* legitimacy of a certain community or ethnic group traditionally employing a certain production strategy (farmer or herder) over resources of land and water. This aggravates the feeling of alienation or competition in situations where by scarcity of resources, due to natural factors, force producers to change their land use patterns and are prevented from doing so. In most of the cases pastoralists do not recognize artificial boundaries due to the fact that they do not comply with their herding strategies and environmental stress coping mechanisms (see Markakis 1993). Therefore, boundary demarcations could aggravate alienation in since it may result in isolation of producer communities (farmers or herders) from their traditional resource bases.

Tenure is an institution. This institution is a legal and administrative framework regulating as to who owns land and as to how it should be used and disposed of. In the Ethiopian case land is a public property. No specific individual or community does have the final authority over this resource. This institutional arrangement at times clashes with perception and requirement of producers utilizing these resources. For some, a given land, which traditionally is being utilized by the community, is rightfully community property rather than common (as far as others or non community members are concerned) or public property. For instance for the *Boran* pastoral communities range land on the *Borena plateau* is a Boran property to be used and administered by traditional rules and customs. Accordingly any attempt, for example states attempt to allocate part of this land to private investment over land, resettlement or for state farm, would more likely lead to alienation. For others land is a public property over which no particular group could claim ownership. Accordingly an actual additional demand for land or land use change can be a legitimate reason to claim for more "unused" land. In this case any resistance from the higher authorities or from other producers leads to alienation or competition (Helland 1997 cited in Irwin 2000 pp30).

Therefore states policy actions and administrative decisions are aggravating factors to induce behaviors of alienation and competition while the main cause is actual scarcity of resources. And alienation and

competition are preconditions for the prevalence of conflict to different levels of intensity.

Conflict is the final consequence in this interplay of factors. Conflict is said to be prevalent when there are perceived as well as actual cases of hostile clashes over certain periods of time. Intensity of a given (prevalent) conflict is measured by; the number of parties involved, the duration of time it took, the number of causalities reported as well as the degree of involvement required by higher authorities. This is the general frame of analysis to be applied on the study.

## 4. METHODS OF THE STUDY

### 4.1 General description of Quowet wereda\*

#### **Location and topography**

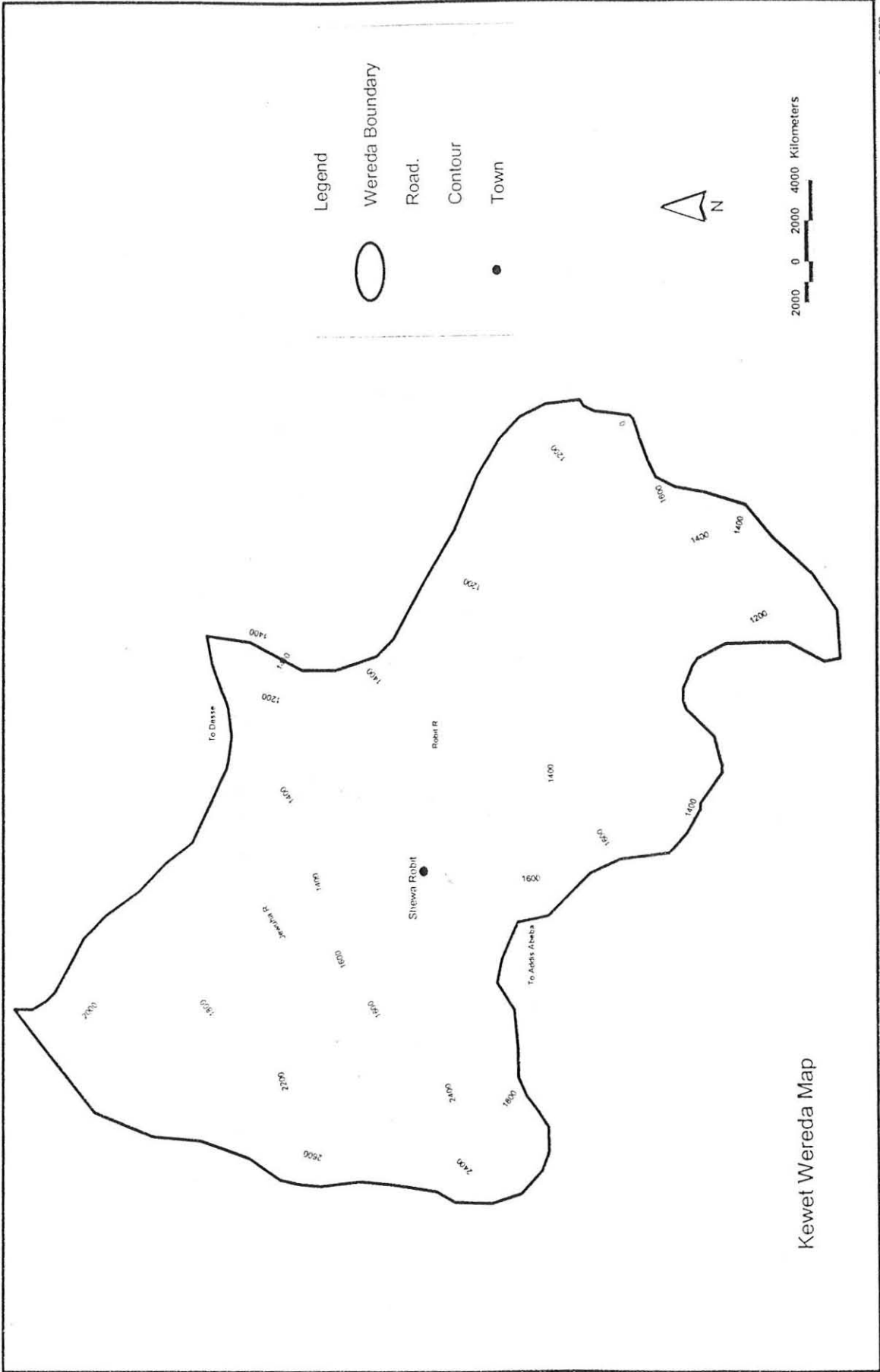
*Quowet Wereda* is one of the *Weredas* of North Shewa administrative zone of the *Amhara* national state. The *wereda* is bordered by the *Semurobi-gelalo wereda* of Zone 5 in the *Afar* national state in the east, by *Efratana gidem* and *Lalomama weredas* in the north and *Tarmaber wereda* in the south and south west (all *weredas* of the North Shewa zone). It is located at about 40.1° East and 9.8° North.

The *wereda* consists of 20 rural peasant associations and 3 urban *Kebelles*. *Shewa-robit* is the *wereda* capital and is located at 225 Km distance from the national capital, Addis Ababa. The town is found at altitudes of 1,280m.

The total area of the *Wereda* is 62, 600.36 hectares. Since the major economic activity is agriculture most of the area in the *wereda* is dedicated to cultivation. The farmers in the *wereda* are also engaged in relatively extensive (relative to the surrounding highland areas of North Shewa) livestock rising in addition to crop cultivation.

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\*All data regarding socio-economic situation of the *Quowet wereda* are found from the *wereda* administration office, unless indicated otherwise.



Legend

- Wereda Boundary
- Road.
- Contour
- Town



2000 0 2000 4000 Kilometers

Kewet Wereda Map

Source :SCRIP

The relief characteristics of the *wereda* from the data found in the socio-economic reports of the North Shewa Zone Planning and Economic Development Desk indicates that 26 % of the total area consists of flat plains, 38 % consists of hills, 17 % valleys and 19 % rugged terrain. Most of the area under investigation is found in what are commonly called as “*Rasa plains*” which are extended flat plains with scattered hills.

### **Climate and natural resources**

Most of the soils of Northeast *shewa* formed from the volcanic rocks are inherently fertile. Information found from *Quowet* wereda agriculture office indicates that the soil types found in the wereda are of four types. These are Black soil (*Vertisols*) 55%, Red clay soil 15%, Brown soil (*Vitosols*) 22% and Gray soils 8%. The most common soils in the case area are *Vertisols* , which, according to Daniel Gamachu (1990) , are relatively deep and with good natural fertility.

The following table shows perennial rivers in *Quowet* wereda and their use.

**TABLE:4.1 PERENIAL RIVERS AND THEIR USE**

RIVER	LENGTH	USE
Sawor	40Km	Livestock & floor mills
Robit	35Km	Livestock & irrigation
Jewha	27KM	Livestock
Kobo	15m	Livestock

*Source: Quowet wereda Administration.*

With regard to surface geology, most of Northeastern *shewa* excluding the *Awash valley* consists of the 'Ashangi group' of the lower basalts and the 'Trap series' lava flows. The formation of this started some 65 million years ago and resulted in the creation of eastern foot-hills in extensively faulted, faults which affect surface drainage and the distribution of ground water in Northeastern *shewa* (Daniel Gamachu, 1990).

Most of the area in the *wereda* falls under "Kolla" thermal zone (see table below for agro climatic classification proposed for Northern Ethiopia), which is 65% followed by "Woinadega" 18.6% and "Dega" 14.4%.

**TABLE: 4.2 AGRO-CLIMATIC CLASSIFICATION PROPOSED NORTH ETHIOPIA**

	Kola	Woinadega	Dega	Wurch
Altitude (m)	1500-1800	1800-2400	2400-3500	> 3500
Mean monthly temp (°C)	18-20	15-18	10-15	< 10
Annual rainfall (mm)	300-900	500-1500	700-1700	>900
Dominant crops	Sorghum, Maize	<i>Teff</i> , Maize & Barley	Barley & what	Barley

**Source: Belay Tegene “*Potentials and limitations of an indigenous structural soil conservation Technology of Wello, Ethiopia EASSRR, Vol. XIV. No. 1,1998:4*”**

The wereda's temperature and rainfall is different in all the different climatic zones. The lowland areas of 'Rassa' where we find the three peasant associations of southeastern Quowet are typically of high temperature zones and receive annual rainfall of around 700-900mm, while in northern and western part of the wereda the rainfall supply generally better. The following rainfall and temperature data for the year 1994 shows the situation of Shewa robit town as recorded in 1450m altitudes.

**TABLE: 4.3.MEAN MONTHLY RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE IN SHEWA ROBIT STATION FOR THE YEAR 1994\***

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Rainfall (mm)	0.0		69.3	52.6	40.9	15.0	279.9	224.2	203.0	1.5	62.9	2.5	1021
Mean Monthly minimum T(C°)	11.8	14.2	17.9	19.3	19.1	20.1	19.0	18.4	16.9	14.9	15.3	12.2	
Mean Monthly maximum T(C°)	29.5	30.5	31.8	33.1	34.4	35.4	31.5	30.0	29.9	30.1	28.2	27.7	

Source: National Metrology Agency, 2003

### **Population**

The total number of population in the *Wereda* is 134,347, amongst 62,452 are male 60,895 are female and 19, 828 are urban dwellers while 103,519 are rural dwellers. The *wereda* is the fifth largest among the 20 *Weredas* in North *Shewa* zone. The total density of population of the *wereda* is 120.9, which ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in the zone (CSA 1995) .Out of the 20 rural peasant associations of the *Wereda* the 3 peasant associations, which have common boundary with the neighboring *Afar Wereda* and hence have the problem of conflict are the *Sefi-beret*, *Kure-beret* and *Abaya-atir* peasant associations. All of these peasant associations are located in more or less similar climatic zone with their *Afar* counterparts in neighboring *Wereda* of *Semurobi-geleálo* but are engaged in different agricultural activity i.e. crop cultivation. The farmers in these peasant associations also practice livestock herding due to the suitability of the climate and as an alternative source of livelihood. The total number of

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\* This year happened to be the latest year of which the data could be acquired since the National Metrology Agency has terminated its operations in the station from the year onwards.

population in *Abaya-atir, Kureberet, and Sefiberet* P.A.s is 6,229, 4,023 and 7,673 .

### **Agriculture and land use**

The following table shows the land use and land cover data (2000/2001)

**TABLE:4.5 LAND COVER AND LAND USE IN QUOWET**

Area (in hectares)	Land use/ cover
<b>Land under cultivation</b>	<b>19,847</b>
Annual	18,735
Permanent crop	1,112
<b>Uncultivable land</b>	<b>10,705</b>
<b>Potentially cultivable land</b>	<b>3,228</b>
<b>Bush land</b>	<b>15,673</b>
<b>Forest</b>	-----
<b>Grazing land</b>	<b>11,608</b>
<b>Water</b>	<b>not given</b>
<b>Swampy</b>	-----
<b>Land for construction</b>	<b>not given</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b>1,539.36</b>
<b><u>Total area</u></b>	<b>62,600.36</b>

*Source: See Table above*

The wereda is suitable for production of various kinds of oil seeds, fruits and vegetables and cereals. However the most common kinds of crops in the '*Rasa plains*' (the areas which are the focus of the study) are Sorghum, Maize, Sunflower and sesame.

## 4.2. Data collection and methodology

### **Methods of data collection:**

Different methods are applied to fulfill the information requirements for the study. Accordingly the method applied to gather information on the magnitude of the conflict in the study area was to access the data available in the North *Shewa* zone police department reports. In addition perception data are also gathered on the similar issues from sample survey respondents.

The methods applied to gather actual data on the situation of natural resource scarcities and population pressure include accessing information from wereda and zonal records, utilization of secondary sources (CSA, DPPC publications etc...) and interviewing zonal and wereda experts. Perception data on the situation of natural resources are also acquired from the sample survey as well as the focus group discussions.

Information regarding all aspects of mutual perceptions, the role of authorities and the current and historical situation of relations between farmers and herders are mainly gathered from the focus group discussions, the sample survey and interviews with different subjects.

Background information for discussions on conceptual issues, conditions of natural resources and history of settlement and conflict in the area are gathered almost entirely from secondary sources. An unpublished study on causes of conflict in the area by a member of the police department is also utilized basically to supplement information gathered from primary sources on the role of culture in conflict. In addition several documents of the wereda and zonal peace committee such as action plans, progress reports and minutes of meetings of the committee are utilized for acquiring information on current attempts of conflict resolution.

Non-participant Field observations in the forms of observing the conditions of resource scarcity in farmer and herder areas, observation of settlement patterns of the population, limited assessment of the belief systems of and behaviors of interaction between the populations as well as participation in tow of the peasant association and wereda level peace committee meetings were employed.

Archival sources were not utilized mainly due to the limitations of the scope of the study on current issues of conflict and conflict resolution attempts and also due to the shortage of time to exhaust all sources where archival documents could be accessed. The researcher however recognizes the relevance of archival documents especially for studies on

conflict, which focuses on historical trends of conflict and conflict resolution.

### **Data sources**

#### Primary sources:

The study is based on fieldwork consisting of a field stay of few weeks as well as frequent field visit to the case area. The fieldwork comprises of the following techniques of research.

- Focus group discussion
- Group interview
- Individual interview
- Sample survey
- Non-participant field observation.

A. Focus group discussion: This technique is utilized as a prime technique of data collection. Accordingly, a group of candidates were selected to form focus groups. The numbers of participants in the focus groups range from five to eight. And the general direction pursued in those discussions was for the researcher to trigger issues for discussion and promote active group participation. All contents of the discussions were recorded in a 90 minutes tape recorder for latter transcription.

B. Group interview: In the group interview again a similar composition of participants as in the focus groups are selected. However the number of the group is limited to 3 or 4 persons in order to effectively exhaust issues in the interview. The role of the researcher here was more active

and focused on guiding the interview by raising issues framed for the discussion. Different sets of questions were presented for different groups like development workers, administrators or town dwellers.

C. Individual interview: This interview was conducted with selected individuals like elders, clan chiefs local officials, development workers town dwellers, key informants and knowledgeable members of the community. The interviews consist of rather exhaustive questions (as compared to the group interview), and were undertaken twice or three times for some individuals.

D. Sample survey: The sample survey is conducted to supplement the other basic field methods by generating qualitative data basically attitudinal aspects of conflict. Accordingly interviews were conducted based on a non-probability quota sampling design. The survey was undertaken in purposefully selected 3 Amhara farmer peasants associations, which are *Sefiberet*, *Kureberet* and *Abya-atir* P.As. A total of 60 questionnaires are distributed, i.e. 20 each. The same total numbers of questionnaires were distributed to in the neighboring *Afar* side. However, since herder mobility dose not comply with specific settlement and therefore no significance of stratification was envisaged. But attempt was made in the process of conducting the interview to include members of different herding communities with in the Afar herders by encountering them at the most convenient locations.

E. Non-participant Field Observation: The researcher undertook systematic but non-participant observation on the case area regarding issues of relations between the different ethnic groups, the situation of the resources under question, production patterns and productivity, relationship between local people and administration etc. This method was also utilized to further develop the thesis by including additional variables.

Secondary sources:

The fieldwork was also supplemented by library work based on secondary sources. The following are secondary sources utilized during the study.

- Books and periodicals
- Studies on conflict by researchers and by administration staff as well as socio-economic studies by zonal offices
- Statistical publications
- Documents and reports available in wereda and zonal administration offices and police departments.

### 4.3. Significance of the study

Sustainable development in rural agricultural and pastoral areas requires the prevalence of peaceful co-habitation among different communities. The disruption of production, as a result of conflict

hampers development and, as well, may lead to intensification of poverty. Therefore a study on causes of conflict and its consequences is one important area of development research. The study could render the following advantages to study area and other areas with similar problems.

- Introduce better perspectives from which problems of productivity and instability in the area could be understood,
- Assist current and/or future development projects in the area to integrate relevant objectives of problem solving (like conflict resolution) based on the findings in the study,
- Realize government policy review with regard to decisions affecting highland-lowland transition zones,
- Inspire future research activities over crucial factors focused on the study in relation to farmer-herder conflict.

This study may also generate information for various purposes and to different consumers. To mention a few:

- To the federal government bodies engaged in regional development and administering issues of relations between different ethnic groups, specifically
  - To the F.D.R.E. federation council,
  - To the ministry of Federal Affairs,

- To the local government, more specifically Amhara and Afar regional administrations,
- To development NGOs and organizations working in the case area,
- To research institutes working in the area of conflict resolution, pastoralism or natural resource management,
- To researchers who would like to make further study on the issue or other problems in the case area.

#### 4.5. Delimitation of the study

This study specifically focuses on analyzing causes and consequences of resource conflict in northeastern Ethiopian lowlands from the perspective of common resource value and utilization. The specific study area is the Quowet wereda of North Shewa zone in the Amhara national region. Accordingly any of the analysis and the findings of the study are specific to the case area. The study area is selected due to the previous knowledge of the researcher about the prevalence of conflict in the area and due to its relative accessibility to conduct the study from the center, Addis Ababa.

## **5. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF POPULATION SETTLEMENTS, ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS AND CONFLICT IN NORTH SHEWA.**

### **5.1. Historical review of population settlements and inter-ethnic relations.**

Several historical accounts confirm that the earliest settlers in the highland-lowland transition zones of northeastern escarpment in the shewa plateau are the *Argoba* community (eg. Mc Cann 1990, and Ahmed Hassan 1994) . According to Ahmed, the *Argoba* are an entirely Muslim population, which were historically known to have been engaged in the economic activities of both Agriculture and trade. In what is commonly called '*Rassa*' area, which is the focus area of this study and is found in Quowet wereda under the current administrative structure, there are several historical exhibits testifying the precedence of the Argoba settlement in the area. Ancient mosques and old cemeteries at Asberi and Wassiso and in several other areas between Daletti and Rassa Gubba are few of the indicators of early Argoba settlement in the area. Amhara elders in the area also agree to this historical account. The traditional feature of Argoba settlement in the transition zone between the *Quolla* and *Dega* areas is most probably associated with the significance of the area as important trade route from the central highlands to the Middle East, which makes it particularly suitable to them since the Argoba were the long distance traders.

Ahmed, further argues that Oromo settlement in those areas is traceable to the periods of the great Oromo migration that took place in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The two branches of the Oromo Baraytuma and Borana established settlements in yefat and timuga . Before then the Amhara christian and Argoba Muslim populations used to inhabit in several highland and lowland areas of Yefatina timuga. The Oromo settlement mostly took place over rich range and forestland that extends from the central highland to the arid zone. The Oromo migration resulted in large-scale displacement of the Amhara and the Argoba.

The Amhara and Argoba resettlement by the late seventeenth century is associated with the revival of local Christian Amhara power with the strong alliance with the *Wallasma\** and his Muslim Argoba followers against the Oromo (Ahmed Hassen). The process of Amhara settlement was apparently initiated under the leadership of Nagassi (1696-1703) who is the founder of the Shewan dynasty. The king and his followers undertook Amhara settlements on the land they annexed from the Karrayu Oromo. With the further strengthening of the Shewa dynasty by Sebste son of negassi (1705-1720) Sebste's grand son Amhayesus (1743-1774) Amhayesus asfawsen (1774-1808) and Wässän Säggäd( 1808-1812). ( Stitz Volker,1970 also Svein Ege, 1996)

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\* Leader of the Argoba

The Amhara began to establish their agricultural settlements in the lowland areas, which were earlier, used entirely by the Oromo for their pastoral way of life. This phenomenon continued to take effect in various directions from the Waynadaga districts of Qüowet, Gedem, Efrata and Gamza with Amhara sedentary farmers establishing their own villages in the Quolla. The new villages established in Quolla areas are in fact extensions of the Dega settlements, which is indicated by the new names given to them respectively as Quowet quolla, Gedem quolla , Efrata quolla and Gemza quolla. Therefore one significant era of Amhara resettlement and consolidation is attributed to the political developments associated with the strengthening and consolidation of the emerging Shewa dynasty in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Ahmed Hassen 1994)

In relative terms the Afar are the latest communities to move into these areas probably since the late eighteen century. According to some historical accounts, by late 1890s various clans of the Afar seem to have extended their settlements further westwards to the Oromo inhabited areas. These include the *Eberto*, the *Gabota*, the *Gobisarra*, the *Modaito* and the *Harammela* clans. This was associated with the great famine of 1888-1892 and ecological factors, which forced them to move to the neighboring Oromo inhabited areas of the lowland districts of Yefat and Timuga. Similar population movements are also reported regarding the *Hasoba*, the *Gibdossa*, some of the *Asayhimera* clans and especially the

*Hammuggura* around the *wasan-qurqur (sefiberet)* of Quowet wereda where their village of *Adadlehingege*\* is said to have been established in those periods. Another major Afar group, which moved into the area towards the end of the nineteenth century, are the followers of one of the *Asayhimera* chief, Mohammed Aydahis who due to local power struggle in *Awssa*, led his people into this areas with the permission of Emperor Meneilik.\*The descendents of these people still live in the *Rassa* area in '*Kedebura*' village of Quowet. (Ahmed Hassen)

The history of environmental stress and conflict involving the three communities had its best manifestation in the periods of the great famine 1889. This period was a very harsh time for the whole of Ethiopia probably the impact of scarcity in shaping social psychology and resulting into desperation and conflict could be referred to the typical case in these periods. Competition and conflict in those periods was not associated mainly in search for land for there was no land at that time, which was not devastated and was worth claiming. People killed each other then over desert trees for wild fruits. In the aftermath of the drought the number of population had declined, the environment

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\* Currently this village consists one of the herder Kebeles in Semurobi-geleálo wereda, neighboring Quowet

\* There is also an oral account from the *Amhara* in *Rassa, Quowet* that Mohhamed Aydahis fought in support of *Menilk* in *Awssa* that he lost ground among his own community. Therefore menilik resettled him with a reward of some slave laborers from now *Beneshangul* area in order that he can practice agriculture and live among the Amhara in the area. The inhabitants of the *Kedebura* village practice agriculture now and have a nilotic facial texture probably confirming the legend.

rehabilitated back and the number of conflict occurrences dropped back tremendously. ( Rubenson 1991)

But soon afterwards political situations started to dictate the inter-ethnic relations in the area. Power struggle between Hailessilassie and Lej Iyssu (and king Michael in support of his son Iyassu) and their attempts to divide the people in support of one another resulted in ethnic based divisions and conflicts. Iyassu had the strategy of strengthening his position by hiding behind the Oromo and Afar while supporters of Hilesslasie relied on the local Christian Amhara population to weaken Iyssu and strengthen the position of the then crown prince Hilesslasie. As a result the area become the center of turmoil and recurrent conflicts. The power struggle ended with the triumph of Hilesslassies supporters however the misery of the local population did not stopped at the point of political stability. King Hilesslasies supporters' aggravated conflicts by taking their own measures of land confiscation and heavy taxation over the Afar and the Oromo. As a result a new wave of farmer-herder and herder state conflicts occurred in which local Oromo and Afars took their grievances on the state by killing their Amhara neighbors as, for example, in 1924 a group of 30 Amhara were rounded up and massacred by a group of Oromo assailants. (Ahmed Hassen )

Around the year 1925 frequent ecological crisis occurred in the vast area of Afar depression. As a result the Afar nomads moved in large numbers of herds of livestock to the *Oromo* occupied areas of *Yefat* and *Timuga*. This caused a critical chain of reactions with the *Oromo* responding to the pressure from Afar by pushing hard on the *Amhara* settlements both in the *Quolla* and *Wainadega* areas. Series of conflicts mainly between the *Oromo* and the *Afar* took place in the years 1925, 1927, 1929 and 1931. Historical accounts tell that it was in these times that people started to realize that the roots of conflicts were the differences in production styles and the environmental stress associated with them. In those periods the *Amhara* were typically farmers; the *Oromo* transhumant herders and the *Afar* were almost entirely nomadic pastoralists (Ahmed Hassen 1994). Probably the most affected of these were the *Oromo* transhumant herders whose limit of expansion was dictated by the scarcity of land and competition from both sides. This factor may partially explain the gradual withdrawal of the *Oromo* from present day *Quowet Quolla* and the contact of *Amhara* and the *Afar* over the vast plains in *Rassa* area.

Another landmark event in the history of inter-ethnic relations of these communities was the period of Italian occupation. In the beginning of these periods all the communities participated in firm alliance with the patriotic resistance forces. However, latter in the era the force of

occupation overpowered the resistance and the occupation leadership pursued new anti-resistance strategy after the careful assessment of situations. This strategy was the strategy of 'divide and conquer'. As a gradual consequence of this strategy some segment of the Afar and Oromo populations started to take advantage provided by the period and expanded into the Amhara occupied areas. However the bitter consequence of these measures came in the aftermath of the occupation periods when the local Amhara feudal lords took revenge measures over Afar and Oromo communities in the form of large-scale displacement campaigns and resettlement of Amhara farmers. (Ahmed Hassen )

The post-Italian occupation period was also significant since in the periods to follow Hilessilassie's government pursued the policy of modernization. Three important changes occurred in the new era of modernization. First, expansion of commercial agriculture mainly over pastoral land took place especially in the areas across the Awash valley. This development accelerated the pressure on the pastoral Afars to expand more in the areas northwest of the Awash River. Specific to the case area state plantations have also took pace there with the establishment of the Shewa-Robit prison plantation over basically Afar communal land with the permission of the Afar clan chiefs who also received rewards for granting some land for the purpose. The impact of establishment of commercial framings in the area had more indirect

impacts than direct ones. The mechanized farming sector had brought on large amount of farming labor to the area who were mostly farmers from the highlands and exploited the chances of exploring the uncultivated fertile lands for latter settlement.\*

In addition to the above mentioned factors large number of populations of highland areas of northern shewa migrated out to these and other lowland areas seeking relief from the negative effects of population pressures on land resources. Especially severe drought occurrences in 1957/58 and 1961/62 contributed for such types of mass migrations.(Daniel Gamachu 1990 also Mesfin Wolde-Mariam, 1991)

Expansion of towns like Shewa-Robit and Sembete along the Dessie road provided new opportunities for infrastructures like markets opening up the settlement areas for new explorers. The Imperial government also pursued open policy favoring expansion of individual farmers in line with the regulation of the right of useoccupation (see further discussions in chapter 4 of this study) not only as a policy of citizens' rights to resource access but also, and more importantly, as a policy of rural-agricultural development. This policy measure was taken since in those years the country faced considerable grain production deficit According to Mesfin Woldemariam ( 1996).

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\* Information about these is acquired from informants in the interviews conducted for this study, Shewa-robit, 2003.

Such developments aggravated pastoral land scarcity in considerable amounts. Competition started to take the formal ways of land claims and litigations on the basis of rights to community ownership of land as well as violent clashes with new settlers. This new phase of conflict ended with the downfall of the Imperial regime in 1974 and a new form of land tenure was introduced in 1975 with its own complications and drawbacks opening up to another phase of farmer-herder and herder state conflicts.

It is within these historical contexts that the current inhabitants of the area try to legitimize their claims and counter-claims of land, which are associated with the feelings of alienation and competition at present. However unbiased interpretation of the historical accounts would yield the general conclusions that no clear cut judgments can be passed on neither of populations as being the victims of or beneficiaries of specific strategy of marginalization. And accordingly, rather than analyzing as to what happened to a certain community as a result of its relations with some other community, it is of greater importance to analyze as to what happened to all communities and to the relationships among them as a result of what happened to the earth and to the sky.

## 5.2 The condition of natural resources and problems of scarcity, and degradation in North Shewa.

### **Soils**

The condition of natural resources, mainly soil, in Northeast Shewa is different in the highland and lowland zones. While most of the soils in the area were inherently fertile the land in highland zones is intensively cultivated while in lowland areas the land is mostly used for grazing and the soil is relatively less eroded (Daniel Gamachu 1990)

Among the areas in Northeast Shewa designated as intensively cultivated areas most of the land is characterized by peasant cultivation of mainly grains, oilseeds, and pulses, where about 70% of the land is devoted to the production of annual field crops. About 32% of the total area of *Mänz\** & *Gishe* and 8% of *Yefat* and *Timuga* fall in the class of intensively cultivated land. These are the areas where land over use and soil degradation is most common. (Daniel Gamachu)

Areas designated as moderately cultivated bush land are regions where about 30-50% of the land is used for the production of annual crops and about 20% of grazing and browsing during the growing season. About 47% of the total area of *Mänz* and *Gishe* 6% of *Yefat* and *Timuga* are

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\* These "Awuraja" designations are no more functional and areas under former designations are now under different Weredas.

moderately cultivated bush land. This type of land use is common in stream valleys of Mänz and Gishe and nearly most of the escarpment..

The open Grassland type of land cover is found in parts of the central and northern sections of the eastern foothills and at lower elevations in most of the intensively cultivated areas. These areas are also moderately cultivated but most of the land (55-90%) is used for livestock grazing.

(Daniel Gamachu)

The Awash plains mostly consist of scrubland where 40-70% of the land is used for pastoral livestock grazing and browsing. In north part of the *Awash* valley, the main land use and cover types are wooded grassland and riparian woodland or bush land, also use for pastoral grazing and browsing. Most of the central and southern sections of the valley consist of either dense bush land, used for pastoral browsing and grazing or swamps and marshes, the outer peripheries of which are used for grazing. (Daniel Gamachu)

### **Range resources**

The most important resources in herder inhabited areas designated as upper basin rain fed area which are located at the escarpments below 1500m bordering the central highlands and are part of the Awash plains, are Range resources. Generally the soils in the afar region commonly

known as the *Awash* valley are deficient in nitrogen as well as trace minerals including copper, manganese, cobalt and zinc (Faye et.al, 1991). The number of human and animal population also has increased in rapid rates. As a result degradation of the range lands, inadequate effort to introduce and expand improved forages, and under utilization of supplementary feed sources have resulted in critical shortages of the feed sources.

### **Water resource**

The most important water sources in North Shewa and the Awash plains are rivers and streams. The major rivers in the area are the Jämma and the Awash. The main tributaries of the Jämma from Mänz and Gishe are the Adabay, the Awot, and the Möfer wuha, and from Tagulet to the south, the Dalocha and Chacha. Among the major tributaries of the Awash from Yefat and Timuga are, north to south, the Jarra, the Nagaso , and the Hawadi.(Daniel Gamachu)

The characteristics of stream flow on the western slopes are most probably similar to those of the north section of the escarpment. Run-off from streams in southern parts of Northeast shewa, on annual basis, is high compared to that of the streams of the north. The southern streams originate in the southern section of the escarpment where rainfall amounts are high on seasonal basis, however, the picture is different in

late autumn and winter the mean monthly run-off in northern streams is 1.6 times that of the southern streams. In spring (March-May) the mean monthly run-off in the northern streams is 2.3 times that of the southern streams. From October to May, therefore, stream run-off is higher in northern regions of Northeast shewa than in southern sections. In the northern streams, 24% of the mean annual run-off is in late autumn and winter and 18% in spring. The corresponding figures for the southern streams are 7% and 4%. Most of these rivers have relatively higher potential for irrigation since the run into the lowland flood plain areas from the highlands in the west. Especially the Jewha head stream of Nagaso, north of robit has high potentials for irrigation. The Robit River is already being used for irrigation and has high potential for establishing new projects. .(Daniel Gamachu)

Further in eastern section of Quowet wereda and specifically into the Rassa plains the number of streams and their volume is smaller than the highland areas. There is no perennial river crossing the Rassa area and there are only few seasonal streams. Gradual shortage of rainfall has resulted in decline of most of the seasonal streams. The situation is even worse in the neighboring Semurobi-geleálo wereda where there are no water sources what so ever. Herders travel up north to the Jewha river and southwest to Robit and some seasonal streams in search of water across farmer inhabited areas. Conflicts became recurrent in seasons of

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low rainfall when herders travel long distances across farmer areas following the sources of the waters. ♦

During the Meher season (June-September) stream run-off is higher in south. In June run-off is drastically reduced in the north, only about half of the run-off in the southern streams. In June run-off amounts are nearly twice as high in the south as in the north. During *Meher* the mean monthly run-off in the south is about 3.5 times that of the north. *Meher* season run-off in the south is 87% of the annual run-off while in the north it is only 55%..(Daniel Gamachu)

The rivers in Quowet wereda of Northeast Shewa are the Sawor, the Robit, the Jewha and the Kobo with the distances of 40Km, 35Km, 27Km, and 15Km respectively.\*

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♦ Source, own survey.

\* Source, Quowet wereda administration

## **6. THE NATURE OF CONFLICT AND IT'S CONSEQUENCES IN THE STUDY AREA**

### **6.1 Forms and manifestations of the conflict**

Often conflicts are associated with violent attacks and cattle raiding. However, while it is true that these are the major manifestations of farmer herder conflict, as far as the case area is concerned, there are few more manifestations of conflict in addition to these. The situation regarding the forms of conflict as gathered in the area from observation, focus group discussions as well as interviews with different subjects is presented as follows.

***Violent attacks involving human and animal casualties:*** such forms of conflict mostly took place when organized groups who have established prior intentions launch attacks on either group. Triggering events or proximate causes of such attacks are established when a group of herders or farmers report that to members of their community through their own way of traditional communication that an unusual activity of the counter side is witnessed. Such activities could mostly be, for instance, encroachment of farmers to grazing areas around disputed territory. In most of the cases these actions do not necessarily imply any intention of provocation. It may be the case that the farmers or herders could be driven by the demand for more pasture. Armed group herding

strategies are natural results of the increase in livestock number, which created the demand for organized herd management to protect animals from theft or raids. Farmers in the case area employ collective herding strategies in the form of assigning few armed men for herding while the rest remain on their farms.

However as a result of misperceptions such conditions are often sufficient enough to launch armed attacks. This condition works for both sides since precedence of conflict cycles have broken down all forms of communications for mutual understanding and tolerance.

Similar effects are also created by incidences of an unusually heavy activity of fire wood collection by farmers. Often fire wood collection results in violence, especially, if the activities coincide with confrontations of resistance and either accidental or deliberate setting of bush-fire.

**Cattle raiding:** cattle raiding are undertaken mostly by individuals and segment groups. On the Amhara framers' side cattle raids undertake their operations with high secrecy and in segment groups of few friends or family. On the Afar herders' side cattle raiders initially undertake their operations independently but after the raids are successfully accomplished they submit the cattle to their clan chiefs as they have

**Burning range and damaging crop:** such conflict measures are taken mostly when farmers are resisted by herders, not to access fuel wood, and herders are prevented from grazing in farmer plots. Although it has been difficult for the researcher to counter check their allegations, herders in the case area perceive range burning by farmers as strategy of driving herders away and expand agriculture. Farmers also largely consider damaging of crops as a deliberate act of provocation and strategy of herder expansion than a desperate expression of anger. As a result such measures of conflict often trigger armed group attacks as a response measure.

**Damaging water well:** one recent manifestation of conflict in the case area was damage of water well, which used to serve both farmers and herders. The farmers in the vicinity of the well reached on a collective decision and took the action of damaging the water well called "*tagraa*" by filling the well with rocks and wood to drive herders away and prevent hostile encounters. However this incidence has contributed to large-scale herder alienation and resort to violence.

## 6.2 Measuring the conflict

Conflict as a variable is usually analyzed in terms of its prevalence as observed phenomena and the dimensions by which it is measured, mainly by its degree of recurrence and intensity in a given area.

In terms of recurrence the prevalence of conflict in this study is measured in relation to the comparison of the total number of reported cases of conflict over time and more specifically over consecutive years. Accordingly an increase or decrease in of the data on the total number of reported cases of latter years as compared to the preceding ones is taken as indicator of conflict in the study area.

Intensity of conflict on the other hand is measured by taking as an indicator the comparison of the total number of casualties in the selected initial year to the same type of data on a latest year of complete annual reports.

Conflict in the case area is a strongly felt and prevalent phenomena. Both the conflicting communities their respective local administrations, the central government and the general public who have access to the information about the situation in the area have different levels of awareness about the prevalence of conflict, its causes and nature.

In a survey conducted for this study a data collected on sample populations revealed that the majority of the respondents from the Amhara farmer and Afar herder communities replied that they perceive the conflict in the area as a frequent and ever increasing phenomenon. In the discussions with the local administrators and development workers it was revealed that both perceive the conflict in the case area as the major obstacle of development. Central government bodies are recently showing interest in assessing the problem and evaluating options for conflict management and resolution.

As part of the effort of the administration to assess the situation of conflict in the area the *Quowet* wereda administration, through its section for local militia organization and security collects data on occurrences of conflict to organize and report for the zonal administration police department. The system of data collection and organization in the wereda is way behind to be called efficient and comprehensive enough given the diverse requirements of verifying, sorting and diversification of data requirements. However it provides a useful insight on the trend of conflict occurrences and intensity overtime.

The following tables present summarized data from the police report on occurrences of conflict and the number of human and animal casualties

in violent armed conflicts and cattle raid incidences over series of time (from 1987 up to 1994 of the Ethiopian calendar i.e 1994/95-2002/3).

**TABLE 4.1: DATA ON ANNUAL NUMBER OF CONFLICT OCCURRENCES AND NUMBER OF CASUALTIES IN THESE CONFLICTS EACH YEAR (1987-1994 E.C. or 1994/95-2001/2)**

Year of conflict occurrences	Conflicts involving violent killings	Conflicts involving cattle raids	Total number of conflict occurrence	Total number of human casualties	Total number of animal casualties (animal lost for raids)
1994/95 (1987 E.C)	7	9	16	9	62
1995/96 (1988 E.C)	11	8	19	33	17
1996/97 (1989 E.C)	11	11	22	7	17
1997/98 (1990 E.C)	2	28	30	5	75
1998/99 (1991 E.C)	2	14	16	6	48
1999/2002 (1992 E.C)	3	19	22	14	63
2000/2001 (1993 E.C)	5	24	29	29	108
2001/2002 (1994 E.C)	7	13	20	13	226
<b>Total (8years)</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>616</b>

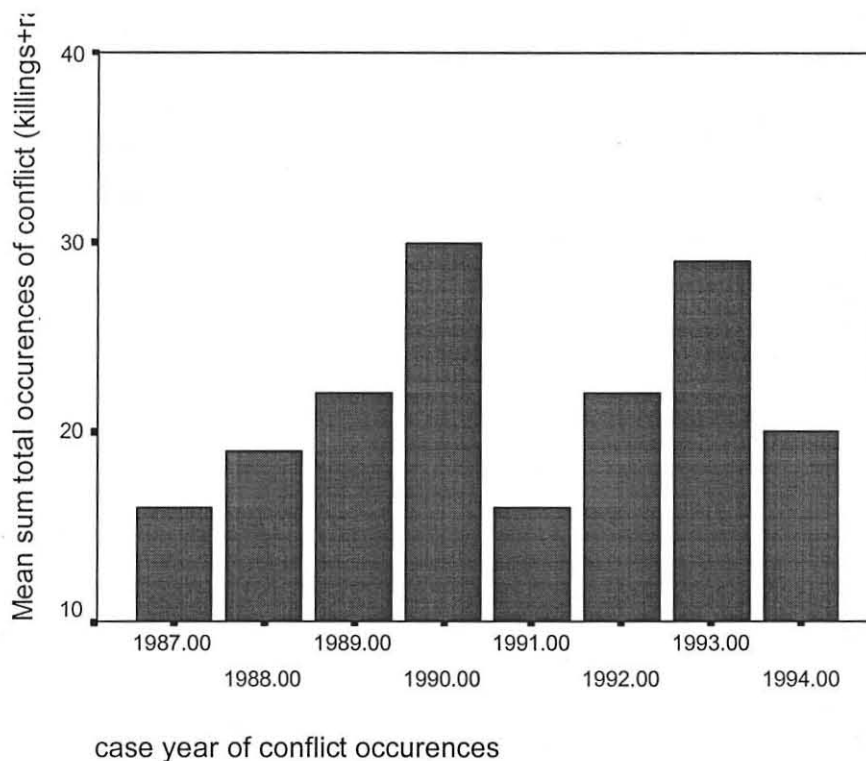
Source: North shewa zone police department, Debre-berhan;2003

### **1. The nature and degree of recurrence of the conflict**

One of the indicators of the nature of conflict in the area is the nature and degree of its recurrence. Accordingly the study has revealed that;

- a. Conflict between farmers and herders has been frequently occurring in all the case years, for 8 years, or for a duration of time amounting a decade. This depicts the area as a zone of recurrent farmer-herder conflicts.

**Graph: A. Recurrence of conflict in the study area\***



## ***2. Intensity of the conflict***

Analysis of the data on total annual number of conflict casualties for series of years demonstrates that the conflict in the area is becoming more intense over time. This is more demonstrated especially by the increase in number of animal casualties (losses) in recent years. As for the situation for the number of human casualties it is found out that it doesn't show any consistent pattern of either increase or decline. This is

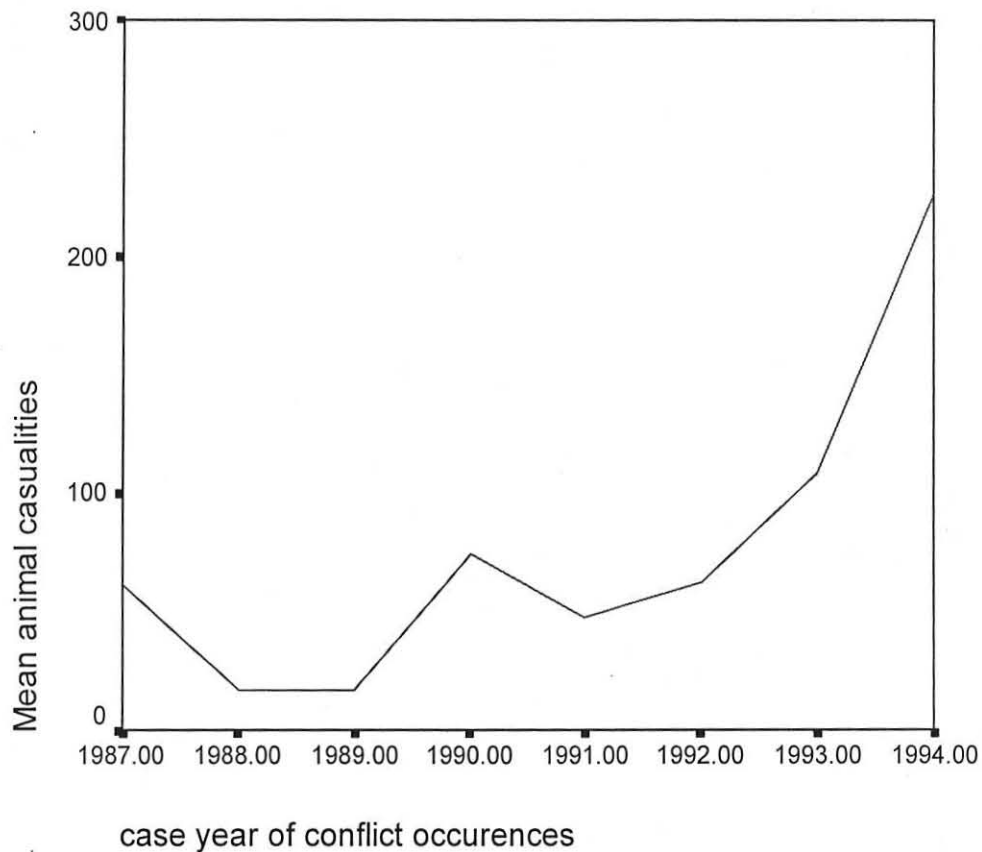
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\* Years of conflict occurrences are reported in Ethiopian Calendar (E.C) for convenience. See table 4.1. for the corresponding G.C.s. Also ignore the digital function of .00 after the years.

not due to the fact that the number of human casualties does not relate to intensity of conflicts. But rather in this case there happen to exist other conditions that dictate its pattern. Based on a general observation one of these possible conditions is the fact that with recurrence of conflicts people usually develop increased sense of security awareness for the number of human casualties to decline or be controlled. It is most probable that, for instance, farmers or herders often retreat in times of intense attacks leaving their cattle behind. Similarly in several incidences of conflict attackers may resort to causing more animal casualties than human casualties since they will gain more benefits and less liabilities this way.

The following graph summarizes the case of conflict intensity by the indicator of the number of animals raided (animal casualties in raids) over consecutive years.

**Graph: B Graph on number of animals raided (casualties to raids) over eight years**



### 6.3. New trends of conflict in the study area

New trends in the conflict are newly manifested forms of conflict observed in recent incidences. It also includes increased sentiments of hostilities and offensive and defensive preparedness. Analysis of such trends is crucial because they show the obvious results of increase in intensity in future conflicts and new negative patterns of relations in the future. Negative trends in a conflict prone area may lead into severe

conflicts, especially in the absence of effective and sustainable conflict management capacity of the local administration. \*

**Involving women in violence:** One of these trends is killing of women. The highest of such incidences is witnessed on the “*Kure beret*” market where 27 afar women are killed as revenge to a preceding killing of one Amhara peasant by herders. This trend is a new phenomena since previously women were excluded from violence by both parties. Women were rather peacemakers and bridges between the communities. In the past when cattle ridings occur and an agreement was reached to return the cattle women were sent to collect them. In addition when cattle were lost into farmer or herder territories and the community allows a search to be undertaken women were sent to hostile territories and there were a guarantee to their safety. When there was a threat of revenge in heated hostile periods. Herder women were sent to farmer markets for exchange. There used to exist a mutual custom of excluding women from violent attacks and killing either women or children was considered a taboo.

The “*Kurebret*” market incidence has changed the nature of the conflict in the area. There is a high degree of resentment on the Afar side. Up to

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\* For instance David Turton(1990), (cited in this study in the preceding section) in his study on the case of the *Mursi*, southern Ethiopia, discusses the tragic ‘massacre’ of one tenth of the Mursi population in a conflict with their *Bume* neighbors, which took place on the eve of the down fall of the previous regime when the state apparatus was weakened. The escalation of the conflict to such intensity was attributed to the previously growing trend of proliferation of arms purchase in which case the Bume had the upper hand due to their access to neighboring Sudan to equip themselves with considerable amounts of arms like the Ak 47 automatic weapon.

the time of this report the Afar were threatening to revenge the incidence opening up to another cycle of conflict.

The situation is so sensitive when it is seen from the angle of traditional social psychology of rural communities. Men in these communities have the customary duty of defending their women and children from violent attacks. And when they fail to do so or avenge it they lose community esteem and are largely conflict prone due to frustrations. An attack on traditional neutrals is initiated due to the mounting frustrations by the lapses in the rule of law and conflict resolution.

**Killing of animals:** Previously both farmers and herders give the traditionally high value to animals. They sympathize to the death of animals of their counterparts in times of animal plague and drought. In the times of relative peace they appeal to each other to host their animals to rescue them from drought.

However, since recently, killing of animals is being frequented as a new form of conflict. Animal killings occur when raiding is practically impossible. It is being preferred because cattle killers are not as hunted by authorities as those who have killed men. But the general intention is “let us kill their cattle and wound their heart”. The problem is that

especially herders' hearts' would become heavily wounded afterwards and mutual hostilities are aggravated as a result.

**Purchase of more arms:** Proliferation of arms purchase is the result of the prevalence of intensive and unresolved conflict in the area. Since arms are instruments of offence and defense acquiring more in quality and quantity of arms is considered crucial to strike the balance and secure the upper hand.

The recent trend in the case area in this regard is that while both parties are attempting to acquire more arms, herders are more eager and relatively successful in their attempts. According to report of informants they even exchange relief grains to arms. Arms owned in the area include specialized automatic weapons and team combat weapons like the very common A.K47 (Automatic Kalashnikov) and even RPG rocket launchers and hand grenades. An attempt to control arms transactions is usually challenged by herders while farmers are increasingly frustrated by the knowledge the situation.

## 6.4. Consequences of farmer-herder conflict in the study area

### **6.4.1 Pre- conflict symbiotic relations between the farmers and herders**

Before we discuss the impact of conflict in the relationship of the two producer groups and in their productivity, we should first review the pre-conflict relationship between them.

The term "symbiosis" is often used by several scholars in reference to the cooperative aspects of relations between different producers and production systems. It has been used to describe the closeness of agro pastoral production systems to their natural environment." Symbiosis" also implies that herders and farmers cannot survive without each other. It implies mutually beneficial relations, while enabling both farming and herding communities to preserve their separate cultural and physical identities ( Toupet 1975 and 74 cited in Hussien k 1998:18).Such positive relations include Ecological linkages and exchange linkages.(Mc Cown et.al 1979 cited in Hussein k. 19998:18)

When we observe the pre- intense conflict relationship of mutual interdependence between farmers and herders in the case area, we will

find out that both in terms of perception and actual sense there has been diverse and essential forms of symbiotic relations between them.

One aspect of this symbiosis can be referred to as the ecological linkage of various aspects, which used to exist between the two production systems. In post harvest season the farming zone provides sufficient amounts of crop residues for grazing. As a result farmers welcome their herding neighbors for grazing in their farm plots. The farmers' interest is not only inspired by the desire to accommodate herders as a token of good will and friendliness but rather, more importantly because they are aware of the gains of useful amount of manure from the dung of the grazing animals. In addition to this farmers also gain the advantage of establishing individual friends among the herders for future beneficial relationship at individual and family level.

Also important to the farmers was the availability of unmediated exchange with herders since many of the individual herders often offer exchange of their animals at relatively lower prices to the farmers they encounter in the farmer villages. Particularly the Afar herders used to gain few more advantages than the ones mentioned above. The major one among these was the advantage of accessing water sources for their animals including farmer built ponds and streams.

The dry grazing season was also an important occasion of cultural exchange including learning each other's languages (which is a very crucial instrument of securing better advantages in the markets where the two communities interact), exchange of lifestyles (food, clothing best ways of animal adaptation and use etc) as well as useful customs and traditions (traditional medicine etc)

The other most important type of linkage is exchange (market) linkage. Although we have discussed about irregular types of exchange linkages in association to dry season grazing, exchange linkage takes the most crucial and regular form of exchange, which is exchange in regular markets. Rural markets and market-based villages are established mainly to serve both producer groups and grow by this function.

Almost all of the exchange centers or markets in the case area are located in the Amhara farmer peasant associations bordering the Afar herders. This is obviously because of the fact that only sedentary farmers can have permanent places of village settlement and permanent place of market spots. In addition farmer individualism as compared to herder communalism allows for development of commercial values and as a result exchange among individual farmers. Also important is the fact that farmer villages are more proxy to large urban centers and the fact that unlike herds farmer communities are not homogenous producers in a

sense that in addition to cultivation farmers adopt different levels of animal husbandry and also there are individual households within the farming communities who produce traditional handicrafts.

However the above-mentioned fact should not be interpreted as it if implied farmer village exchange centers are independently existent or complete by themselves. In the contrary dry zone farmer village markets are strongly dependent on herder participation market in different production zones.

The prime rational for this is the fact that in dry zones there is less crop diversification for farmers to satisfy their demands domestically. Therefore since dry zone farmers are the natural transit between dry pasture zone and highland farming zones it is essential for them to become market bridges between the two zones for exchange of their respective products. Accordingly dry zone farmers should satisfy their demand from diverse crop products by selling animals, which they have previously purchased from their pastoral neighbors. Therefore market exchange was one essential form of their symbiosis.

## **6.4.2. The post conflict scenario**

### **Disruption of symbiotic relations**

When we assess the current state of relations between farmers and herders in the case area it was found out that the deterioration of cooperative behaviors from time to time has now reached a stage of its climax. Afar herders have now ceased to come to Amhara farmer markets. More recent to the periods this study is conducted women also have ceased to come to the markets after the *Kureberet* market incidence involving killing of women.

All other forms of symbiotic relations, including dry season herder stock grazing on farm plots, are interrupted affecting both parties mutually.

### **Lesser access to resources**

The existence of a *de facto* buffer zone over a relatively large area of land across farmer herder boundaries is one sad consequence of the conflict. Every season the grass grown on this “red line” is left untouched by both parties. In addition to this there are disputed lands, which are suspended by authorities from use by both. The major of these is what is called “*Dahoda*” land (estimated as 70 hectares), which is a subject of claim and counter claim by both parties.

## **7. CAUSES OF CONFLICT**

Causes for conflict can be classified as inherent and proximate causes based on the degree of their contribution to the prevalence, recurrence as well as intensity of conflict as a phenomenon. Inherent causes are causes, which create the material conditions for conflict in a dynamic process. Proximate causes are the psychological conditions resulting in behavioral changes for conflict.

The relationship between the two is explainable by the fact that prevalence of inherent causes by itself does not lead to conflict. While the proximate causes cannot exist with out inherent causes.

For example in this study the inherent cause of farmer-herder conflict is identified as natural resource scarcity. For scarcity to lead into conflict;

- it has to be sufficient enough to threaten livelihoods of both communities,
- it has to be perceived and deeply felt as a phenomena, and
- it has to impact the psychology of both conflicting parties.

In the preceding section we have seen that the conflict between farmers and herders is generally increasing in terms of intensity and is a strongly

prevalent as well as recurrent phenomenon. In this section we will try to give analytical explanation as to why in the first place there is conflict and what makes it recurrent and intense.

## 7.1. Natural resource scarcity; the underling cause

### 7.1.1. Natural resource scarcity in the study area

#### ***I. Shortage of arable land:***

Shortage of land for cultivation is the result of the decline in land holding size of farmer households. Farmers land holding sizes used to be relatively better before the radical change brought about due to the land reform and resettlement policy measures taken by the current and the past regimes. The crucial periods associated with these changes are the years 1984/5 and 1987/8. The *Dergue* policy of land reform in 1975 had no significant impact on land holding size of the area. Since there was no large-scale tenancy in the area peasant households who became landowners under the Imperial regime's law of *useoccupation*\* maintained their holdings after nationalization. In the years 1984/5 the *Dergue* realized a policy of resettlement, which mainly affected grazing areas. In the year 1996/7 the E.P.R.D.F. government launched a policy of land redistribution under the name "the just redistribution of land". The redistribution of land has

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\* '*useoccupation*' refers to the right of possessing a certain property which is not right fully claimed by a prior owner and use it to make it latter ones own possession. It is also called '*resnullis*' a latin term for 'no ones property'.

increased the number of landowners in the area by allocating land to the landless youth and even absentee farmers who reside in the town of Shewa-Robit. This has led to the further fragmentation of cultivation land and rapid decline of grazing areas when former grazing areas are allotted for cultivation.

**TABLE:7.1 AVERAGE PEASANT LAND HOLDING DATA FOR QUWOET WEREDA**

Years in G.C.	Average cultivation land holding (in hectare)	Average grazing land holding (in ha.)
1992/3	1.44	0.9
1993/4	1.44	0.9
1994/5	1.44	0.9
1995/6	0.9	0.6
1996/7	0.9	0.6

*Source: Socio economic status report north shewa administration plan and economic development desk; 1997, Debrebrhan*

The average land holding size which is 0.9 hectares per household is smaller than the national average, which is 0.98 (CSA 1997/8) and the average for North Shewa, which is 1.05 (CSA,1997/8) Farmers also estimate the average land holding in the area around 4 'Timad' (approximately closer to one hectare). The impact of the decrease in land holding size by 36.2% is strongly felt in the area. In the focus group discussions and interviews farmers in the study area expressed their dissatisfactions about the fragmentation of farm plots. And in the survey

response for land size related questions large majority (91.1%) of the respondents replied that their holdings are not sufficient enough to support the average family of the current population ( see tables 7.2 & 7.3 below). As a result they express their concern about the threat posed to their livelihoods due to the decline in productivity

**TABLE: 7.2 SURVEY RESPONSES ON POPULATION ESTIMATE OF THEIR AVERAGE LAND HOLDING SIZE.**

Question	Reponses (in "Timad")*		Community of respondents	Total
			Amhara	
2.4. What is the average land holding size in your area	4.00 (t.)	Count	45	45
		<b>Total %</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>93.8%</b>
	6.00 (t.)	Count	2	2
		<b>Total %</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
	12.00 (t.)	Count	1	1
		<b>Total %</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	Count	48	48
		<b>Total %</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Own survey, 2003

\* 'Timad' is a local measure for land holding , in which one 'Timad' is approximately ¼ of a hectare

**TABLE: 7.3. FARMERS' RESPONSES REGARDING THE SUFFICIENCY OF THEIR CURRENT LAND HOLDINGS.**

Responses	No. of respondents	Percentage
Sufficient	5	8.9%
Not sufficient	51	91.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100 %</b>

*Source: Owen survey, 2003*

**II. Shortage of grazing:** The situation for grazing land is even worse. Decline of grazing land size within farmer areas was attributed to the allocation of former grazing areas to cultivation during the implementation of the land redistribution policy and as a result of measures taken by farmers to expand their holdings to adjacent grazing areas. However in the neighboring herder areas scarcity of animal feed sources, due to range degradation and increase in animal and human population, was being intensified by alarming rates.

During the former government farmer grazing areas were protected by an arrangements of communal use and regulated by farmer cooperatives. However, later in final years of the regime farmer cooperative officials started to expand their holdings over the grazing areas. And right after the downfall of the regime former cooperative heads and farmers accelerated expansion to the grazing areas. The current government

measures of land redistribution did not reverse the situation but rather aggravated it by redistributing the holdings of those who established expansion as well as remaining grazing areas.

In herder inhabited areas also shortage of shortage of grazing resources is a major problem of scarcity, as manifested by the decline in availability of grazing resources. A study on feed sources status of the Afar region undertaken by Beruk Yemane (2000), revealed that the feed resource status of the region during the study period is deficit by 795,697 tons per year. The highest deficit in the region was shown in zone five which also consists the Semurobi-geleálo wereda bordering the Quowet wereda of northern shewa. The total deficit in this Zone amounts 366, 806 tons of feed sources, which nearly consists the total feed deficit of the whole of the Afar region. This situation is depicted in the following table.

**TABLE: 7.4 THE STATUS OF RANGE RESOURCES IN ZONE 5 OF THE AFAR REGION IN 1998**

Range resources in Zone 5	Area (Hectare)	Demand per. Ha. of production in tones	Total demand / Ha. prod/ tons	Total livestock population in TLU	Tot. /feed required in tons	Total feed balance (tons)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass land</li> <li>• Low value crops</li> <li>• Riparian wood land, Bush and shrub land</li> <li>• Swamp and marsh</li> </ul>	145,440	0.56	81,446	<b>288,771</b>	<b>660,903</b>	<b>-366,806</b> <b>(Deficit)</b>
	14,035	1.00	14,035			
	343,650	0.50	171,825			
	22,326	1.20	26,791			

*Source: Beruk Yemane "Pastoralism and Agro-pastoralism: which way forward?" ESAP -Proceedings 2002*

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*Source: Beruk Yemane "Pastoralism and Agro-pastoralism: which way forward?" ESAP -Proceedings 2002*

### **III. Shortage of water.**

The study had the limitations of supplementing the data on water resources from technical studies due to lack of access to pertinent works. However, information gathered from sample survey responses revealed that the scarcity of water sources is associated with the gradual decline in volume of seasonal streams and rivers and increase in pollution.

Herders in the study area reported that due to the unavailability of water sources and shortage of rain they are forced to travel from 7 to 10 hours of journey in search of water. The researcher also observed that the only source of potable water for the town of *Kumamie*, the capital of *Semurobi gela'lo*, is a daily supply by water tanker from *Shewa-Robit* town (nearly 60 Km.s).

### **7.1.2. Causes of scarcity**

Natural resource scarcities are caused and intensified by the increase of human population and resource degradation affecting resource use value over time. Often conflicts are associated with the decline of the “resource pie” and the increase in number of population competing to share the “resource pie” (eg. Vanderlinden, 2001). In the following sub-sections we will try to analyze the situation of these basic factors associated with the cause of natural resource scarcity.

#### **I. Rapid Population growth\***

Total number of population is tremendously increasing in both the *Amhara* farmer and *Afar* herder areas by large amount. For instance information obtained from *Quowet* wereda administration indicates the current rate of population growth for rural areas is 3.45%, which is larger than the estimated national average for rural areas, which is 2.23% (CSA, 1995). The increase in the side of the *Afar* is mainly attributed to the religious and cultural custom of polygamy and the absence, rather resistance of family planning practices. The *Afar* as a community strongly believe that having as much children as possible is

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\* Data gathered from wereda offices in the study area has been found largely unreliable due to the observation that there are deliberate exaggerations of the number of population which is pursued as a tactic of competing for local relevance for better advantage of budget allocation and relief supplies from the central and regional governments. Therefore it is important to note the limitations of the analyses in this regard.

advantageous in terms of strengthening their community. The responsibility of raising and taking care of children is shared both at family and community levels. Worrying about the future is not in the social psychology of the *Afar* herder community as in all pastoral communities elsewhere. And as far as children are concerned they are considered as being brought up to this world by will of *Allah* and will be taken care of by him.

Marriage is a source and manifestation of communal bondage for the community, hence parents consider having as much children means having future potential for making more relatives within the community. The *Afar* religious & cultural tradition allows marriage between close family relatives making early marriage easier.

The life of the *Afar* is also changing positively in the direction of exposure to modern life. They are getting used to modern human as well as animal medicine. They also are increasingly being exposed to measures of preventing epidemics including menses of preventing malaria. As a result of these there is a relative decline of mortality rate in recent years.

Even though, on the one hand, the *Afar* are threatened by the expansion of sedentary agriculture closer to their settlements, the growth of near by urban areas and peasant villages, on the other hand, has rendered

tremendous market and infrastructure advantages to foster their livelihoods. As a result of these, for instance, in the times of severe drought they can exchange their livestock for cereals and endure the time until relief assistance is due. The expansion of towns also has provided for roads, telephone and other infrastructures for communication of drought alert and relief supplies, among other things. Therefore the *Afar* are now a days not as secluded and neglected communities as they used to be. And this reality has contributed to the decline of the rate of mortality leading to increase in natural population growth.

associations bordering the *Afar* have access to primary and secondary education. There is a health center in *Sefiberet* serving all the nearby peasant associations. In addition, access of communication allows easy travel to the town of *Shewa-robit* for severe health cases, which require advanced medical attention. As a result there is a general decline in the rate of mortality with the exception of the impact of malaria, which is becoming the major cause of fatality in the area.

An interview with development workers working in the area of family planning and maternal & child health care in *Quowet* wereda revealed that family planning is not a widely disseminated and well-understood notion in the rural areas. The number of peasant households volunteering to participate in family planning programs as beneficiaries of counseling services and contraceptive packages provided by the project is very low. Among those who participated in the projects majority of them also withdrew their participation. On the other hand the number of households participating in the project for maternal and childcare benefit packages is increasing. Information found from the Amhara Development Agency family planning and maternal health care project office for north shewa zone indicates that while the total number of the registered beneficiaries for family planning benefit packages amount only 598, of all the family heads in *Quowet* wereda the number of family heads enrolled for counseling in maternal and child health care are

3,742 (2,055 male & 1,687 female). The trend that can be summarized from this is that while measures to disseminate family planning know how are not so far successful farmer households are increasingly becoming more interested and able to prevent child mortality.

**TABLE: 7.6. DATA ON TREND OF POPULATION GROWTH IN QUOWET WEREDA FOR THREE PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS**

Rural peasant associations	CSA Census for 1994	Wereda estimate for 2001 *
SEFI BERET	3,263	6,573
ABAYA ATIR	2,515	5,499
KURE BERET	2,268	3,023
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,046</b>	<b>15,095</b>

*Source: CSA, The 1994 Population & Housing Census for Ethiopia results for Amhara region: Addis Ababa, 1995 & Quowet wereda council, 2003.*

## II. Natural resource and ecological degradation

Gradual destruction of tree and bush coverage in the area is one of the observed problems. Causes associated with these are the demands for more fuel wood and increased reliance on animal biomass consumption resulting in gradual decline of the supply of natural fertilizer to soil. Rises in temperature and soil erosion were also phenomena increasingly being observed as a result. The scattered hills in the area are increasingly becoming devoid of natural vegetation. Encroachment of weed herbs and pests has also increased from time to time. For instance the Quowet wereda office for Agricultural development report of crop

\* It is found out that that there would be a large difference between the projection for the same year had the rate of projection been used to predict the then estimate number of population (which would be lesser) hence it is only preferred here to take the wereda administration account of information while considering the possible limitations it may have.

damage in the year 2000 indicated that as a result of pest infestations 1,203 hectare (41%) Of the sorghum, 131ha. (20%) of the *Mung-pea* and 956 hectare of the maize grown were damaged on the wereda.

Rain shortage is becoming more acute in recent years. According to the observation of the zonal Department for Disaster Preparedness and prevention (DPPD) there is a gradual decline of in rainfall, which has got more severe in the past 3 years. Associated with rain shortage is the induced condition of drought, which is a strong manifestation of the dimension of ecological degradation overtime. The most severe incidences of drought in the area are recorded in the past 2 to 3 years (see table 7.7 below). The consequential relationship between drought and escalation of conflict is depicted by the contrast of the situation of unprecedented increase of raid incidences in the past three years including this year to the data for the total number of animal fatalities as a result of drought, which is also higher in recent years.

The following data on impact of drought is presented for contrast to the data on conflict on the preceding section.

**TABLE: 7.7. DATA ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE REPORTED AS NEEDING EMERGENCY RELIEF ASSISTANCE IN QUWET AND SEMUROBI-GELALO**

Years	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Semu robi-gel'alo	10,000	—	—	10,000	—	10,000	1,650	61,870	28,570	49,400
Quowet	24,000	—	—	—	11,400	11,244	42,304	116,394	17,500	19,800

Source: DPPC early warning department information data source may 2003.

**TABLE: 7.8. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF LIVESTOCK HOLDINGS IN QUOWET WEREDA IN THE YEAR 2002/3 AND THE NUMBER OF REPORTED ANNUAL ANIMAL FATALITIES IN THE SAME YEAR**

	Cattle	Sheep & goats	Asses & Mules	Camel	Total
Estimate number of animal holdings	91,394	31,901	8,040	2,334	133,669
Estimate number of animal fatalities	8,866	3,205	354	125	12,550
<b>Percentage of fatalities to holdings</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>

Source: North Shewa zonal Departement for DPP, Dbrebrhan 2003

### 7.1.2 Land use change:

Land use changes have been the apparent consequences of the above-mentioned forms of increasing scarcity. One of the manifestations of land use change is the conversion of grazing land to cropland. Farmers are increasingly forced to expand their farms to the grazing areas adjacent to

availability of the infrastructure facility of health care, potable water and relief assistance is driving more and more of the herder population to these areas.

*Afar* herder mobility is also being constrained by the increase in human population, competition in other areas (with Oromo and Somali clans), recurrence of flooding and drought around the awash river and by the overtake of land for investment in commercial agriculture.

In addition to the socioeconomic data on some of the actual indicators of resource scarcity, the survey conducted for this study also indicates that all the respondents perceive that there is the problem of scarcity in the area. (See table 7.9)

**TABLE: 7.9. SURVEY RESPONDS ON PERCEPTION ABOUT THE PREVALENCE OF RESOURCE SCARCITY**

Responses	No. of respondents		Percentage	
	Afar	Amhara	Afar	Amhara
There is scarcity	60	56	100%	100%
There is no scarcity	—	—		
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Owen survey, 2003*

The sample survey also revealed that a considerable proportion of the respondents, (49.1%), attribute the problem of scarcity to a combination

of both resource degradation and population pressure. However respondents from *Afar* identified resource degradation as the main cause (90.0%) while the *Amhara* farmers identified both factors as equally important (96.4%) ( see table 7.10)

**TABLE 7.10. SURVEY RESULT ON COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ABOUT CAUSES OF RESOURCE SCARCITY**

Responses	No.of respondents		Percentage		Total percent
	<i>Afar</i>	<i>Amhara</i>	<i>Afar</i>	<i>Amhara</i>	
Population pressure	3	1	5.0%	1.8%	3.4%
Resource degradation	54	1	90.0%	1.8%	47.4%
Both population & degradation	3	54	5.0%	96.4%	49.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Owen survey, 2003

## 7.2 Competition and alienation:

Competition: As a result of scarcity in both sides the situation of competition has been aggravated. Farmers persistently attempt to exploit every opportunity of expanding cultivation to grazing areas near the boarder. In the past years farmers who are located in the villages adjacent to the border zone have taken practical measures of plowing

new plots. This is manifested by the observation that land holding size of farmers those villages are much larger than the average holding.

Herders also have taken measures of forcing isolated farmer settlements in some areas to the extent of forcing farmer villages to abandon their settlement areas and move to Amhara dominated farmer villages. Such incidences for instance were reported by informants to have occurred in 1992, when *Amhara* farmers who used to live in what is called "*meskelle*" area were forced to evacuate and get resettled by authorities in what is called "*kuchima*" village of the "*abayaatir*" P.A.. These new comers were given the lands, which were formerly used for grazing. The same also has happened to villagers of "*Emboay baaeid*" who were forced to get resettled near the *Amhara* dominant settlements.

Competition for pasture is also taking the form of bringing more stock to the border areas from both the farmer and herder sides. Both communities are adopting a strategy of armed group herding for effective herd management. Unlike scattered grazing concentrated grazing had by it self resulted on rapid range degradation in many areas leading to competition and confrontations over access to grazing.

Loss of cattle due to drought and animal plagues is also creating more demand for cattle raiding. Raiding is a form of conflict than competition.

However the desire to acquire more cattle at the expenses of either community is a psychological precondition of competition to raiding as a form of conflict.

The following results were found on the survey response for the question which tests community attitudes of the desire to compete for more resources. Accordingly significant number from both the Afar herder and Amhara farmer sides have shown strong desires to compete and expand towards neighboring holdings. Those who are strongly in favor of expansion from both sides constitute 63.5% of all the respondents from both sides (table 7.11.). And those who are in favor of expansion if conditions allow constitute 30.4% of the total number of respondents. Only 6.1% responded that there is no need for expansion to neighboring holdings.

Another observation from the survey responses is the difference between the two community respondents' in terms of the degree of their attitude on the need for expansion. Accordingly out of the total respondents of Amhara farmers only 32.7 % were in favor of expansion while 54.5 % responded that they agree to the need of expansion if possible and 12.7 % responded that expansion is not at all necessary. Among the *Afar* herders, however, 91.7 are strongly in favor of expansion while the remaining 8.3% responded that they agree for expansion if situations

allow. But most importantly all the *Afars* interviewed are in favor of expansion one way or another.

What can be inferred from the above observation is that as a result of the dominantly held attitudes in favor of expansion by both sides, there is an increasing tension which could easily lead into conflict escalations.

**TABLE: 7.11. SURVEY RESULT ON COMMUNITY FEELINGS OF COMPETITION**

Responses (do you feel that your community should expand to neighboring holdings ?)	No. of respondents		Percentage		Total percent
	<i>Afar</i>	<i>Amhara</i>	<i>Afar</i>	<i>Amhara</i>	
Strongly support expansion	55	18	91.7%	32.7%	63.5%
Agree to expansion if it is possible	5	30	8.3%	54.5%	30.4
Expansion Is not necessary at all	-	7	0.0%	12.7%	6.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Owen survey, 2003

Alienation: Alienation is a consequential feeling of competition. The competing parties through the process and the actual measures taken in the competition will develop a collective feeling that they are losing out to their counterparts. On the sample survey conducted for this study 85.5% of the total respondents from both communities (99% from the *Afar* and 68% of the *Amhara*) replied affirmatively for the question “do you feel

that your community is disadvantaged by the overtake of resources by your neighbors?”, which shows the prevalence of strong sentiment of resource alienation.

The Afar herders feel the farmers are expanding cultivation over the areas, which they consider as rightfully theirs. They also feel that the farmers are increasingly encroaching to their grazing areas for grazing and fuel wood collection and in the process they degrade the rangeland as well as destroy the bush cover leading to gradual deprivation of herder means of survival. In addition to this they feel that they are increasingly being denied of access to water sources by accelerated farmer settlement near all the water sources.

Such feelings of alienation on the side of the *Afar* are consolidated in the forms of historically based claims of land, a right to livelihood based claim of access to resources and a politically backed issue of community territory and boundary in their part. The situation of alienation is more or less similar on the side of the *Amhara* farmers to that of the *Afars*'. Especially farmers who are forced to evacuate from their former holdings strongly feel alienated of their land. Increased herder resistances of access to grazing and fuel wood collection around the border also usually aggravate farmers' sentiments. They feel alienated that what they consider as used to be a common pool resource of grazing land and bush

forest is now being protected and claimed by herders as Afar community property.

**TABLE:7.12 RESPONDENTS RESULTS AS TO WHETHER THEY FEEL DISADVANTAGED BY THE OVER TAKE OF LAND BY NEIGHBOURS**

Responses	No.of respondeents		Percentage		Total
	<i>Afar</i>	<i>Amhar</i>	<i>Afar</i>	<i>Amhara</i>	
Feel disadvantaged	60	38	100%	69.1%	85.2%
Do not feel disadvantaged	-	17	-	30.9%	14.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: own survey*

## 7.3 Aggravating factors

### 7.3.1 Uncertain and problematic tenure system

In a historical perspective emperor Hilesellasié 's regime had the most clearly defined and elaborate form of land tenure according to the view of the researcher. Since fairness of a given tenure system is an issue different and more subjective than clarity this view prefers to emphasize

to the analysis of the nature of tenure certainty as a regulatory framework of law.

One interesting feature of the tenure system of the imperial regime was that it contains legislations as to how land was to be acquired, titled, utilized and alienated to others. Detailed regulations are also outlined as to what forms of land ownership are existent, who has rightful ownership of land and what the relationships of the forms of ownership and owners are. Accordingly the system recognizes four major forms of ownership, which are;

- Private ownership (as “*rist*” and “*gult*” or as alienable private property)
- Land owned by public institutions
- Land owned by an agricultural community such as tribe or village
- Land owned by none in particular and regarded as state property

The most important legal provisions related to our purpose of analysis are those regulations, which recognize a form of community ownership of rural land. Accordingly, article 1489 of the Imperial state of Ethiopia’s civil code (1960) in chapter 2, under the title “Agricultural communities” stated that;

*land owned by an agricultural community such as a village or tribe shall be exploited collectively when ever such mode of exploitation conforms to the tradition and custom of the community concerned*

Further article 1493 of the same regulation stipulated that;

*land owned by an agricultural community may not be acquired by usoccupation*

And article 1492 ruled that;

*any provision or custom creating between the members of a community discrimination based on race, religion or social condition shall of be no effect*

Article 1168 is more relevant when it comes to the relationship between communal owners and those who try to exercise their legal right of land ownership over “no ones” property (hence state’s) in accordance with the legal provision of usoccupation of marginal, un-owned land.

*the possessor who has paid for fifteen consecutive years the taxes relating to the ownership of an immovable shall become the owner of such immovable provided that no land which is jointly owned by members of one family in accordance with (their) custom may require by useoccupation (and ) any member of such family at any time claim such land*

Such regulations are important to our discussion because they explain the nature of historical expansion and settlement of farmers to marginal areas. Amhara elders explain the legitimacy of the settlement of their predecessors as being legally supported by the rules and regulations of the system. They claim that land holding has not taken place on community property but rather on un-owned land in accordance to the

provisions of usoccupation, conversion of land to cultivation and legitimizing owner ship by paying land tax to the state.\*

The Dergue regime abolished all forms of private ownership including communal ownership of land under its ideological principle of "land to the tiller" (1975). Accordingly all natural resources became "the property of the masses". The system constitutionally ruled, "State is the owner of all natural resources including mines, forests and land and state ownership is public ownership" (PDRE constitution 1987). There was neither a de jure stipulated recognition of community property nor was any guideline as to how to regulate the actions of the two production systems of cultivation and herding with regard to competition for access to land. Land redistribution during the Dergue regime took place mostly in areas where there was feudal serfdom. Cultivation is the focus of the principle of "land to the tiller" in accordance with socialist principle of agrarian class transformation. Therefore all cultivable land were allocated to the landless peasants. In semi-arid rural areas where agriculture has expanded the Dergue allocated pastoral land to expansion of state farms and landless peasants. Ecological obstacles and conflict only checked expansion of agriculture in those periods. Even though herder alienation aggravated in those periods herders direct their hostility more towards the state than towards farmers. However with an

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\* The local people referred this as the rule of "ገገገ, ገገገ" "possess, cultivate, pay tax"

increase in resource scarcity conflict between farmers and herders as between the state and herders got aggravated.

Again according to the assessment of this study the most recent but rather the most uncertain tenure system was found to be that of the current government's. The Federal Government of Ethiopia's constitution Article 40 section 3's provision reads as follows;

*The right to ownership of rural and urban land as well as of all natural resources is exclusively vested in the state and in the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the nations nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange.  
(Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1995: 98)*

With regard to the ways of accessing land as a resource of fostering livelihood, section 4, of the same article legislates the following;

*Ethiopian peasants have the right to obtain land without payment and the protection against eviction from their possession. The implementation of this provision should be specified by law.*

Also section 5;

*Ethiopian pastoralists have the right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as the right not to be displaced from their lands. The implementation of this provision should be specified by law.*

Looking at the regulations as they are, the following questions can be raised in association to the uncertainty of the legal arrangements of the existing tenure;

- what are the specific rights and duties of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia on allocation and use of the land among their members and non members, as owners of land?
- does the provision imply that the regional boundaries are territorial limits to these owners or does all the above mentioned national elements exercise land ownership over all the national land?
- if the former is the case does it mean that the 'owners' can exercise a legal authority of excluding non-members? and how?
- if these are the owners and state is the administrator of land on their behalf to what extent can the state regulate pattern of land use and distribution among individual/communal producers?
- and about the free access to land, is the limit of state resettlement obligations (citizen rights) restricted within regional boundaries? or can pastoralists for example exercise their right of free access beyond ethnic boundaries ? etc...

Answer to the final question may be referred to the last phrase of the provisions referring to future regulations for details however the question remains open for the moment. One feature of the regulations is that whatever form of free access they promise to both producer groups, likewise to the previous government's they neither recognize nor protect community ownership of land including to private ownership.

There are few problems associated with this at least as far as the issue of conflict and its causes in the area are concerned. These problems are basically associated with local perceptions that are related to the general framework of law, as far as right of access to resources is concerned. The *Afar* herders largely consider that, unlike the previous ones, this system recognizes their ethnic, identity and rights associated with it including a right over communal land. They perceive that the *Afar* ethnic group has its own self-administrative region with an implication of a sense of an ethnic territory and distinct boundary. They even interpret this as if it clearly implies a right of excluding others or as far as non-*Afars* are concerned. The only problem they perceive is that the problem associated with clear demarcation of their territory in order to make them be able to exclude non-members. Actually it is true that the community has elaborate customary system of land tenure within itself. However as far as tenure security is concerned the governing legislation of the state doesn't clearly legitimize their ownership. With regard to regional boundary also, they seem to believe that there is a rigid and enforceable boundary between them and the *Amhara* farmers, which they roughly identify and feel that it should be a limit of any form of farmer expansion.

The *Amhara*, similarly, recognize that there is some implication of regional demarcation in the system. However they do not seem to agree that the boundaries of the *Amhara* are the farms adjacent to grazing

areas and they cannot expand grazing to uncultivated land. They believe that cultivation is not the only form of agricultural activity they should be limited to.

Whether regional boundaries are the boundaries between the two production systems is not clearly regulated by law. However, if so is the case, it doesn't seem to fit to the practical realities of resource scarcity cumulated in courses of time. For one thing population growth and land degradation has resulted in over crowded settlement of land in farmer areas that with realization of such arrangements one form of agriculture, which is livestock raising, will cease to exist threatening farmers livelihoods. The same may be true for Afar herders. The currently observed acute shortage of access to water sources among others indicates the threats posed on the community's existence as a pastoral group if rigid boundaries are the limits of livelihood for the production system.

### **7.3.2. The role of authorities in interventions to regulate the existing relations**

Alienation and competition also are further aggravated by the failure of authorities to take effective measures resolving disputes over access to

resources and by the perceptions of being disadvantaged when authorities took some measures of regulating access to resources.

The *Afar* for instance have feelings of dissatisfaction over the inaction of authorities to strictly demarcate and regulate farmers activities in disputed areas as well as the failure of authorities to open the destroyed water well of “ *tagraa*” for herder access.

The *Amhara* farmers similarly are dissatisfied by the inaction of authorities to prevent eviction of farmers from settlements near the disputed areas. They also fell highly alienated when authorities try to exert pressure on them not to expand cultivation and grazing towards the border areas.

Both feel similarly disadvantaged by the action taken by authorities to suspend access to disputed lands like “ *dahoda* ” and others. Since both consider these areas as rightfully theirs, suspension of use right is considered a measure taken at their expense. In addition to decisions on regulation of access, failure of authorities to effectively prosecute criminals who are responsible for killing of men or raids and return all lost property also is a source of resentment and distrust of authorities.

As a result of these members of both communities have equally high degrees of dislike and distrust of the authorities of each other's counterpart, dissatisfaction towards the role of their own authorities and perceive a vacuum of role for involvement by central government.

#### 7.4 The role of culture

Often conflict as a form of relationship between two groups is analyzed from the perspective of the existing cultural traits as fundamental cause that shapes the pattern of behavior of the groups. However this view suffers from the narrowness of cultural determinism since it lacks the wider dimensions of analyzing the value of man to nature relationships in shaping man to man relationships.

Culture is the material and psychological manifestation of a society's way of life in its struggle for survival and growth. A certain society's culture is shaped by the practical material and psychological needs to survive in a certain environment. Cultural traits contributing to conflict are also developed after a material condition for conflict prevails and conflict becomes one way of survival in a certain environment. Hence, since conflict precedes the development of cultural traits associated with it, culture cannot be considered as the inherent causes of relationship of conflict between or among groups. Whenever cooperation is the most essential and the most suitable form of relation among groups these

groups develop and manifest cultural traits contributing to cooperation, such as inter-marriage, assimilation or co-production. In a similar fashion, when conflict and competition happen to be perceived as the most essential and feasible form of relation, cultural traits of conflict such as vengeance and social enmity will develop and be manifested. This is not to imply that societies make a spontaneous and blind choice between the two but rather there are situations dictating as to which way to go forward.

Therefore, as for instance, herders wear typical kinds of dress that match the requirements of their environment, scarcity dictates that herders go in to conflict with their farming neighbors. But once they are developed cultural traits have their own share of contributions in accelerating conflicts in a cycle of recurrence.

As far as the two communities in the study area are concerned there are several manifestations of cultural traits association with conflict. Although observation in the case has revealed that the significance of such cultural traits is declining in recent years, remnants of these manifestations still are found to exist in the study area. The major manifestation of this cultural dimension is the existence of mutually held perceptions of hostility, mistrust and undermining each other. In addition there is a mutually held tradition of rewarding those members

of their own community who managed to be active in violent attacks or raids against the other community. There is also a culture of initiating, pressurizing and orienting members of their community to be ready and active in attacking the others and defending one's own community or making up for the losses in the form of vendetta.

The following manifestations are revealed with regard to the traditionally held values of conflict in both communities\*. Cultural traits of conflict manifested among the *Afar*-herder communities include;

- An *Afar* should kill a member of the ethnic groups with which they are in conflict to be called man enough and demonstrate this by presenting a proof after cutting male genital parts of his victim or his blood stained clothes.
- Ten days after this his family will celebrate his transformation with other members of the community at a ceremony called “*eidecha*” where he receives congratulations.
- After he is celebrated as a “killer” he will have the following privileges as an indicator of his social status;
  - In traditional holidays he will be the lead song maker and receives rewards,

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\* The information for this section is partially acquired from an unpublished study by a member of the North Shewa police department, Habtamu Sisay, (1998) Shwea-robit

- His traditional knife called “*dubit*” will not be used to slaughter animals rather the knife of those who have not killed is used for slaughter in order to instigate the youth,
- In wedding ceremonies there is a specially decorated place where only “killers” are allowed to dance on,
- Once he killed 4 men his status will grow further and has the privileges of wearing decorations on his wrist, neck and ears.

On the contrary those who are not able to gain the status of “killer” will have hard times making a bridal match, they are verbally harassed and generally considered as cowards.

In a similar fashion an *Amhara* celebrates his status as a killer after proving his deed by bringing up a blood stained traditional knife, “*dubit*” of his *Afar* victim. Afterwards he enjoys the privileges of decorating like the *Afar*, he will proudly sing emotional war songs (*shilela-fukera*) in ceremonies of marriage and funeral. A killer’s wife enjoys several privileges, like potting water without queue. When a ‘killer’ dies special funeral ceremony is conducted to him and memorial tomb will be built for him.

On the contrary those who have not killed may be refused by a girl’s parents to marry their daughter. He will be verbally harassed for trying to

pretend to be a competent young man and denied of all privileges enjoyed by killers.

All these especially the culture of vendetta always leads to conflict escalation. Families who have lost their relatives due to conflict are always under social pressure for vengeance.

Such traditions with the exception of vendetta are now declining in their significance. For instance parents are finding it more significant to request the wealth status of the farmers of those who requested their daughters for marriage than being a killer.

Results of the sample survey with regard to the perception of the population as to which causes are the most significant ones in resulting conflicts revealed that culture is generally given a secondary position to resource scarcity 26.3% (see table 5.9 below). However differences of attitudes were observed among the respondents from the two communities with regard to the contribution of culture to conflict as compared to resource scarcity. Out of the total number of respondents from the *Amhara* farmer community 50.0 % responded that culture was the dominant cause of conflict, 30.4% responded both factors have equal contribution and the remaining 19.6% responded resource scarcity as the dominant cause. In contrast, 93.1% of the *Afar* herders responded

resource scarcity was the major factor while those of who responded culture, culture plus resource scarcity, and political difference were; 3.4%, 1.7% and 1.7% respectively.

The nature of responses in this regard seems to have reflected subjectivity to significant extents. For instance the respondents from the *Amhara* farmers' side appear to have perceived that the *Afar* herders are more motivated by their culture than the objective conditions of resource scarcity to enter into conflict with them. Such kind of subjectivity is one of the limitations of the application of the survey data to generate information on actual problems of scarcity and conflict.

The general conclusion of the study on the role of culture is that culture has its own significant role in prevalence, recurrence and intensification of conflicts in the study area but it is not the inherent cause of the conflict.

**TABLE : 5.9 SURVEY RESULT ON COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ABOUT THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT**

Respo	No.of respondents		Percentage		Total%
	<i>Afar</i>	<i>Amhara</i>	<i>Afar</i>	<i>Amhara</i>	
Resource scarcity	54	11	93.1%	19.6%	57.0%
Cultural difference	2	28	3.4%	50.0%	26.3%
Political difference	1	-	1.7%	-	15.8%
Both scarcity & Culture	1	1.7	1.7%	30.4%	0.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Owen survey, 2003*

## **8. ATTEMPTS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

### 8.1. Pre-1991 attempts of conflict resolution & management

#### **8.1.1 Conflict resolution & management attempts during the Imperial State of Ethiopia**

Finding archival documents on conflict related issues in those periods had been one of the constraints encountered in the study. However information found from the interviews and focus group discussions with elders of both communities indicates that conflict management rather

than resolution was the focus of the involvement of the authorities during that period.

There is a general agreement that interventions to manage conflicts were relatively effective then especially in the dimension of implementing rule of law to duly punish culprits of conflict. The state police apparatus applied a strong pressure on community leaders of both sides to hand over criminals. Those community leaders who failed to do so, used to be subject to severe punishments in the forms of detention, confiscation of their property or pay compensation charges. Individuals held responsible for perpetration of violence would receive severe punishments in a manner that signals a warning message to deter future offenders. In the early periods of the regime criminals used to be subject to capital punishment by hanging in public places such as markets, after a speedy legal deliberations. In the latter years this practice was gradually abolished and suspects enjoyed the privileges of appeal and alternative punishments.

In addition armed police units used to be assigned in market places in order to avoid confrontations and violent clashes. And according to the accounts of informants their prevalence had been an effective deterrent mechanism.

Conflict resolution as an administrative agenda was not strongly promoted. However symbiotic relationships in those periods were relatively stronger that local (community) initiated forums of negotiations for settlement of disputes used to take place occasionally\*. Tribal chiefs and elders had significant roles in these occasions and, most importantly, there used to be mutual understanding and trust at least as far as among elites are concerned. The elites were widely accepted by the members of their own community hence there was strict adherence for resolution arrangements made by them.

Apart from these state authorities had not established permanent institutional arrangements for conflict resolution and no systematic study was undertaken to assess the problem. Conflicts were understood then as historical cultural realities depicting the drawbacks of traditional societies and modernization was considered as an ultimate remedy of transforming the society and social relations.

### **8.1.2 Conflict resolution & management during the Socialist Government of Ethiopia.**

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\* Traditionally negotiations were held for prolonged periods of times until agreements were reached. Then both sides would make commitments to compensate the loss and to work for peace. Finally the reconciliation will be finalized by a ceremony where both sides will present animals for slaughter as a token of good will. '*Argoba*' (an ethnic group) elders used to play important roles in mediating the two. They have acceptance by *Afars* as firm adherents of the Muslim religion and by the *Amhara* since as farmers and traders they are well assimilated with the Amhara and understood farmers' problems.

Management of conflicts in that period was considered as a burden on the state. Hence heavy deterrent measures like applying severe punishments on suspects of individual killings and heavy military action used to be taken on both communities, especially in cases of intensified group armed confrontations. The regime showed minimal degree of tolerance for armed group confrontations than individual killings. And at times the state army was sent to undertake indiscriminate attacks by air force helicopter combat units incurring severe casualties from both sides.

In latter years of the regime individual killers who were handed over to authorities were punished with light imprisonment and a compensation fee of 2,000 Birr, to families of the victim. This compensation money used to be utilized to enforce reconciliation between the killer's and the victim's families and between the two communities.

Similar to the previous regime, sustainable conflict resolution was not in the policy agenda of the state. State relied on demonstration of heavy hand to deter conflicts. This had resulted in a shift in the direction of conflict from farmer-herder into herder-state.

## 8.2 The FDRE government and its attempts of conflict resolution & management

For the purpose of organizing information found from the records of zonal and wereda peace committee and police departments as well as interview with officials, it is preferred to classify this era of conflict & resolution into three chronological periods.

### ***i) The period of state's awareness of the problem of conflict in the area: (1992\* - 1994 G.C).***

At the beginning of this period the then transitional government started to respond to the problems of conflict by sending representatives of the government to the area. On June 28, 1992, the first meeting between the officials and representatives of the conflicting communities was held. In that meeting representatives of the public informed the officials about the scale of the conflict and causes for its escalation by presenting their own complaints such as denial of access to grazing and water, subsequent raiding etc.

At the end of this first meeting the participating officials requested the public representatives to prepare joint draft resolutions containing options for conflict resolution. Accordingly an 11 points draft resolution was prepared and submitted to the office of the prime minister. The

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\* This year was a pivotal point in the dimension of conflict in the area. Intense and recurrent conflicts took place then as a result of administrative vacuum perceived in the new government and new build up of arms acquired from the dismantled army of the previous government.

resolution contained detailed proposals like the option of common resource use arrangements, establishment of joint committees for the task of handling offenders & return of lost or raided property and permanent forms of communication etc.

However no response was made on the part of the government to build on the foundations laid in that period. As a result conflicts escalated in the following years. Late in 1994 government tried to make a partial response through regional authorities in the form of establishing joint peace committees among the conflicting communities. Accordingly representatives from *Amhara* & *Afar* communities passed a resolution to work together on conflict management at a joint meeting held on May 18, 1994.

***ii) The period of government activities to establish conflict resolution & management structures (1995 -1998).***

Starting 1995 joint security and peace committees (usually referred as 'peace committee') were restructured and devolved up to *Kebelle* levels. In these periods the authorities took practical measures to implement their conflict management plans. The major activities undertaken as outlined in the 1996 action plan and the 1997 report of activities of the zonal peace committee were: -

- To try to be able to send police units to conflict areas as soon as reports on conflict escalation are made,

- Try to work effectively in bringing all individuals who are responsible for perpetration of violence to justice and be able to return all looted property,
- Create public awareness on the impacts of violence,
- Participate elders in conflict management.

As a result the years 1997 and 1990 were reported as being relatively effective years of conflict management. \*

***iii) Periods of escalation of conflict beyond the management capacity of local authorities (1999 to the present).***

These periods have been periods of recurrent drought and conflict escalation. In those periods the attempt of authorities to manage conflicts largely failed due to the change in the dimension and scale of the conflict. Conflicting parties start to realize that local authorities cannot bring about sustainable resolution to the conflict since they do not have the necessary administrative capacity and legal mandates to make crucial decisions like border delimitation. Hence conflicts when they arise had been beyond the management capacity of the local authorities.

In these periods meetings of peace committees were largely unsuccessful due to differences of opinion based on allegations as well as counter

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\* Also see data on conflict occurrences in section 4, Table-4.1 of this paper.

allegations of community favoritism and reluctance to implement planned activities. As a result many meetings were concluded without joint resolutions.

When we summarize the observations on conflict resolution attempts of the current government the following general conclusions can be drawn. Firstly the current government has realized important measures in this regard. Attempts have been made by the government to establish joint peace committees in all tiers of the federal structures i.e. from the regional to peasant association levels. Establishment of this structure by itself created the forums of communication for authorities of conflicting parties, the opportunity of having discussions of conflict management & resolution options and publicization of the prevalence of conflict to the general public.\*

Secondly, documenting conflict occurrences and resolution meeting proceedings is a new beginning for the possibility of conflict analysis and assessment of possible options of conflict resolution. Thirdly, the government employed the strategy of public participation in conflict management & resolution. Although the attempts of the local authorities to practically implement this strategy had its own shortcomings,

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\* Often government media does not report incidences of conflict as they occur. However the public learns about the situation of conflict in this area and many other parts of the country when there is media coverage about peace and reconciliation attempts.

realization of the need for active community participation is a big step forward.

However as far as the situations for the study area (and also in other areas in the country) are concerned the general direction being pursued by the current government suffers from several drawbacks. First, there seem to be lack of realization as to how to effectively deal with conflicts in respect to choosing between focusing on conflict management or resolution. Accordingly the directions being pursued by the government seem to have missed the target of conflict resolution by giving undue emphasis to conflict management. This is openly manifested in the contents of action plans and activity reports of the peace committees. These reports indicate that the activity of authorities mainly focus on measures that may contain conflicts temporarily such as punishment of criminals, return of lost property etc....However, conflict resolution is more comprehensive and sustainable than conflict management and includes measures like realization of development intervention to mitigate the impacts of conflicts by dealing with the inherent causes.

Secondly, it has been the general belief of the government that it had laid the foundations for regulating inter-ethnic relations by the constitutional provisions of the right of self determination (article 39) and public ownership of land (article 40). However empirical evidences have

demonstrated the insufficiency of these legal frameworks hence the need for reevaluation of the excessive reliance on them.

Finally there is an apparent failure to realize institutional structures and functional division of tasks among different government strata for effective conflict resolution. In addition, the need for effective community participation and exploiting the potentials of indigenous conflict management practices has been under emphasized. The important roles of different sections of the society like elders, clan chiefs, religious leaders and women have not been well explored and exploited for the purpose of realizing sustainable conflict resolution.

## **9. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **9.1 Conclusion**

In semi-arid areas where the two production systems of farming and livestock raising share a common ecological zone of production, conflict between farmers & herders is the dominant feature of interaction. Empirical evidences undertaken in various case areas in semi-arid Africa demonstrate this unfortunate reality. The major cause attributed to this is the situation of the ever-increasing trend of natural resource scarcity.

This study on a semi-arid zone in *Quowet* wereda and its neighboring *Afar* wereda of *Semurobi-geleálo* has explored the relationship between resource scarcity and conflict.

The study has tried to analyze the resource-conflict interactions by exploring the nature of the two variables in their multi-dimensional manifestations. Accordingly the study has revealed that the inherent and most dominant cause for conflict between farmers and herders , especially in semi-arid areas , is natural resource scarcity .In addition, other factors like uncertainty and lack of clarity in the tenure and regional boundary regulations contribute for the aggravation of conflicts.

The prevalence of conflict in many areas of the country requires urgent attention and rapid response since it is increasingly affecting peaceful co-habitations and productivity while consequently threatening the livelihoods of both farmer and herder communities.

## 9.2 Policy recommendations

### **9.2.1 Strategies for intervention**

As the findings of this study as well as others studies on similar issues would suggest the critical area of intervention to bring about sustainable solution to the problem of conflict is to deal with the inherent cause of conflict, which is natural resource scarcity. Accordingly the major

strategy that should be designed and implemented is development intervention of several aspects; in short, medium and long terms. Development intervention aimed at bringing about changes including changes in the pattern of relations will achieve their goals if they are carefully designed and implemented to match the specific requirements of the target groups, which in this case are the different producer groups of farmers and herders.

In addition to this it is very essential to focus on alleviating the problems of population pressure and resource degradation by implementing development projects that combine these two elements in parallel. Range and farmland rehabilitation projects, afforestation projects, water development projects and family planning schemes are some of the major options of development intervention in the area and in other areas with similar needs.

The other major area of intervention of secondary importance to the above is dealing with the behavioral aspects of the population. This intervention will have a minimal impact in the absence of development intervention. However in due course of time when positive results of the development intervention are apparent it will become important to deal with attitudinal aspects of the population concerned. Hence institutional intervention to change the pattern of relations from competition to

cooperation will be essential. In line with this awareness creation schemes and forums of cooperation and communication should be launched.

### **9.2.2 Measures of policy reform**

The major area of policy reform is to deal with current legal and administrative elements that are found to aggravate than mitigate the problem of conflict in the area .One of these is lack of clarity & transparency of the tenure system and the issue of regional boundaries. One essential reform in this regard should be a legal reform for recognition of community property, which among other things will enable both communities to be aware of their ownership rights and be able to protect herder grazing areas, farmer grazing areas and forests from being unlawfully possessed and utilized in an unsustainable manner. Once the communities established ownership rights they can determine their forms of use and modes of access to others by adjusting to their needs in situations of relative abundance and scarcity without feeling alienated at any scale.

The other essential reform to be recommended is regarding determining regional boundaries in resource scarce areas where two different user groups interact. Basically rigid borderline demarcation is not a feasible strategy that should be pursued. The kind of boundary arrangement

suggested in this study is an arrangement in the form of establishing a boundary zone than borderline. The essence a boundary zone is essentially having a flexible zone of transition between the farming zone and pastoral production zones where none of the two would establish ownership rights (with the right of exclusion) but will have common access for a specific form of production, which will be livestock grazing. This zone is supposed to cover a relatively larger area of land than a borderline would require and comprises of extra territory of fairly equal amount in both sides of the borderline. The limits of this boundary zone would possibly be farmer private and community holdings and herder community holdings on which both could exercise rights of exclusion. Specific application of this should be subject to detailed study, should be implemented asymmetrically to fit the practical requirements of different areas and require active community participation as well as thorough negotiations. Implementation of this strategy is crucial for avoiding competition and promoting co-production leading to cooperation. In addition the boundary zone, if established, should be an area of focus for development interventions where authorities of the two regions will endow their common resources and efforts. Unlike the border line arrangement, which results in isolation, this arrangement will bring about both communities together and create a sense of sharing a national resource. Therefore this arrangement will have a political gain of serving the objectives of national solidarity and nation building.

### **9.2.3 Efficient structure of conflict resolution**

Establishment of the peace committees in different levels of the federal government structure is one positive achievement that deserves proper recognition. However the peace committees should effectively work to actively involve community members including essential groups like elders, clan chiefs and women. In addition they need to be further strengthened and supported by federal government authorities to effectively accomplish their tasks.

One important measure that needs to be taken in this regard is an active follow up of their activities by the federal authorities. The federal affairs ministry and the federation council should boost their levels of engagement in the area. The federal affairs ministry can assist in the area of capacity building, research and coordination of the activities of the peace committees with other governmental and non-governmental institutions. For instance one area of challenge for the regional authorities has been the obstacle they face in bringing criminals to justice. Some offenders especially some members of the Afar community exploit the advantages of moving between places within and across their region. They also exploit the suitability of banditry way of life in groups without affecting their livelihoods and being able to effectively defend themselves from the poorly equipped regional police force. Such

criminals should be labeled as federal offenders and bringing them to justice should be a federal jurisdiction. Similarly regulating possession and transit of weapons is also a federal jurisdiction, the implementation of which will support the conflict management efforts of the local authorities.

The federation council (House of federation) is a legislative body of government empowered to interpret the constitution and propose necessary legal provisions concerning relations among regions (article 62 of FDRE constitution). Accordingly new regulations addressing the needs of the area should be legislated and brought to force. The council should also initiate studies to reform the existing laws in line with the practical requirements of peace building in the area.

Finally, the task of conflict resolution and peace building requires a concerted national and local efforts, which need to be guided by appropriate policy framework.

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**ANNEX**

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**Questioner for the survey on the causes of Farmer-Herder conflict in North East Ethiopia:**

**The case of *Kewet* woreda of Northeast Shewa.**

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Respondent identification number \_\_\_\_\_ Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Community 1. Amhara 2. Afar 3. Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Woreda \_\_\_\_\_ Peasant Association \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

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**INTRODUCTION:** I am one a student of Addis Ababa University participating in a graduate program in regional and local development studies. As a partial; requirement for the completion of the program I am undertaking a research titled ‘**Causes and consequences of Farmer-herder conflict in Northeast Ethiopia: The case of Kewet woreda in northeast Shewa**’. The purpose of this questioner is to acquire first hand information about the factors of conflict from the population directly affected by the conflict in the area. The result of this study will be used to make policy makers and development planners in the country understand the problem in holistic manner and to apply a more integrated and sustainable conflict resolution mechanisms.

All the questions to be asked are purely for research purpose. Therefore I kindly request you to feel free to give your personal opinion to the best of your knowledge. I would like also to stress that this study is part of the necessary attempt to resolve the issue of conflict in the area and to bring about peaceful co-habitation for sustainable livelihoods. Therefore warm cooperation from your part is required for our mutual objective. Your individual answers will be kept strictly confidential. Your answers will be combined anonymously with all other respondents’ and, therefore, no reference will be made to you in particular.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

### 3. Increasing

3.3. ( if increasing ) what has been the cause

1. Adoption of better utilization pattern
2. Less animals to graze
3. Do not know

3.4. ( if declining) what has been the cause

1. Land degradation
2. More animal population
3. Overtaken by neighboring community
4. Combination of the above \_\_\_\_\_

3.5. What is the condition of water resources (river and wells) over the past years?

1. Has increased in volume
2. Has been constant
3. Declined in volume
4. Declined in quality (polluted)
5. Combination of the above \_\_\_\_\_

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#### 4. INFORMATION ABOUT LAND USE CHANGE

4.1. Is there a trend of converting more of grazing land to cultivation?

1. Yes
2. No

4.2. Is there a trend of converting formerly cultivated land to grazing

1. Yes
2. No

4.3. Has cultivation and grazing been expanded to more of formerly un utilized land?

1. Yes
2. No

4.4. Is there a trend of cultivating certain varieties instead of formerly cultivated land?

1. Yes
2. No

4.5. ( if 'yes' ) what is the cause

1. Land is getting more suitable to the new favorites due to land quality change
2. The new crops are demanded more in the market or household use
3. Other \_\_\_\_\_



1. Strongly believe
2. Believe
3. Strongly disagree
4. Disagree
5. I do not care

7.1. If you agree to the question above explain why\_\_\_\_\_

## 8. INFORMATION ABOUT THE ROLE OF AUTHORITIES ON ALIENATION- COMPETITION

8.1 Has any actions of the local authorities advantaged the neighboring communities

1. Yes
2. No

8.2 ( if yes) which actions\_\_\_\_\_

8.3. Is there any thing the authorities should do to advantage you

1. Yes
2. No

8.4. ( if yes) how\_\_\_\_\_

## 9. INFORMATION ABOUT CONFLICT

9.1. What do you think is has been the cause of conflict in your area

1. Resource scarcity
2. Cultural difference
3. Political difference
4. Other\_\_\_\_\_

9.2. How do you assess the conflict? is it-

1. Moderate and constant
2. Intense and constant
3. Intense and increasing
4. Can not determine

9.3. Do you think conflict will increase in the future?

1. Yes
2. No

9.4. Who is primarily responsible to conflict

1. Your own community
2. Neighboring community
3. Lack of appropriate response of local authorities
4. Other\_\_\_\_\_

9.5 Do you think resolving this conflict is

1. Very simple
2. Simple

3. Very complex
4. Complex

9.6 with regard to conflict resolution how do you assess the role of higher authorities

1. Very insufficient
2. Insufficient
3. Very sufficient
4. Sufficient

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**Thank you very much for your cooperation !**

### **Declaration**

This thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and all source of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

ATKILT DANIEL

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'ATKILT DANIEL', written over a horizontal line.