

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

NATURAL RESOURCE COMPETITION AND
INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN WONDO GENET,
SOUTH-CENTRAL ETHIOPIA

BY

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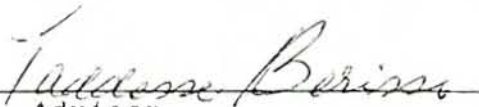
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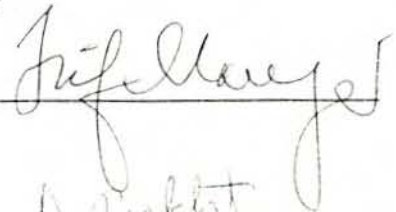
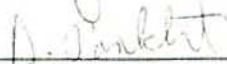
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PREFACE

This thesis deals with natural resource competition and interethnic relations in Wondo Genet, particularly in Wondo Wosha, Awassa *woreda* of South-Central Ethiopia. It tries to analyze the relationship among access rules, scarcity of resources, and the resulting changes of social relations among users. It also investigates the impacts of various institutions established in the area in affecting the competition for resources. The role of government's economic and political policies in altering farmers' access to resources are also discussed.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is an introductory part dealing with statement of the problem, objectives of the study, fieldwork condition, methodology and theoretical orientation. The second chapter describes the geographical location, population and natural resource endowment of the area. The third chapter deals with access rules, economic utilization of the resources and interethnic relations among the various groups before the 1975 land reform. Factors that contributed to the ethnic heterogeneity of the area are discussed here. The fourth chapter covers the Derg period (1974- 1991) and discusses the transformations brought about by the changes in land tenure. It closely examines the factors that intensified resource scarcity and the resulting relationships among the users. Major emphasis is given to the role of ethnicity in the process of competition for scarce resources between the early settled groups and those who came lately. It examines how competition for natural resources and the consequent conflicts between the haves and the have-nots was turned into conflict between the early settlers and the latecomers. In the fifth chapter, developments in ethnic relations and formation of new types of alliances among the groups and the changes brought about by the recurrent ethnic conflicts and scarcity of resources in the social organization and agricultural practices are discussed. The role of the macro level political condition in changing the micro level ethnic relationships is also addressed. The final chapter is a conclusion and summary section.

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ACRONYM

AWDF	Awassa Woreda Department of Finance
CADU	Chillalo Agricultural Development Unit
CSA	Central Statistical Authority
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's evolutionary Democratic Front
ERCShB	Ethiopian Red Cross Society Shashemene Branch
KPA	Kebelle Peasant Association
MFCDO	Mena Family and Community Development Organization
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organization
PPC	Peasant Producer Cooperatives
SNNPR	Southern Nations, nationalities and People's Regional state,
SHWAO	Shashemene Woreda Administration Office
SHWDA	Shashemene Woreda Department of Agriculture
SHWDF	Shashemene Woreda Department of Finance
WPE	Worker's Party of Ethiopia
ZWAO	Ziway Woreda Administration Office

GLOSSARY

<i>awraja</i>	sub-province
<i>belbela</i>	sub-clan among the Oromo
<i>bete-mengist</i>	Royal palace
<i>buden</i>	group
<i>chiqa shum</i>	lower ranking rural resident official
<i>chisegna</i>	tenant
<i>debo</i>	traditional labour exchange method
<i>dawana</i>	communally used land among the Sidama
<i>enset</i>	false banana
<i>gasha</i>	unit of land measurement equivalent to 40 hectares
<i>gebbar</i>	tribute payer
<i>harma</i>	mechanism of social tie formation among the Oromo
<i>jala</i>	friend
<i>kebele</i>	local administration unit
<i>lelleba</i>	fictive ethnic identity formation mechanism among the Oromo
<i>meqenajo</i>	oxen exchange
<i>maderiya</i>	in lieu of salary
<i>neftegna</i>	northerners in the south and their descendants
<i>qelad</i>	unit of land and also refers to land allotment mechanism
<i>qocho</i>	bread prepared from <i>enset</i>

<i>rist</i>	hereditary use right of land
<i>semon</i>	church land
<i>shimagle</i>	elder
<i>siso</i>	one-third
<i>utawa</i>	privately used land among the Sidama
<i>unino qenino</i>	mechanism of social tie formation among the Sidama
<i>wonfel</i>	traditional labour exchange method
<i>woreda</i>	lower level of government administrative unit
<i>wotat geber</i>	young farmer
<i>yeketema demb</i>	urban tradition
<i>yemengist meret</i>	state land
<i>zemachoch</i>	campaigners

ABSTRACT

This thesis describes the competition for agricultural natural resources and the resulting interethnic relations in Wondo Genet, and particularly in Wondo Wosha. The major objective of the study is to examine the factors that create scarcity of natural resources and its impacts on the inter-human, mainly interethnic relations among members of the eight ethnic groups engaged in similar economic activities and its influences on agricultural practices. It also examines the role of different organizations established in the area in aggravating the competition for the resources and the attitude of individual farmers towards them.

The pre-1975 private land tenure system and the availability of rich agricultural natural resources had attracted private commercial agriculture and agro-industry investments and stimulated the migration of people from various areas to Wondo Wosha for better economic opportunities. In addition to the already existing Sidama, Guji and Arsi, the arrival of Kembata, Hadiya, Wolayita, Amhara and Gurage diversified the ethnic composition of the area. The relations between the Sidama and Guji, on the one hand, and the Arsi, on the other, was characterized by hostility and war. Although competition for the rich pasture and water resources of the area was the initial cause of the animosity, cultural factors and the prolonged negative attitude towards each other was equally responsible for the persistent uncordial relations.

Relations between the lately arrived (mainly the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita) and the early settler groups was determined by social, economic and political factors as well as by the types of relations among the early settler groups themselves. The relations among the early and late settler groups have shown remarkable transformations with the changes in the national political system and land tenure. Before the 1975 land reform, their relations were characterized by little economic and social interactions and absence of feeling of competition. The private ownership of land, the unambiguous access rules, the difference in economic occupations and the existence of relatively abundant resources prevented the development of competitive feeling between the two parties. As a result, scarcity of resources and feeling of competitive threat were limited. The limited competition and conflicts over resources were expressed along class lines as ethnicity was ascribed a minor role in resource allocation.

During the Derg period, the organization of the rural people in *kebele* Peasant Associations (KPA) (which is responsible for natural resource allocation and keeping peace and stability), brought the previously aloof groups into close contact and created a feeling of resource competition among them. The previous farm labourers also became settled farmers. The establishment of different organizations, forestation program and the introduction of the Derg agrarian policy intensified the resource scarcity. As competition for resources increased among the people with different origins and ethnic identities, the roles ascribed to ethnicity became significant. In the process of competition ethnicity and ethnic identities were crystallized. In order to avert the competitive threat, the early settlers strongly reacted against the late settlers whom they considered as intruders. To counterbalance the reaction, the latecomers identified their economic and social interests with the political and economic systems of the Derg Government and, consequently, controlled the political power at KPA level. They often used the power to win in the competition for resources, which ultimately created disparities in resource control. The conflicts that arose from resource allocation were expressed in ethnic terms.

The introduction of Mixed Economic Policy in 1990 modified the former rigid access rule and relaxed the tension among users. The new political conditions after the fall of Derg and particularly the establishment of federal states along ethnic and linguistic lines greatly glorified ethnicity and ethnic identities. In the controversy between the Arsi and the Sidama on the regional demarcation of Wondo Wosha, some formerly conflicting groups became allies, while some of an age-old allies stood on opposite sides.

As the interethnic relations among the groups has shown dynamic changes in the different periods, the problem of resource scarcity has also induced changes in the production system. Farmers increasingly shifted to cash crop production, intensive use of irrigation, decreasing fallow land and periods and reducing cattle population.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the statement of the problem, major objectives of the study, fieldwork conditions, methodology of data collection, rationale for the selection of the research area and finally the theoretical orientation for the analysis of the research problem.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In agrarian societies like Ethiopia, peasant farmers' survival is basically dependant upon their access to agricultural natural resources such as arable land, water, forest and other resources which are crucial for agricultural production. Access to these resources is influenced and partly shaped by the ecology, population density, resource potential, land use practice and social organization of the community. Thus, based on these variables the rules for access to resources varies from one extreme of making resource open to all users, irrespective of their locality and/or number, to the other extreme of exercising complete control by limited number of people, such as a family or an individual (Thebaud, 1995; Weinstock, 1986).

The quality and quantity of the resources and the rules of access affect population density, in turn. In areas where population density is high and/or the land is fertile and risk in agricultural production is minimal, ownership of land and access to natural resources are usually complex and competitive. Scarcity often leads to more complex kinds of access rules and causes stronger competition among users. High resource potential, besides being used by small landholder farmers, has the capacity of attracting large-scale private and government investments that could further aggravate the competition for natural resources.

Farmers respond to population pressure and resource scarcity in different forms. These include agricultural intensification, rural-urban migration, off-farm rural income and a shift to cash crop production (Ahmed, 1984; Dejene, 19996; Bekure and Singh, 1996 et al.). It is obvious that, besides these responses, scarcity of resources also shapes inter-human relationships. As individuals or groups endeavour to satisfy their own resource needs at the expense of others, previously established social relations would be affected in one way or another.

The competition for scarce resources could lead to conflict that can be expressed in different ways and at different levels. It can occur between individuals, groups, or between individuals and the

community. In areas where different ethnic groups co-reside and exploit the same scarce resources, there is high possibility that the conflict which arises over resource competition can be expressed in ethnic terms and affect inter-ethnic relations.

Ethnicity like any other means of social organization could be manipulated to satisfy individual or groups' needs. Since "it comes out of the world of interaction, competition, and conflict among people as they attempt to survive and prosper" (Newman, 1978:105), it can possibly be used to mobilize group action for personal or group political, social and economic interests.

In areas where different ethnic groups co-reside and compete for similar scarce resources, the relation between them will be changed. "Changes in the relation between ethnic groups over access to resources can produce conflicts and ultimate shifts in the reversals in the power relations between them" (Cohen, 1978:391). The shift to unequal relations is more pronounced when membership of certain ethnic group significantly provides access to scarce resources.

In Ethiopia, where population increase is about 3% per annum at a national level, and where more than 80 ethnic groups are said to live, the problems of resource deterioration and competition among groups are evident. When this competition culminates into conflict, especially in multi-ethnic areas, it has tremendous ecological, social, political and economic consequences.

In response to resource scarcity, farmers' behavioral changes in their inter-human relation has a great impact on their interaction with the environment and production process. Accordingly, any effort targeted to address environmental problems and/or peasant production is hardly sustainable unless it gives due attention to the dynamic changes of inter-human relations resulting from resource competition.

On the basis of this premise, the study had investigated how competition for scarce natural resources affects inter-group relationship. If it does, in what circumstances will it manifest itself in ethnic terms? What are the practical factors that determine individuals access to agricultural natural resources in areas such as Wondo Genet where different ethnic groups live together and exploit similar scarce resources?

The study also investigated the impact of the competition and the subsequent conflict on the economic organization of the farmers. Since the number of governmental projects and institutions in Wondo Genet is larger in comparison to its geographical area, the study will attempt to investigate their impacts on resource competition and conflict.

1.2 MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following general and specific objectives:

1.2.1 General objective:-

The impacts of population pressure, resource scarcity and ecological crisis are often seen in the human-environment relation. Little attention was given to the behavioral changes in the inter-human relations. The general objective of this study is, therefore, to examine the impacts of resource competition on the inter-human relations, specifically on inter-ethnic relations.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

1. To examine the relationship among different ethnic groups living in the area in relation to competition for natural resources and to explore the major factors that influence and shape access to natural resources.
2. To investigate the impacts of external factors such as migration, market expansion and particularly the establishment of various Government institutions and projects in aggravating the competition for and the conflict over agricultural natural resources in the area.
3. To examine the response of farmers towards the external forces that compete for resources.
4. To assess the impacts of competition and conflicts over rights of access to natural resources and the role of political changes on the people's social relationships and production strategies.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As competition for scarce natural resources shapes inter-human relations, and leads to social, economic, political and environmental changes, the study will be significant at the following general and specific levels.

At a specific level: -

- i. As an ethnographic work, it will contribute to the limited literature on the multi-ethnic community of Wondo Genet.
- ii. The results of the study can help to understand the causes of past social clashes in the area and assist in finding solutions for the peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups.
- iii. It is also significant in analyzing the Government's role in influencing individual farmers' access to resources and affecting inter-ethnic relations.

At a general level: -

- i. As a result of the tradition developed in the field, most research concerning natural resource competition and management have been carried out in the northern part of the country, especially in the drought prone areas and among the nomadic pastoralists. Only a few studies have been conducted on the topic among settled farmers in less drought-prone areas of the South. Thus, the study will contribute to the limited studies carried out on natural resource competition and ethnic relations in the southern central part of the country.
- ii. It may also serve as a base for comparative studies on the topic in the future.

1.4 FIELDWORK SITUATION AND DATA COLLECTION

The data for this thesis was collected in two phases. The first phase lasted for 35 days (from July 27 1998 to August 31, 1998), while the second phase was carried out for 30 days (from December 2, 1998 to December 31, 1998). Obtaining official research permission, a preliminary survey of the study area, selection and interviewing of key informants and locating archival materials were the major activities in the first phase.

Interviewing was the major method employed to collect information both during the first and second phases. In interviewing informants both semi-structured and unstructured questions were used. The semi structured questions were used mostly in interviewing representatives of organizations and KPAs leaders, while the unstructured (also often informal in approach) were used to interview other key informants. Key informants were selected from all groups to obtain balanced information. Representatives of all the organizations in the area were interviewed. Case study was the other method used to collect data. To illustrate the past events in relation with

resource competition and conflict, different cases of incidents and armed conflicts between ethnic groups were investigated in detail.

In the second phase, in addition to collection of more qualitative data, a survey was conducted on a selected sample households. As it was difficult to include all the four KPAs in the sample unit, Wosha Soyama and Gotu Onoma were selected for their contrasting features in ethnic composition, land holding, soil fertility and social relations. In Wosha Soyama, ethnic heterogeneity, population density and land fragmentation are high while in Gotu Onoma they are relatively low. Soil fertility and agricultural productivity are also high Wosha Soyama. Average land holding of a household is larger in Gotu Onoma than the other KPAs. Gotu Onoma is predominantly inhabited by Arsi Oromo while in Wosha Soyama the Sidama constitute the single largest group. Thus, Wosha Soyama can represent the remaining two KPAs (Wotera Kechema and Shesha Kekele) whereas Gotu Onoma represents itself.

Five percent of the total household population was selected using systematic sampling method, in which every ethnic group is represented according to its percentage to the total population. In the survey it was tried to gather information about household demography, land holdings, land arrangements, irrigation practises, cattle and pasture.

When I crosscheck the information collected in the survey with the data found from the Awassa *woreda* Department of Finance, mainly about household land holdings and land transactions, I found many discrepancies to use it for quantitative analysis. Close examination revealed later that for certain reasons the people interviewed did not responde truly to some of the questions dealing with land holdings and transactions. Even if land transactions have prevailed in the area since 1990, they are still illegal and people are hesitant to tell about their holdings acquired through transactions. Expectation of future land redistribution also led some of those who have more than average holding of land to take some actions such as distributing the lands among family members who are actually living in the same household.

Attempts were made to gather relevant written materials from archives of various government offices. In some cases very important data are found from some archives like the archive of Shashemene *Woreda* Administration Office and the former South Shewa Regional Administration Office in Ziway. A very important report of a survey held in the four KPAs in 1990 was found from the archive of the Shashemene *woreda* Adminstration Office. The survey was conducted by a special committee established by the ad hoc committee set-up to solve the violent armed conflict

between the different ethnic groups in July 1990. The Special Committee was composed of experts from various organization (Regional and *Woreda* Administration Offices, Departments of Agriculture, *Woreda* Health Office, Shashemene Town municipality etc.) and respective KPAs leaders. The survey provided valuable qualitative data about the population density, ethnic composition, effects of the different organizations and related displacements of farmers. Thus, it is intensively used to analyze land holdings, resource competition and interethnic relations during the Derg period. However, still other valuable material are believed to have been destroyed during the 1991 change of government and later in the new organization of administrative regions.

The data obtained from the Shashemene and Awassa *woreda* Departments of Finance are very important in giving information about the number of KPA members of each *kebele* for different periods. Moreover, the current list of KPA members and their farm holding is found to be more reliable to use it for qualitative analysis and it helped to examine the dynamic changes in landholding within a decade. To know land holding along ethnic lines, the list of farmers found from the Finance Departments were categorized along their ethnic identities using key informants from each group.

In the field I had some advantages and constraints which influenced the data collection process. Soon after settling in the area, I tried to gather information using the standard anthropological research methods and my fair prior knowledge about the area. I was living in the town of Shashemene for long years and used to make frequent visits to the area. This gave me a chance to have a prior knowledge about the area. Moreover, the repeated visit I made to the area during 1990 while I was working in the former South Shewa Administrative Region enriched my knowledge about the area and some of the problems in relation with resource utilization and interethnic relations. It also created good opportunities to be acquainted with some people living in the area, who later helped me to identify key informants. However, in spite of my enthusiasm and prior information, initially it was difficult to gather information about ethnicity, ethnic relations and resource allocation.

The first factor for the initial difficulty was the very nature of the research topic and the type of information I was trying to collect. In Wondo Genet where members of about eight ethnic groups live together, the relationships among them dramatically oscillate from harmonious relationships to conflicts and armed violence. The people of the area experienced successive ethnic armed conflicts since 1990. The current political system which gives a right of self administration to ethnic groups and the related controversy over the regional demarcation of Wondo Genet made the relation

among the various ethnic groups delicate. The successive social conflicts and the subsequent ethnically charged atmosphere made the attempt to collect information about ethnic relations more arduous. The new political condition and the resulting social significances ascribed to ethnic identities and ethnicity made the topic more sensitive. Some of my informants initially associated me with the Government or some political organizations and refrained from expressing their real feelings. Moreover, the conflict between the two major ethnic groups (Arsi and Sidama) in the nearby areas, such as Guguma and Shalo, made the atmosphere in Wondo Wosha more tense. The cumulative effect of these factors at the beginning made my informants uneasy to talk about ethnicity and interethnic relations and made the attempt to gather information difficult.

The other related sub-topic of the research which deals with resource allocations was equally sensitive to obtain information. Conflicts among ethnic groups in the past over access to land made the issue more delicate. Information about informal land transactions were usually kept secret. Consequently I was forced to spend some days without actually doing anything.

In spite of the initial set backs, I gradually gained the confidence of my informants and succeeded to collect the necessary information. My prior information about the area has helped me to familiarizing my self with the area, to now where to look for relevant information and identify key informants easily. My acquaintances also assisted me to approach and win the confidence of the informants. In interviewing informants, I was usually start with the less sensitive questions (often about past history of the area, resource endowments etc.), then gradually move to more sensitive ones after obtaining their trust.

1.5 RATIONALE FOR THE SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH SITE

Wondo Wosha was selected for this research for various reasons. The first factor is the existence of a very high population density the area. According to the 1994 National Population and Housing Census, the total population of the area was 21,157 with 3,173 households (CSA, 1994). That will give the area a crude population density of about 588 persons per square km., which is 16 and 61 percent higher than the population densities of the *woreda* and the Region to which it belongs.

The other factor for the selection of the research site is the existence of eight ethnic groups. Since members of these groups are interacting among themselves and exploit similar resources, the area is

more conducive to study interethnic relationships that are influenced by resource use pattern and scarcity.

The area is also both an ethnic boundary (between the Arsi Oromo and Sidama) and political boundary (between Oromiya and Souther Nations and Nationalities Regions). The two ethnic groups had a conflicting relationships since their encounter. The intensity of the conflict vary in different periods and conditions. This would give good opportunity to investigate the interethnic relations in light of the political changes that took place in the past years and past relation between the groups.

The existence of various governmental and developmental institutions and projects that compete for the available resources made the area more interesting for the research. Furthermore, the impact of the former Derg government's political and economic policies, mainly agrarian policies, are more noticeable, especially in the endeavour to create model PPCs in the area. Thus, Wondo Wosha is conducive to study the impacts of the policies on resource utilization and individual's access to natural resources and the consequent effects on interhuman relationships in the area. The combination of the above mentioned factors made Wondo Genet suitable to study natural resource competition and interethnic relations.

1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.6.1 Resource Scarcity and Competition

Natural resources can be defined as those components that are found naturally and provide goods and services for human satisfaction and utility. Based on their nature of existence and sustainability, natural resources can be categorized as stock resources and flow resources. Stock resources are those whose physical quantity is limited and the amount utilized at one time will influence the quantity left for future use. They are exhaustible and nonrenewable. Flow resources, on the contrary, are not limited in quantity and they are renewable and non-exhaustible. They can support people and of being endure indefinitely. Nevertheless, for some flow resources, there are certain critical zones below which sustainability of them is impossible (Gibbs and Bromley, 1989; Grima and Berkes, 1989).

Natural resources, with labour and capital, are one of the three major components of agricultural

production (Grima and Berkes, 1989; Barlett, 1980). The ecology of a given area largely determines the availability and productivity of the natural resources, which, in turn, conditions the population density of the area. Thus, in semi-arid areas where land fertility is low, water is scarce and the chance of improving production is little, population density is usually low. While in areas where soil fertility and production output are high and the risk of production failure is minimal, population density is usually high (Rosenzweig et al., 1984).

Concerning population increase, the Malthusian and Boserup theories of population are the two major yet opposite views. Malthus argued that the incompatible increase of population and agricultural productivity would create disturbance and, thus, population increase needs checks. In contrast to this, Boserup argued that population increase is a means to enhance productivity and development by introducing agricultural intensification, invention⁷ and use of more sophisticated technology (Weinstock, 1986; Rosenzweig et al., 1984). However, both theories agree that the increase of population density puts pressure on agricultural resources in a given area.

Access to natural resources is determined by tenure systems that govern ownership and utilization of the resources. It has a close relationship with productivity of the resources, systems of production and population density. In better productive and/or dense populated areas, ownership and access to natural resources are often complex and competitive, and often leads to intensification of agricultural production.

Brown and Podolefsky (1976) indicated the close relationship between population density, agricultural intensity and land tenure. While noticing the absence of correlation between dispersed settlement and high agricultural intensity, they found a very strong correlation between individual ownership of land on the one hand and agricultural intensity and high population density on the other. However, they argued that there is no direct relationship between land tenure and population density, but they are related indirectly through agricultural intensity (Brown and Podolefsky, 1976). This means, population density *per se* does not directly affect land tenure, but it affects the tenure system by inducing changes in agricultural production systems. Therefore, population density, agricultural intensity and local land tenure practices are often mutually associated.

On the other hand, while acknowledging the importance of population density, Mitchell (1991) stresses on population pressure as one of the underlying forces behind social changes in general and systems of agricultural production in particular. Population density refers to simple people-land ratios in a given geographical area, whereas population pressure is an aspect of the entire

relationship between population on the one hand and resources base and production systems on the other.

Population growth is one of the factors that initiates population pressure in a given geographical area. Population increase, both by natural growth and migration, augments population density per unit of land. Since population pressure refers to the intensity of the pressure on the resource base and the economic potential of the area, population growth may not necessarily lead to population pressure as long as the resource base can support the increasing population without incurring pressure. The level of technology used also determines the intensity of population pressure on a resource base. Adopting better technology can increase the carrying capacity of the area and accommodate the growing population (Mitchell, 1991).

The second factor attributed as the cause of population pressure by Mitchell is squeeze on natural resources, systems of production and distribution. Economic and political factors that condition the adequacy of people-land ratio can alter the relationship between population and economic resources and cause population pressure without actual population growth. Environmental degradation can also create stress on the available resources, decreases output per unit of resources and, consequently, exacerbates population pressure. On the contrary, a high degree of agricultural intensification may increase the carrying capacity of the resource base and accommodate more people in a given area (Mitchell, 1991).

Increasing population pressure and the need for more resources would cause resource scarcity and lead to competition among users. In a condition of limited supply, the increased demand for resources, would inevitably lead to "problems such as diminished per capita consumption, decreased returns for production effort, increased opportunity costs of procurement, or depletion and degradation of the resource base" (Ferguson, 1984:55).

Scarcity of resources would also ultimately bring changes in tenure. Weinstock defined tenure as "a system of interpersonal and intergroup relationships through which man's relationships with part of his environment is mediated" (1986:175). Consequently, there are a number of rules, which define individuals' right to land and related resources. Depending on ecology, population density, land use practices and the social organization of a given society, tenure varies from place to place and from society to society. It ranges from one extreme of making a resource open to all users, irrespective of localities and/or number, to the other extreme of restricted ownership in which an individual or a household enjoys an absolute control. Changes in tenure systems alter the access rules. In a

condition of increasing scarcity, the access rules would be more complex (Thebaud, 1995; Dessalegn, 1984).

National and micro level political and economic conditions and various state policies could further affect individuals' access to natural resources and may aggravate scarcity and intensify the competition for them (Dessalegn, 1993, 1994; Gizachew, 1994). In Ethiopia, although the 1975 land reform had nationalized all rural lands, abolished tenancy and gave "equal" access right to all farmers, lack of legal mechanisms to ascertain a farmer's ownership of his/her land resulted in high degree of tenure insecurity. The agrarian policy of the Derg government, which was targeted to establish socialist relation of production in rural areas, had tremendous impacts on farmers' access to land and production decisions. The establishment of State Farms and Tea and Coffee Development schemes had displaced a number of farmers from their holdings and increased the pressure on the remaining resources. Similarly, the State and Community forest developments in some areas had increased resource scarcity, mainly land, and intensified the resulting competition for arable land (Dessalegn, 1993; Gizachew, 1994; Yibeltal, 1994).

Likewise, the establishment of Peasant Producers' Cooperatives (PPC) and Villagization programmes had adverse consequences on farmers by increasing resource scarcity and decreasing productivity. To implement the agrarian policy, individual farmers' best land were taken and valuable resources, such as water points and pasture, were given to PPCs which had been much less efficient than private farmers. The evicted farmers were usually relocated in marginal lands or made landless. (Dessalegn, 1994; Beyene, 1992).

Therefore, it is possible to argue that population pressure created by increase of population density and/or diminishing of resource bases, causes resource scarcity. When it is coupled with unfavourable government policies, the scarcity would be acute and competition would be more fierce.

Farmers respond to problems of resource scarcity in various ways. In time of increasing resource scarcity and high competition for them, some literature indicates that people would opt for one or a combination of two major categories of responses (Ferguson, 1988; Price, 1984; Brown and Podolefsky, 1974). The first and perhaps the simplest response is expansion to new territories that are capable of supporting the increasing population. However, it is not always easy to increase territories for various reasons. First and foremost, shortage of economically feasible 'free' territory hinders the visibility of this alternative. Even when it exists, the expansion is conditioned by the

economic and social costs of opening it. As population pressure becomes more acute, the opening cost of new territories will increase, while the return from them decreases (Price, 1984).

The second alternative is intensification of production with the available resources and trying to get maximum returns. Increasing cropping intensity, decreasing fallow land and period, applying more labour per unit of land, use of high price and high yield variety of crops, shifting to cash crop production are some the common responses to increasing resource scarcity (Ahmad, 1984; Bilsborrow, 1987; Dejene, 1996). However, this option is also subject to ecological, economic and social factors and may also have adverse environmental as well as social consequences. What is adaptive for an individual might be maladaptive to the environment or the community and may ultimately worsen the problem (Bennett, 1996).

The types of responses adopted by farmers are largely determined by the intensity of the problem, their standard of living, the potential for use of labour intensively, and availability of other economic opportunities, and above all, the ecology of the area (Bilsborrow, 1987).

1.6.2 Competition and Interethnic Relations

Competition for scarce natural resources is a process that shapes the relationships between individuals as well as groups. Jibou defined competition as "the process wherein two or more parties strive to achieve scarce goals within a normative framework" (Jibou, 1990:163). It can occur between any users exploiting similar natural resources in a defined area. It may be between individuals, an individual and a community or between groups. Competition at an individual level (intra-group competition) usually weakens the group's solidarity while inter-group competition strengthens the group's unity.

Whether competition at any level leads to conflict or cooperation is largely determined by empirical facts and types of resources strived for. However, the power relationships between the competing groups and the national and micro level political and economic conditions have significant roles in determining the aftermath of the competition. In the absence of proper mechanisms to solve the problem of resource scarcity, the process of competition would adversely affect inter-human relationships. Ronald Cohen argued that "the greater the competition for scarce resources (CSR), the greater the potential for and the probability of disputes; the greater the number of disputes, the higher the likelihood of warfare in any particular region" (Cohen, 1984:333)

Jiobu also stresses that "competition, to be competition, must take place within a normative framework. It establishes the implicit and explicit norms, values, rules, and laws that govern the striving. Without the framework, the striving would too easily degenerate into conflict and, possibly violence" (Jiobu, 1990:163-64). Thus, increasing scarcity and competition for resources may encourage actions that violate the existing norms and relations (Ferguson, 1984).

In the absence of proper mechanisms for fair allocation of scarce resources, the competition for them might lead to conflicts that would be expressed in different ways. In areas where members of different ethnic groups coexist and utilize similar resources, there is a high possibility for the competition to be expressed in ethnic terms. It is more pronounced especially when membership to a certain ethnic group significantly provides access to scarce resources (Cohen, 1978).

To understand how ethnicity and ethnic identity are manipulated in the process of resource competition, it is essential to see different views about the nature of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Although there are still notions, specially folk views, which consider any group with shared culture as an ethnic group, the elements that mark ethnic and cultural boundaries are quite different. Cultural differences alone cannot attribute a group an ethnic character. Thus, cultural difference is not a decisive factor for ethnicity.

A review of anthropological literature reviles the persistence of two different and opposite views about the origin, nature and strength of ethnicity and ethnic identity. The first view considers ethnicity as natural, innate and an immutable aspect of human identity. It perceives ethnic identity as unchanging and unchangeable. It acknowledges ethnic sentiments as products of the innate nature of human beings. Ethnic attachments are regarded as special forms of bonds. Ethnic indicators are considered as largely inexplicable and holding superpower and 'non-rational quality'. The primary utility of ethnicity and ethnic identity is considered to be psychological in defining one's self-identity and affiliation with others. Thus, ethnicity and ethnic identity are something to be described, not to be explained. This kind of view is generally known as primordialism (Bank, 1995; Jenkins, 1996; Erikson, 1993; Eller and Coughlan, 1993).

However, within this general view, there are variations on the primordial nature of ethnicity. Richard Thompson categorized primordialist views into two broad categories: those who considered ethnicity as naturally primordial tie and those who consider it as culturally and historically produced primordial tie. The natural primordialist view, which is largely maintained by the socio-biology school, considers ethnicity as "primordial sentiment in a sense that leads one to

search for a natural, genetically based origin for ethnic group sentiments". While the cultural and historical primordialism "implies a theoretical basis for ethnic sentiments that is located in the dialectical interplay between deeply rooted historical ties based on assumed kinship, custom, language, and race" (Thompson, 1989:54).

The other and opposite view of ethnicity is known as 'situationalism' (also called 'circumstantialism'). According to this view, ethnicity is situationally defined and tactically manipulated for certain political, economic or social objectives. Ethnic identities are created by individuals or groups in the processes of achieving certain interests. Since it is considered as a means of advancing interests, people can and do change their ethnic ascriptions depending on their economic, social and political interests. The psychological dimension of ethnicity is given secondary place. As a result, "ethnic identities and ethnic groups are seen to be fluid, to appear, undergo transformation, and disappear in response to changing distributions of resources and other conditions. In the mean time, individuals make back and forth movements across ethnic boundaries" (O'Brian, 1986:899). Unlike the primordialist view, for instrumentalists, ethnicity is something to be explained, rather than described and it focuses on explaining how ethnic groups, ethnic identities and ethnic boundaries are formed and maintained.

One of the main proponents of the situationalism of ethnicity, Abner Cohen argued that it is possible to understand why some ethnic groups vanish while others, with their ethnic identifications, persist. He showed the instrumental function of ethnicity in his work on the Hausa traders of Ibadan and Creoles of Sierra Leone. The Hausa traders were able to monopolize the cattle and kola trade by creating strong ethnic solidarity with the northern people who supplied the commodities. They strengthened the ethnic boundary by embracing a more orthodox sect of Islam, *Tijjaniyya*. Similarly, the Creoles were the political and professional elites of Sierra Leone while they were numerically smaller group. To keep their political and professional privileges, they used ethnicity as an instrument through becoming freemasons. Cohen concluded that, had it not been for the political and economic interests, ethnicity would have not much significance in both cases (Cohen, A quoted in Erikson, 1993 and Bank, 1995).

The dynamic nature of ethnic boundaries invalidates the primordial view of ethnicity. Ethnographic evidences show the fluidity of ethnic identities and ethnic boundaries. They are dually correlated with macro and micro level economic and political processes that include patterns of access to political and economic resources at large, and the internal structure of the groups with the merits they entail to members (Nnoli, 1989; Jenkins, 1996).

In spite of its weaknesses, primordialism, especially cultural and historically produced primordial view of ethnicity, has some impressive notions which suggest caution from discarding it completely. It stresses the strong and enduring bond ethnic identity creates among members based on shared culture. In spite of their fierce opposition to the primordial view of ethnicity, instrumentalists also do not deny the power and stability of ethnic identities and bonds. They also acknowledge the stable effect of ethnicity in emotion and sentiments. While rejecting any form of absolute primordialism, Jenkins remarked that, along with the cultural traits used to define ethnic boundaries (such as language, religion, non-verbal behaviour etc.), the early primary socialization can make ethnic identity a primary social identity and results in deep-rooted ethnic sentiment and feeling of belongingness. Moreover, due to the strong influence of primary socialization, ethnic identity can be acquired as an integral part of selfhood. Thus, "ethnicity may, *under local circumstances*, be characterizable as a primary, if not a primordial, aspect of identity" (original emphasis) (Jenkins, 1996:813). However, no matter how powerful and inflexible it may be, and how strong sentiments it produces, ethnicity is always socially constructed (Jenkins, 1996; Eller and Coughlan, 1993).

On the other hand, the study of ethnicity and ethnic groups has got a new dimension in anthropology and other social sciences after the publication of Barth's introduction in the book *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969). Barth detached ethnicity from the traditional culture oriented approach that regarded ethnicity as an expression of culture and introduced an interactional approach in the analysis of ethnicity and interethnic relations. He indicated that ethnicity is primarily a form of social organization based on ascription and self-ascription. He argued against any attempt to describe ethnic group and ethnic identity in terms of distinct cultural marks. Cultural differences are used by members to mark ethnic distinctiveness. The cultural traits employed can be either values and/or objective earmarks such as language, religion, clothes that can be created or taken from past or even from other people. They can also be changed, replaced or dropped over time. Apart from their use in creating a distinction or marking a boundary across groups, they do not have an analytical value (Barth, 1969; 1994; Roosens, 1989).

The major focus of attention should be, therefore, the subjective element of belongingness and the boundaries between ethnic groups across which personnel are recruited. The focus on "the processes of boundary maintenance quickly showed that ethnic groups and their features are produced under particular interactional, historical, economic and political circumstances" (Barth, 1994:12).

In the interactional approach of ethnicity, ethnic membership is based on ascription and self-ascriptions based on the perception of cultural distinctiveness. The approach confirms that ethnicity and ethnic distinctiveness are not biological, ecological or cultural variables, but an aspect of subjective dichotomization created in the process of interaction. The major goal of researches and theorizing of ethnicity and ethnic relations is, therefore, why and how boundaries are created and maintained (Cohen, 1978; Erikson, 1993). The strength of ethnic boundaries, the intensity of ethnic self-affirmation and ethnic identity depend upon the degree of economic, social and political resources a group possesses and tries to protect (Roosens, 1989:13).

In spite of the increasing interest in ethnic groups, few scholars bothered to define and set out the elements that differentiate ethnic identity and ethnic groups from other forms of social identities and groups. Among those who try to define ethnicity, some took shared culture as the primary criterion for ethnic groups while others stress the ideology of common descent. Still others emphasise shared past history and the feeling of oneness. Abner Cohen took the extreme position by considering the London share brokers as an ethnic group since they are endogamous and share a common identity (Vermeulen and Govers, 1994; Cohen, 1978;).

Michael Brown argues that at least six major criteria should be fulfilled to label a group an ethnic group. Firstly, the group should have a distinct name for itself, which indicates the sufficient development of collective identity. Secondly, there should be a belief among the members in common ancestry and metaphoric or fictive kinship relation. But a conception of genetic tie may not necessarily exist. Thirdly, the existence of shared historical memories, often myths of legend passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. Fourthly, the existence of shared culture used to mark distinctiveness and expressed in both value systems and objective traits such as language, religion, laws, customs, institutions, dress, music, crafts. Fifthly, the attachment of the group to specific territories that may or may not be currently inhabited and; sixthly, the members should have a feeling of common ethnic identity. That is the subjective thinking of oneness and ethnic self-affirmation (Brown, 1997:81-82).

Ethnicity serves many parts of human life. Principally, it has psychological and practical utilities. In the first case, it determines identities and offers individuals psychological security and social roots as members of certain groups and attaches them with others. On the other hand, it has a socio-economic utility in which it serves in structuring social order and in shaping social relations. Ethnicity can also serve as a means for collective action targeted for the benefit of the whole members, or some part of it or even few individuals. It can also have a political dimension. Since

"political action, like economic and cultural activities, is embedded in structures of social relations, some of which are ethnic" in nature (Breton et al., 1990:6). This characteristic of ethnicity enables political leaders to mobilize group members on the ideology of 'sharing common blood' and tradition.

Ethnic identity would be conferred with more than one roles in some particular situations. In certain circumstances, an individual may be given or denied certain advantages by virtue of his/her ethnic identity and, then, ethnic identity may matter more than mere membership to a social group. While in other conditions, ethnic identity may not have material significance and it would be other identities that determine an individual's social position. Thus, in certain societies and circumstances people may assign greater importance to their ethnic identity since it determines their social, political and economic positions. While in other societies and circumstances, depending on the minor role ascribed to it, ethnic identity may have little importance in social interactions (Roosens, 1989:15-16).

There are certain conditions that evoke ethnic identities and mobilize ethnic based collective actions. Ethnicity become more salient especially in the process of competition. "If members of a societal sector that has some potential for ethnic identity are barred from achieving desired ends because of particular sociocultural distinctions, then a potentially salient issue is available for mobilization" (Cohen, 1978:396). To make ethnicity an active means for collective action, it requires leaders to mobilize the members. Nnoli argues that "ethnicity does not exist in a pure form. It is always closely associated with political, juridical, religious and other social views, which constitute its important ingredients as well" (1989:2). Therefore, he insists that any meaningful analysis of ethnicity should attempt to understand an ethnic phenomenon in relation with its interactions with other processes mentioned above.

Since ethnicity is a product of social interaction, it has no existence apart from interethnic relations. The degree of contact and power relations between ethnic groups determine the type of relation between them. Based on this premise, Ronald Cohen set out four types of interethnic relations (Cohen, 1978:389). The first one is called fragmented relation and occurs between groups with equal power relation, but having little or no reason for physical or social interaction. The second type of relation is indirect relationship, and occurs between groups with unequal power relation and having limited contact. Cohen presented the salient trade described in different ethnographies as an example of indirect relationship. Limitation of contact and relative physical isolation hinders the stronger group from dominating the weaker one.

Balanced relationship is the third type and occurs between groups with equal power relationship and frequent interaction. The interacting groups usually live in one area or near each other. It is characterized by symbiosis and homeostatic interactions. The relation between nomadic and agriculturalist groups based on reciprocal trade relation is an example of balanced relation. However, Cohen noted that the existence of symbiotic trade relation at one time does not necessarily imply everlasting equity of power relation between the groups. The relation can be altered through time depending on the factors that change power balance. The fourth and the most commonly observed type of relationship is known as stratified relationship and develops between groups with frequent and high degree of contact, but with asymmetrical power relationships. This type of relationship is produced when specific ethnic groups control access to scarce resources and when group membership significantly determines access to resources. Ethnic stratification is the outcome of this type of relationship (Cohen, 1978:389-91).

1.6.3 Competition and Interethnic Models

There are a number of anthropological models developed to examine interethnic relations in relation to competition. Owing to their relevance to the issue at hand, two of them seem to be worthy to discuss for analyzing the resource competition and interethnic relations in the research area.

The first model for analyzing interethnic relation is the one developed by Frederick Barth (1956, 1969). Barth took ecology and economy as the central variables to analyze interethnic relationship. He explained possible relationship between different ethnic groups living in the same areas in four general principles.

1. The distribution of ethnic groups is controlled not by objective and fixed 'natural area', but by the distribution of specific ecological niches that the group, with its particular economic and political organization, is able to exploit.
2. Different ethnic groups establish themselves in stable co-residence in an area if they exploit different ecological niches, especially if they can establish symbiotic economic relations.
3. If different ethnic groups exploit the same ecological niches fully, the militarily more powerful will normally replace the weaker.
4. If different ethnic groups exploit the same ecological niches but the weaker of them is better able to utilize marginal environments, the groups may co-reside in one area (Barth, 1956 quoted in Weinstock, 1986:180).

Barth's model has an analytical importance due to its emphasis on the relationship between distribution of resources and ethnic groups. It also pays due attention to environmental variables,

economic and military power relationships between competing groups in shaping interethnic relations.

Although the model has strong methodological importance, it pays little attention to the role of the state in governing resource allocation and influencing groups relationships. In his later work Barth also acknowledged the importance of this factor. He insisted on integrating the model which had been "focusing more on dispersed ethnic competition for resources, and the lifestyle commonalties and distinctions it generated" with the new trends that attempt to explain interethnic relation in light of the political power and state structure (Barth, 1994:19).

The second model is the one developed by Robert Jibou (1990). Jibou, after examining the basic commonalties of the various economic theories analyzing racial and ethnic relations in light of resource competition, suggested what he called a 'competitive framework of ethnic relations' to interpret interethnic relations and socioeconomic differences. The framework is based on the assumption that as people are living in a state of finite resources and rewards, scarcity is inevitable. The distribution of the finite resources and rewards would ultimately create different groups and cause social, economic, cultural, political or psychological inequalities among them. Thus, scarcity and the resulting distribution of resources become the basis for organizing society (Jibou, 1990). The basic tenets of the framework are the following.

1. *Competition Produces Ethnicity*. "Neither racial nor ethnic characteristics are important unless meaning is attached to them". The framework assumes that competition is a mechanism of allocating scarce resources and rewards. When resources become more scarce, the competition for them will equally be fierce and there is more possibility for ethnicity to be at the focal point in the process of competition. Thus, "the social meaning of ethnic tags, will rapidly crystallize, forming hard boundaries. The subsequent rejection of people on the basis of ethnicity amounts to excluding them from the competitive process, or to reducing and deflecting their competitive threat. In this sense, competition leads to ethnicity" (Jibou, 1990:182).

2. *The Majority Gains from the Minority*. It asserts that in the atmosphere of overabundance of resources, allocation would not be a problem. But, since resources and rewards are limited, distribution is determined in the process of competition in which the majorities are always the winners. In the US case, the majority- the whites- are constantly the winners at the expense of the non-white minorities. Consequently, the majority vest interest in maintaining ethnic boundaries and inequality.

3. *Competition Produces Ethnic Socioeconomic Differentiation*. "Competition not only leads to ethnicity, but it also produces socioeconomic differentiation along ethnic lines" in which the majority gets the maximum (Jiobu, 1990:182). Nevertheless, the framework notes that ethnic competition is only one of the mechanisms leading to particular form of socioeconomic differentiation. In ethnically homogenous societies, differentiation can occur in the absence of ethnic competition.

4. *Competition Affects Demographic Potential*. The framework states that the boundaries formed as a result of the competition affects group size. In a situation where resources are abundant, group size has no or little significance in shaping interethnic relations and, as a result, boundaries are often soft. Whereas when resources are scarce, the relation of the groups competing for the available resources is affected by their size, and members will have little chance of crossing ethnic boundaries. However, he noted that sometimes the perception of the size of a group has more significance than its actual size. A group defined as large would be perceived as a threat by other competing groups and face negative responses far out of proportion to its actual size (Jiobu, 1990).

Jiobu summarized the framework as follows: "scarcity leads to competition; competition leads to ethnicity; ethnicity leads to inequality; and inequality is socioeconomic status" (Jiobu, 1990:183). Jiobu is aware of some of the implications of the framework. Firstly, he noted that the framework is based on the assumption that there is always scarcity of resources and rewards and, thus, competition is inevitable. In the process of competition, inequality in allocation would occur. This inequality will significantly be expressed along ethnic lines. Thus, the framework does not imply a promising and harmonious relationships between different ethnic groups.

The second and what he called the 'disturbing implication' of the framework is, since it assumes that resources and rewards, specially to attain high socioeconomic statuses, are limited, the attempt to attain these statuses would create fierce competition and unhealthy relationships between ethnic groups (p.185). Hence, it presumes ethnic animosity as an enduring feature of human society.

The framework is very pertinent to analyze interethnic competition and relations in many respects. It acknowledges the importance of power relationship in ascertaining resource allocation, which, in turn, determines socioeconomic inequality among ethnic groups. As Ronald Cohen indicated (1978:389), power relationship between ethnic groups determines the type of relation they develop. Political power has a central role in determining resource allocation. Jiobu showed how political power difference between the whites and the non-whites determined resource allocation. It

presumes that ethnicity become significant only when meanings are attached to it. More importantly, it takes demographic variables into account to explain interethnic relations.

In spite of the framework's major attention to resource competition and allocation, it has some limitations to be applied universally in examining interethnic relations and ethnic socioeconomic inequalities. The assumption that "the majority gains from the minority" may not be always true. Minorities, because of their control of political power, can control and enjoy a lion's share of available resources. The issue of majority/minority should not be always seen in terms of absolute group size but it should be conceived in relation with power differentials. The framework does not also try to deal with the role of past historical relationship between competing groups in shaping their current relationship.

To explain the process of resource competition and interethnic relations in the research area fully, the above mentioned issues should be complemented in the two models discussed above. Both models have some similarities. They are based on interactional approach of ethnicity and presume that ethnicity and ethnic identities are situationally created and maintained. Nevertheless, they also have their own respective limitations to explain the resource competition and interethnic relations in the area. Therefore, there is a need to combine the two to explain resource scarcity, competition and the resulting interethnic relations in Wondo Wosha.

CHAPTER TWO

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Wondo Genet is located in Awassa *woreda*, Sidama Zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR). It covers the area from some 15 km. south of the town of Shashemene, near the Wondo Genet College of Forestry, to Malge Wondo, where the Meat and Vegetable Canning Factory is located (a few km. east of Awassa). In fact, the name Wondo Genet is a relatively recently given name to the area. It was Emperor Haile Sillassie, appreciating the natural beauty and panoramas of the area, who named it Wondo Genet (Wondo- Paradise). Some informants indicate that the area had been called Malge Wondo before it was renamed as Wondo Genet.

Although the area is collectively known as Wondo Genet, it is divided into sub-regions that have climatic, demographic and socio-economic variations. Close to Shashemene is Wondo Wosha, while the town located some 22 km south of Shashemene is called Wondo Kella. Busa, Basha and Malge Wondo are situated in the southern parts of the area. Most parts of Wondo Genet, except Wondo Wosha, had been part of the former Sidamo province under Awassa *woreda*. Wondo Wosha was administered under Shewa province of Shashemene *woreda* and until the 1991 new administrative division, it constituted four of the 81 *kebele* peasant associations (KPAs) of Shashemene *woreda*.

Wondo Wosha is the research area of this study. The name Wosha derived from the small stream that passes through the small town, which is also called Wosha. Wosha, therefore, is the name of the stream, the town and the surrounding area. Although Wondo Wosha is part of the larger Wondo Genet area, it is separated from the adjacent areas by natural and cultural boundaries. In the north, Mount Abaro is the boundary between Wondo Genet and Shashemene (i.e. SNNPR and Oromiya Regions). It also serves as a traditional ethnic boundary between the Arsi Oromo and Sidama. Gerarimo and other chains of hills that stretch to the northern, northwestern and western parts of the region separate Wondo Wosha from the neighbouring Sidama highlands. In the south, the Hallo stream is the boundary between Wondo Wosha and Wondo Kella. In the western side the area adjoins the Arsi dominated Borera and Meddo *kebele* peasant association of Shashemene *woreda*.

Wondo Wosha consists of four KPAs, namely Wosha Soyama, Wotera Kechema, Shesha Kekele and Gotu Onoma. The total area is estimated to be 90 *gasha* (36 sq.km.) that comprises a good deal of uncultivable hillsides, marshy and stony lands. Owing to the favourable climatic conditions and good quality of agricultural natural resources, the area is very conducive for production of cereals and perennial crops as well as animal husbandry.

In pre-1975 period, besides individual farmers, the richness of the natural resources attracted agricultural and agro-industrial investments in the area. After the revolution some of them were appropriated by the state and continued to operate. Currently, there are four major government institutions and a forest project that retain vast plots of land. These are the Wondo Genet College of Forestry, The Essential Oils Research Centre (commonly known as perfume factory), the Wondo Genet Wabi Shebelle Resort Hotel and the branch of former Shashemene-Munessa State Forest Project.

2.2 POPULATION

High population density and a high degree of ethnic heterogeneity are the phenomena that an outsider would observe in Wondo Wosha from the outset. Wondo Wosha has one of the highest population densities in the country. The 1994 Population and Housing Census confirms this fact. The following table shows the population size of the four KPAs of Wondo Wosha.

Table 2.1 Population size of the four KPAs of Wondo Wosha in 1994

Peasant Association	Population size			Number of household	Average hh size
	Total	Male	Female		
Wosha Soyama	7,363	3,883	3,480	1,481	4.97
Shesha Kekele	6,590	3,404	3,186	1,177	5.60
Wotera Kechema	5,452	2,761	2,691	1,139	4.79
Gotu Onoma	1,752	923	829	337	4.65
Total	21,157	10,971	10,186	3,173	4.86

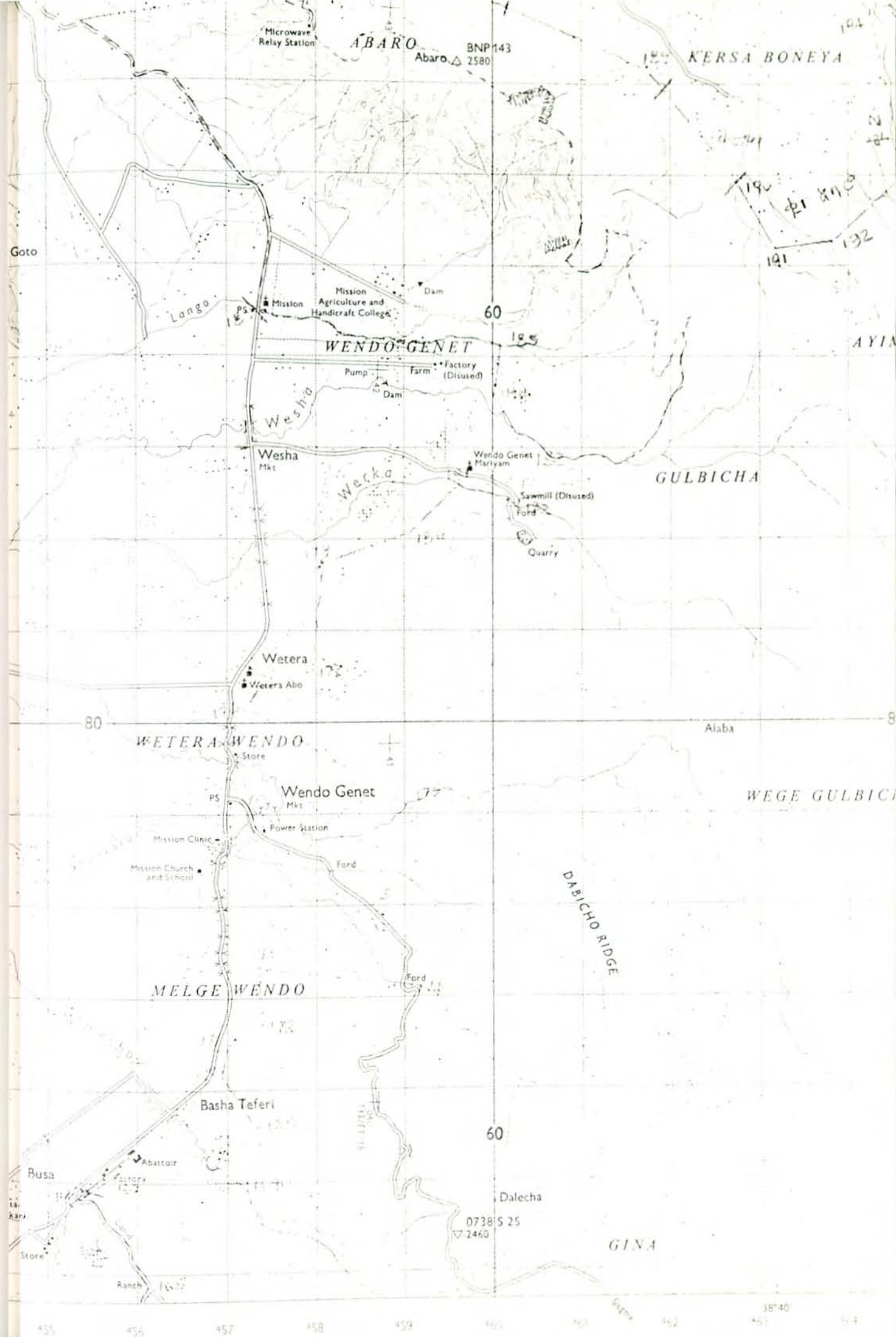
Source: Population and Housing Census, 1994

The population density of the area was 588 persons/sq. Km., which is much higher than the average population densities of the Region (95 persons/sq. Km.), the Zone and *woreda* (357 persons/sq. Km.) to which it belongs (CSA, 1994). Since a considerable size of land is uncultivable and some of the arable lands are held by the institutions, agricultural population density is far higher than the average of the regions and the *woreda*.

Besides natural increase, in migration is the other major factor for the high population density in the area. People had been coming from other areas in search of better economic opportunities since, at least, the beginning of 1950's. This also contributed to the ethnic heterogeneity of the community of the area. The private land tenure system that had thrived in the area, the introduction of cash crop production in the pre-1975 period, and later the Derg agrarian policy, directly or indirectly, contributed to the augmentation of the population density and ethnic heterogeneity of the community. Currently, there are eight major ethnic groups that live and exploit similar agricultural natural resources in the four KPAs. Out of them the Sidama, Guji and Arsi Oromo constitute the majority. The Wolayita, Hadiya, Kembata and Amhara are also significant in number. The number of the Gurage is small and most of them are engaged in other businesses in the town of Wosha.

The fact that the area is an ethnic boundary between Sidama and Arsi Oromo, the long established social interactions between the various ethnic groups, increasing population density and the resulting scarcity of resources (mainly arable land), greatly shape the relationships between members of the various ethnic groups at different periods of time. Moreover, the relations at the local level are influenced by the existing political and economic conditions at a national level. Consequently, the relations among the ethnic groups vary from one extreme of harmonious relations expressed in alliance against other ethnic groups to the other extreme of armed conflicts among themselves.

Owing to the influence of the long established Protestant churches in the area, most of the Sidama, Guji, Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita are Protestant Christians. Most of the Amhara and Gurage are Orthodox Christians, while the Arsi are predominantly Muslims. The Philadelphia Mission in Wondo Kella, the *Edola Hywot Birhan* Church and the *Mekane Yesus* (Evangelical Church) in Wosha are very active. Unlike in some other areas, there is a harmonious relationship and mutual respect among the Protestant and Orthodox Christians.



2.3 NATURAL RESOURCE ENDOWMENTS

Wondo Genet is well endowed with rich, but depleting, agricultural natural resources. The primary asset of the area is the existence of fertile soil suitable for the production of both cereal and perennial crops. Even if the uncultivable lands (marshy, stony and hilly lands) constitute a significant proportion of the total land size, the quality of the remaining arable land is very good, and makes Wondo Genet one of the most productive areas of the region.

However, there are variations in soil fertility among KPAs and within a KPA. Wosha Soyama generally has the best fertile soil while Gotu Onoma is the least of all. Shesha Kekele and Wotera Kechema are moderate. Within Wosha Soyama, the Soyama area (east of the main road) is more fertile than the western part of the KPA. Similarly, in Gotu Onoma the Gotu area is least fertile while the lands adjacent to Wosha Soyama and Shesha Kekele are better in quality. Soil erosion and land degradation are apparent due to the deforestation of the hills. This is more evident in Gotu Onoma partly due to its location at the bottom of Abaro hill.

The other natural asset of the area is its rich water resources. In fact, the existing agricultural production system and economic conditions of Wondo Wosha are made possible by the availability of rich water resources. In addition to the small springs at the bottom of the hills, there are four major streams, namely Wosha, Worqa, Hallo and Lango. The water resources are intensively used for irrigation both by the institutions and individual farmers. The introduction and expansion of commercial agriculture was made possible by the use of irrigation. Moreover, it is used to supply the town of Shashemene with water since 1975/6. To solve the serious water shortage caused by the rapid population increase of the town, the water supply from Wondo Wosha was recently upgraded.

The hot springs are the other natural resources of Wondo Wosha. They are found in Wosha Soyama, just at the bottom of the Gerarimo hill, around the Wabi Shebelle Hotel, and in Gotu Onoma near the College of Forestry. Apart from the ordinary use, the Belle and other small hot springs are used for medical purposes. The Wabi Shebelle Hotel is the major user of the hot spring water in the main hotel at Soyama and at *Belle Fill Wuha*. The hotel uses the natural hot water to serve an open-air bath and swimming pool conveying the water through pipe. Likewise, in Belle a similar indoor service is given. In fact, the hot springs, the open-air bath and the *Belle Fill Wuha* are the main tourist attractions of Wondo Genet.

The forest resource is the other asset of Wondo Wosha. Available documents and oral information indicate that Wondo Wosha had been covered with dense forest only about half a century ago. Mount Abaro and the other chain of hills had been covered by dense forest with economically valuable species. The total forested land of mount Abaro, which stretched further to Shashemene *woreda*, was estimated to be 10,000 hectares (250 *gasha*) in 1940's and had the best *Zigba* (*Podocarpus gracilior*) trees in the country (Russ, 1947:204). The forest resource of Wondo Wosha had been used for timber production since the period of the Italian invasion until recently. Even if there are still some small spots of natural forest in the upper parts of the hills, most parts of it were cleared for agriculture, settlement and timber production. The reforestation schemes of the Wondo Genet College of Forestry and State Forest Project in the past couple of decades had contributed much in recovering the deforested hills, and helped to control soil erosion and land degradation.

Just like the natural forest, the presence of adequate water and fertile soil made Wondo Wosha a suitable place for pasture. Wondo Wosha is said to have been traditional seasonal grazing area for the nearby Sidama, Guji and Arsi Oromo. Besides the traditional animosity among these ethnic groups, competition for pasture and water resource of the area had been the major cause of conflict in the past years. Currently, high population density and the need for more arable land significantly diminished the pasture land. In some KPAs unsuitable plots of land are kept aside for pasture while in others, like Wosha Soyama, there is virtually no common pasture land.

Favourable climatic condition and better infrastructure are the other assets of the area. The region has a wet *woyna dega* climatic condition with an altitude of 1700-1800 m. Using irrigation, farmers can produce two or more times a year with minimal risk of production failure. The road that connects the area with the nearby town of Shashemene enables the people to have easy access to markets and social services. It was constructed before the Italian invasion and later improved by the Imperial state, partly because of the introduction of commercial agriculture and the construction of a recreation centre for members of the royal family in the area. It was later reconstructed anew in 1974/5.

The combination of the above mentioned factors made Wondo Wosha attractive for individual and commercial agriculture, and the establishment of research and socio-economic institutions, which ultimately, resulted in high population density and scarcity of natural resources.

CHAPTER III

LAND TENURE, ACCESS RULES AND ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE PRE-1975 PERIOD

3.1 LAND TENURE IN THE PRE-1975 PERIOD

Due to the agro-ecological variations and specific socio-political developments in different parts of the country, pre-1975 land tenure in Ethiopia significantly vary across regions. However, two major kinds of land tenure systems prevailed in the northern and southern parts of the country. In the northern highlands the *rist* system was the dominant form of land tenure system. In this system land was communally owned by descent groups. Access to land was determined by virtue of individuals' membership to descent groups subject to the payment of tribute, taxes and services to the authorities. The holders of *rist* land had a usufruct right over the land, but could not sell, mortgage or exchange it in any way (Hoben, 1973; Dessalegn, 1993; Bruce et al., 1993).

In the southern part of the country that was put under the political suzerainty of the central government at the end of the last century, the old traditional political, economic and social systems had been dismantled and replaced by new systems imposed by northern state. Accordingly, the existing indigenous, largely communal, systems of tenure were abolished and the state became the sole proprietor of all the land in the occupied areas. The largely "unoccupied" land was declared *yemengist meret* (state land) and the *qelad* system¹ was introduced. The state granted large plots of land to men of influence and power, local notables and traditional leaders to reward their services and loyalty. *Qelad* land could also be bought and became private property. This process introduced in the occupied areas a new kind of tenure equivalent to free holding (Dessalegn, 1984; 1993; McClellen, 1986).

The state also allotted *gebbar* land or labour to the northerner soldiers and civil servants, usually known as *neftegna*, as *maderiya* land (in lieu of salary) with a number of indigenous people on it. The *neftegna* were entitled to exact tribute from the indigenous people both in kind and labour. In less densely populated areas where the indigenous population was too small to grant *gebbar* land, *qelad* land was granted as *maderiya* land. The holders of *maderiya* land either worked themselves

¹*Qelad* is a term for a rope for measurement of land which is about 66-7 meter in length later on the term became synonymous with land measurement and allocation (McClellen, 1986).

or parcelled out the land for those who may work as tenants (sharecropping arrangement). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was also granted large plots of land in various parts of the incorporated areas as *semon* land (Church land).

The holders of *maderiya* and *semon* lands, like that of *rist* land holders, had only a usufruct right, while the free holders had a right to sell, mortgage or exchange the plot of land as long as the government tax was paid. "In the south new settlers were generally faced with two types of land to exploit. (1) Inhabited land already under cultivation, from which immediate benefit could be derived, and (2) underdeveloped, generally pasture or forest, in the northern Ethiopian perception, underpopulated and underutilized" (McClellan, 1986:176-80). The alienation of the indigenous people from the land and the appropriation of the land by the outsiders and some local notables produced what was known as *neflegna-gebbar* (patron-client) system in the south.

In addition to the two major forms of tenure, there were a considerable number of farmers owning and operating small plots by themselves. However, their number and economic significance, compared with the *rist* holders and *gebbar*, were very limited (Bruce et al. 1993). In the eastern, western and southwestern peripheral lowland areas, the social, political and economic developments at the end of the last century had brought little changes to the existing indigenous land tenure systems, and even after the incorporation, previous indigenous land tenure systems had more or less persisted.

Among the Sidama, before the subjugation, there had been two types of land. The first one was called *utawa* on which an individual member of the community had a private use right. The second type of land was called *dawana*. It was usually forest and pasture land, and utilized by all community members collectively. Both types of land belonged to the community and there was no land market. In time of land shortage, a community might change a plot of *dawana* into *utawa* and allocate it to individuals (Betana, 1993). Similarly, among the pastoralist Guji, land had been communal property of the society administrated by *Gada* authority. Thus, before the advent of the *neflegna*, communal ownership of land had been the sole land tenure system among the two societies.

Although the conquest of Sidamo, south of Lake Awassa, was initiated at the beginning of 1889 by one of Minilik's leading generals, *Dejazmach* Beshah Aboye, a full scale conquest was launched in 1881 by *Dejazmach* (later *Ras*) Li'ulseged. He subjugated all the Sidama and Guji clans one after

the other and controlled the whole territory (Berhanu, 1993). In Wondo Wosha, the prevalent conflict between the Arsi and Sidama/Guji and the pastoralist way of life of the surrounding people hindered agricultural settlement in the area well until the Italian period. Thus, Wondo Wosha was regarded as 'unoccupied' land and declared *yemengist meret* (State land). To grant land to institutions, members of military, civil servants and administration, the *qelad* system was introduced in Wondo Genet. The main executor of the *qelad* system was a loyal Wolayitan official named Ondo. With this, private ownership of land was introduced. Before 1975, different forms of land tenure systems used to exist in Wondo Wosha. Based on their holding and status, it is possible to divide the pre-1975 landowners of Wondo Wosha into three.

The first group of landowners was high-ranking officials and notables, mainly members of the royal family. They neither resided in the area nor partook in production in anyway, but retained most of the fertile land. Owing to the increasing importance of commercial agriculture, mainly coffee production and the natural attraction of Wondo Genet as a recreation centre, members of the royal family developed an interest in the area. Dispossessing most of the land granted to a certain official, *Dejazmach* Amberber, they partitioned most of the land among themselves. Most of the Wondo Wosha land was owned by Princess Tenagnework Haile Sillasie, Prince Mekonene Haile Sillasie, Princess Ayda Desta (grand daughter of the Emperor), *Ras* Andargachew Mesay (husband of Princess Ayda), W/ro Konjit Abent (widow of *Ras* Abebe Aregay and aunt of *Ras* Andargachew).

The second group of landowners was those who owned private and *rist* land and were not members of the royal family. Their holdings were moderate in size. Some of them were living in the area and control, partly or fully, the production processes. *Dejazmach* Amberber (who had been holding most of the land before he was dispossessed by the state), his son Captain Demesse (the then director of Sidamo province), Ato Mekuria and his son Teka Mekuria and *Girazmach* Nadew Gebre Tsadiq belonged to this group.

The third group of landowners was institutions. After taking most of the land from *Dejazmach* Amberber and declaring it state property, the Emperor granted some 16 *gasha* in Wotera Kechema KPA to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church as *semon* land (Church land). Similarly, the Emperor granted some 10-14 *gasha* to the philanthropic organization he established (Haile Sillasie I Foundation), which was later sold to the Norwegian Lutheran Mission and on which an Agriculture and Handicraft School was established.

3.2 MODE OF ACCESS AND ECONOMIC UTILIZATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Before the 1975 land reform, there were two major types of modes of land access in Wondo Wosha. These were tenancy and contract (concession) exercised by individual farmers and by entrepreneurs (often foreigners), respectively. Tenancy was a kind of sharecropping arrangement in which a peasant obtained arable land from a landlord and in return gave a portion of the produce and labour service to the landowner. Tenancy was widely common in Wondo Wosha before 1975.

There were two types of tenancy arrangements. The first and common type of arrangement was called *siso*, (one-third) in which the tenant handed over one-third of his produce and gave labour service to the landlord. The other kind of tenancy arrangement was in the form of fixed rent, which was locally known as *yeketema demb* ("urban tradition"), in which the tenant would pay a fixed amount of rent in cash to the landowner annually. The *siso* arrangement was made by poor farmers who could not afford to pay in cash while better-off individuals made arrangements of fixed rent. The amount of the rent in early 1970's was said to be about 20 *birr* per *gasha* annually. Most of the tenants in *siso* terms produced cereals while those in fixed rent produce cash crops as well.

Contract or concession was the second type of mode of access to land and related natural resources. It was typically made by foreign entrepreneurs for commercial agriculture and agro-industries in fertile and irrigatable land. Accordingly, Soyama became the focus of the entrepreneurs. They were engaged in agricultural and agro-industrial operations. In the agricultural sector, coffee was the sole cash crop produced. Coffee had already become the major export item in the national economy as early as the first decades of the 20th century, and there were a number of expatriates engaged in coffee business. Especially after the implementation of the *qelad* system, coffee from Sidamo province to the centre had greatly increased in volume. In the post-Italian period, the volume of coffee trade in the south expanded further. While the state was trying to attract the direction of the coffee trade towards the centre, equally the number of foreign traders and companies engaged in coffee trade also increased (McClellan, 1984; Berhanu, 1993). Therefore, it is believed that the entrepreneurs in Wondo Wosha were motivated by the rewards of coffee production and business.

Accordingly, a number of foreigners, mostly Italians, began coffee production in Wondo Wosha. The availability of privately owned suitable land accessible in contract, and the relatively better

infrastructure of Wondo Wosha made the introduction of commercial coffee production possible. The first to initiate it was a British physician named Dr. Thomson who was affiliated with the Kuyera based Sudan Interior Mission. Initially he had established a water propelled grinding mill on Wosha stream, later he undertook a large coffee plantation in Soyama. Then later, Mr Ottonelli, Mr Olibetto (Italians), Justin Van Billon and his brother (Belgians), Dr. Mulat (an Ethiopian) had been engaged in coffee development.

In the agro-industry sector, there were two major operations. The first one was a sawmill run by a certain Italian named Mr Vincenzo Pettinelli. The mill had been established in Soyama as a branch of the Shashemene Giggessa and Sole Sawmills just after Italian period by an Italian concessionaire, Mario Rappetti. When Mr Rappetti failed to continue the operation, Mr Pettinelli took the concession of the mills including the Wondo Wosha sawmill and Malge Wondo Tomato Canning factory. Later on, he made a contract with Princess Tenagnework Haile Sillasie to supply logs to the Wondo Genet and Shashemene mills from her privately owned forest land at Wondo Genet. The Wondo Genet forest had supplied the mill with logs until it was closed due to the exhaustion of the accessible forest in 1969 (Zerihun, 1988).

The other agro-industrial venture was the production of essential oils. It was first initiated by Mr Justin Van Billon (a Belgian) along with coffee plantation. But later, for unknown reason, he dropped it and it was taken by a French businessman, Mr Hard. He took a large plot of land in contract for cultivating the plants used to produce the oils and to establish a compound for distillation.

The possibility of acquiring farmland for small-scale household and commercial farming, and the increasing job opportunities in the newly opened farms and industries attracted large numbers of people from different directions. In addition to the existing population the arrival of new people rapidly increased the population of Wondo Wosha.

3.3 POPULATION SETTLEMENT

As explained earlier, there are eight ethnic groups in Wondo Wosha. Based on their period of settlement in the area, it is possible to divide them in two categories. The first group constitutes those who settled in the area relatively earlier and claim to be indigenous to Wondo Genet. The Sidama and Guji comprise this group. The second group is those who migrated and settled in the area relatively recently. These are the Wolayita, Hadiya, Kembata, Amhara and Gurage. The case

of the Arsi Oromo is a little bit different and they share some of the features of the two groups. The Arsi have been in the Rift Valley area for long period of time. Most of the rural population of Shashemene are Arsi Oromo and they had been settled in the northern boundary of Wondo Genet for a long time. However, in spite of the geographical proximity of Wondo Wosha to arsi settlement areas, the animosity between the Sidama/Guji and the Arsi, hindered significant Arsi settlement in Wondo Wosha until few decades ago. It is after the Italian period that the Arsi began to settle beyond Gotu area. The Arsi settlement in this direction was expanding and at present the population of Gotu Onoma are predominantly Arsi.

3.3.1 Early Settlers

Even if the Sidama and Guji are the two numerically superior ethnic groups in the area, there is little historical evidences about their settlement in Wondo Genet in particular and their ethnogenesis in general. As to the Sidama, they occupy most of the Sidama Zone of SNNPR that is situated south of Lake Awassa and north of Lake Abaya. They are predominantly agriculturalist with significant number of herds. *Enset* (false banana) is the major crop they produce. The Sidama are divided into 13 clans that trace their origins from two different ancestors. The Malge, Yanesse, Shabadino, Assarado, Hallo, Harbegona, Gabricho and Hadicho claim Bushe as their ancestor, while the Sawola, Qewena, Aleta, Hawela and Harbe trace their origin from Maldiya (Hamer, 1966; Braukamper, 1977).

The limited historical materials on the Sidama offer little and, even inconsistent, information about the origin and ethnogenesis of the Sidama. Various scholars suggested different places as the original localities of the Sidama. One of the leading scholars on the history of the Sidama, John Hamer, based on the tradition he collected from one of his informant, suggested two different localities for the two different ancestors of the Sidama, Bushe and Maldiya. He suggested Ankober (North Shewa) as the original locality of Bushe and Gurage (east of Lake Ziway), or Tigre for Maldiya. Later, he asserts, the two founding fathers joined together and descended southward to Dawa river, and during the period of Oromo expansion of the 16th century they made a northward expansion to occupy their current territory (Hamer, 1970; 1987). Eike Haberland, on the other hand, limited the original territory of the Sidama around Garamba plateau, east of their present territory, and presumed that they made a westward expansion to their presently occupied regions after the 16th century (Haberland, 1963).

Ulrich Braukamper also indicated that the ethnogenesis of the Sidama was a phenomenon of the 16th century. He argues that until the Ahmad Gran War, the Rift Valley had been occupied by various Muslim principalities under the political suzerainty of the central Christian empire and the process of the ethnogenesis of the Sidama was completed about 1650's. Therefore, he concluded, "the true Sidama did not enter history as an ethnic group before the 16th century" (Braukamper, 1977:4).

Sidama writer, Betana Woteso, strongly opposes the idea of two separate original localities for the two Sidama ancestors and limiting the period of the Sidama ethnogenesis to the 16th century. He claims that the Sidama had been a full-fledged, well-developed ethnic group far before the 16th century, even to the Axumite period. He attributed the eastern or southeastern parts of the current Sidama territory as their single original locality (Betana, 1991).

In his historical study of the Sidama and Alabdu Guji Oromo, Berhanu critically reviewed the above mentioned and other literature and concluded that; "it is difficult to decide the exact locality of the original Sidama homeland.... The Sidama traditions preponderantly locate to the northeast and east of their present territory. But, they do not indicate the exact locality of this homeland" (1993:13).

In spite of the differences on the original localities and period of Sidama ethnogenesis, there seems to be a consensus among the various sources and traditions that the Sidama had been located in the eastern parts of their present territory at the 16th century. Berhanu concluded that, "whatever their exact origin might have been, at the beginning of the Oromo expansion, the Sidama are known to have occupied the eastern part of their territory around the Garamba plateau in the upper Ganale river" (Berhanu, 1993:13). From there, they made gradual, but steady, expansion mainly in the western and northwestern direction to reach Lake Awassa.

It is not exactly clear whether Wondo Genet had been part of the Sidama territory at the 16th century or was incorporated in the later period expansion. However, viewing the geographical location and the distance between Wondo Genet and the then Sidama territory, Wondo Genet might not been occupied by the Sidama before their northward expansion. It seems that the Sidama arrived in Wondo Genet and occupied the southern and southeastern parts of the area in the later period of northward expansion which reached Lake Awassa. Some informants indicate that the larger part of Wondo Genet had been called Malge Wondo, after the name of one of the 13 Sidama clans, before it was renamed as Wondo Genet. It is evident that the Sidama had inhabited the south and southeastern highland parts of Wondo Genet before their northward expansion to reach

Wondo Wosha. However, the expansion in this direction had been discouraged by the conflict with the Arsi, and settlement in Wondo Wosha was relatively recent and gradual.

Similarly, the information on the ethnogenesis of the Guji as a whole and their settlement in Wondo Genet is limited. The Guji are part of the Oromo people living in parts of present Sidama and Gedeo Zones of SNNPR and Borena Zone of Oromiya Region. Some Guji remnants are also living in North Omo Zone beyond Lake Abaya. There are considerable numbers of Guji in Wondo Genet. The Guji are divided into seven clans that are categorized into northern and southern confederations. The northern confederation constitutes the Hallo, Wasitu, Otu and Shello, while the southern confederation comprises the Uruga, Mati and Hoku clans.

Different traditions collected by various writers indicate different localities as the cradle of the Guji. One of them suggests the area around the present town of Adola or Kibremengist as the centre of the Guji ancestor, Gujo, and from where his decedents spread into different directions and finally settled in their present territories and established the various clans (Dubā, 1987; Tadecha, 1988). On the other hand, Haberland attributed two separate original territories for the northern and southern Guji clans. He indicated "the area between the Lake Awassa and Langano, which incorporates the regions around Leppisi river, Mount Diro and the town of Shashemene for the northern Guji and Kuyera", while the Harro-Girja area for the southern Guji (Haberland, 1963:175-76 in Berhanu, 1993:3).

Likewise, the oral traditions collected by Berhanu claim the presence of the Guji and Borena Oromo in the Rift Valley which is now inhabited by Arsi Oromo. At or before the Oromo migration in the 16th century, they advanced to the south by following the footsteps of the Borena "whom they regard as their elder brothers" (Berhanu, 1993:4). In his analysis of the various suggestions of the original locality of the Guji, Berhanu rejected the idea of two separate original localities for the northern and southern Guji clans. He argued that the oral traditions of Guji, Arsi and Sidama strongly support the presence of the Guji in the central Rift Valley before the 16th century and their afterward advance to the south. To support his argument, Berhanu presented the Arsi and Sidama traditions. The Arsi tradition stresses that before the coming of the Arsi to their present territory in the Rift Valley, the area had been occupied by the Guji and Hadiya pastoralists. Likewise, the Sidama acknowledge that the area north of Lake Awassa had been the centre of Guji before their advent into the area (Berhanu, 1993:6).

The southward expansion of the Guji from their original territory in the Rift Valley is attributed to the military pressure of the Christian kingdom and Arsi Oromo. In fact, the advent of the Arsi to the Rift Valley is regarded as the major factor not only for the Guji expansion into much of the present Sidama territory, but also for initiating "the western expansion of the Sidama from the upper Ganale river, which probably marked the first encounter between the Guji and Sidama" (Berhanu, 1993:8).

The tradition collected in the field corresponds with Berhanu's conclusion. It states that the Rift Valley area around Leppisi River was the original homeland of the Guji ancestor, Gujo. As to the southward advance and settlement in Wondo Genet and further deep in south, the tradition states that, for unexplained reasons the sons of Gujo advanced from the area around Leppisi River southward and the eldest son had settled in a hilly place in Wondo Genet called Qulloa. The younger brothers had gone further to south in the present territory of the Sidama. They founded the different Guji clans, but all of them had one *qallu*. Later, the expansion of the Sidama from the east pushed them further south into their present territory. Consequently, the Guji in Wondo Genet were detached from their brothers. According to this tradition, the Guji claim to be the first inhabitants not only of Wondo Genet but also parts of the present Sidama territories around Lake Awassa which they called it Adare.

Haberland also indicated various sites serving as Guji political and religious centres along the route from the Rift Valley to the present Guji territory. He pointed the village of Malge Wondo, east of Lake Awassa, as the first site. Moreover, the Guji tradition indicates the village as a place where the first Guji *qallu*, known as Labata, descended from the sky (Haberland, 1966 in Berhanu, 1993). Therefore, historical materials and traditions support the assumption that the Guji had been in Wondo Genet for centuries and their settlement in the area had been prior to their southward advance.

3.3.2 Late Settlers

Migration is one of the factors that increase population density. In Ethiopia, inter regional movements of people and rural spontaneous settlement were common experience of the long history of the country. Wood indicated the operation of two dynamic forces in generating interregional movement and spontaneous agricultural resettlement in the period from 1950's to 1970's in Ethiopia. The first dynamic force was population growth. In the absence of possible economic capacity of the towns to absorb the increasing population and with the limited degree of

agricultural intensification, migration and spontaneous settlement to other rural areas were the main responses to increasing population pressure (Wood, 1977, 1982).

The introduction and expansion of commercial agriculture and the related development of money economy were the second driving forces behind spontaneous agricultural settlement in the period. Moreover, the high price for grains, development of communication (mainly roads), increased knowledge about the diseases that previously hindered settlement and the eviction of farmers to give way for large scale commercial agriculture facilitated migration and spontaneous rural settlement (Wood, 1977; 1989).

The present population pressure and ethnic heterogeneity of Wondo Genet are the results of migration of people from other areas. Apart from the early settler groups mentioned above, the Kembata, Hadiya, Wolayita, Amhara and Gurage had come and settled in the area recently. The land grant to notables as private property and *rist*, and to Orthodox Church as *semon* land and the consequent opportunity for landless people to acquire farmland as *chisegna*, attracted large numbers of people to Wondo Wosha. The Amhara were the first to arrive at Wondo Genet soon after the incorporation of the area by Minilik's force. More Amhara arrived later in search of arable land and settled in Wondo Wosha.

The Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita migrated to Wondo Genet for economic reasons. Their homelands are known for high population pressure and subsequent land shortage. The 1984 population census revealed that the former Kembata and Hadiya *Awraja* was the most densely populated region in the country with 239.2 persons/ sq.km. Wolayita *Awraja* was the second with 216.9 persons/ sq.km. (CSO, 1984). To overcome the problem of agricultural land scarcity, the people of these regions developed a number of adaptive strategies. Agricultural intensification and seasonal and permanent migrations are among the major coping strategies adopted. Yibeltal remarked that, "the seasonal migration by many young Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita peasants to the cotton and sugar cane schemes in the Rift Valley and the coffee plantations in west Ethiopia, as well as great emphasis on coffee production for cash in home areas had become important adaptive strategies by the 1970's" (Yibeltal: 1992:6-7). The availability of privately owned land attracted the land-hungry peoples of these areas to Wondo Wosha to farm as *chisegna*.

The introduction and expansion of commercial agriculture in Wondo Wosha and neighbouring *Woredas* also attracted large numbers of people from various areas. The town of Shashemene was

serving as a rendezvous for these migrant labourers. Plantations in Awassa, Siraro and Arsi Negele were using migrant labour forces hired from Shashemene. Benti, describing the arbitrary system of recruitment, wrote, "when the need [for labourers] arose the farmers or their agents would drive around the town [of Shashemene] calling 'coolie! coolie!' and they would find a large number of migrant labourers competing for recruitment and to get into the tracks" (Benti, 1988:73). He indicated that, partly because of the proximity of their home areas, the majority of the migrant labourers were Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita.

Similarly, the coffee plantations and the agro-industries of Wondo Wosha had brought in many Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita as daily labourers to the area. They were engaged in land clearing, farm preparation, canal cleaning, coffee planting and the like. This group of migrants, unlike the *chiseigna*, were largely seasonal migrants and had firm attachments to their home areas.

Ethnic networks played key roles in promoting migration and settlement in Wondo Wosha. The first successful Kembata and Hadiya brought others from their home areas and provided them with shelter. Some better-off migrants who secured more land on fixed rent terms used to hire their fellow ethnic group members as farm labourer. One of my key informants, Ato Tirkasso, is said to be among the first arrivals, and later sponsored many Kembata and Hadiya from their home area. Ato Tirkasso is a Hadiya by ethnic group and was born in the former Kembata and Hadiya *Awraja*, of Hosaiena. As a teenager he came to Addis Ababa and served as a domestic servant in a family of a foreign medical doctor at Fill Wuha Hospital. After serving the doctor for some years, considering his school age, the doctor sent him to Akaki school in 1948/49. When the doctor left for his country after three years, he made the necessary arrangement for young Tirkasso to continue his education at Kuyera school run by the Seventh Day Adventist Mission. However, by the time he arrived in Kuyera, one term had already elapsed and he was told to come at the beginning of the next year. In the meantime he met Dr Thomson, the head of the Kuyera Hospital under construction, and got a chance to be trained as dresser.

Besides the medical training, he used to come to Wondo Wosha weekly to grind *teff* for the patients in the Hospital at the mill established by Dr Thomson. After completing his training, he was assigned in Wondo Wosha to work both as a medical officer and head operator of the mill. Along with his regular duties, he initiated private farming by taking one *gasha* from Captain Demesse's private land on a fixed rent term. He brought some Hadiya and Kembata to work as labourers in his farm. Later, he added other plots from the private property of Princess Ayda Desta and Ato Teka

Mekuria. Consequently, he brought more labourers, including Wolayita. He also encouraged people from his home area to come to Wondo Wosha and farm as tenants. Later, following those who came first, more migrants began to arrive in search of land and job opportunities. Today Tirkasso is one of the senior respected members of the community.

The Gurage were the last to arrive to Wondo Wosha. They were few in number before the land reform. They came to the area both as labourers and businessmen. Yet the population of Gurage engaged in agriculture was limited.

3.4 INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN PRE-1975 PERIOD

Until the spontaneous settlement of other ethnic groups' members in Wondo Wosha, the area had been sparsely populated. Ethnic interactions were mainly limited among the Sidama, Arsi and Guji. The type of the relations among them varied from bitter hostility, marked by violence and war, to symbiotic relationship strengthened by marriage alliance.

The relationship between the Arsi and Sidama had been characterized by hostility, war and raids since the period of their encounter. The two groups share long boundaries along the borders between Sidama and Arsi/Shewa regions including Wondo Wosha. In fact, among the Oromo the term Sidama was used to designate non-Oromo people and to mean stranger or enemy (Braukamper, 1977; Hamer, 1966).

The crucial factor for the hostile relations between the Sidama and Arsi was economic. There were frequent clashes between them over pasture and water in Wosha area. Cattle raids were common. Apart from the economic reasons, cultural factors also exasperated the conflict. The firmly established tradition of masculinity expressed in killing an enemy man had intensified the animosity. Thus, hostility and absence of settlement in each other's territory had marked the relation between the Sidama and Arsi in Wondo Wosha.

The relations between the Arsi and Guji was also characterized by conflict and war. The two groups belong to the larger Oromo ethnic group, speak the same language and share a number of cultural traits. The Guji traditions collected in the field suggest a genealogical relationship with the Arsi and attribute the hostility to historical incidents that happened between the founders of the two groups. It asserts that the founders of the two groups, Gujo and Arsi, were half-brothers from different mothers. One day, the two mothers quarrelled and fought and their respective sons,

including the later founding fathers, joined in support of their respective mothers. In the fighting, sons from both sides were killed by their respective half brothers. The two mothers, consequently, left for their respective fathers' home with the remaining sons, including Gujo and Arsi. Since then enmity developed between the two groups and they began to kill each other to avenge their brother's blood.

However, competition for economic resources seems to be the major factor for the conflicting relation between the Arsi and Guji. Both groups had been leading a similar life style as pastoralists with little subsistence farming. Wondo Wosha had been their seasonal source of pasture and water for their cattle. The competition for these valuable resources led them into conflict. Moreover, the positive relationship of the Guji with the belligerent enemy of the Arsi, the Sidama, made the relation between the Arsi and Guji more tense. In spite of the unfriendly relationship, however, there were more interactions between Arsi and Guji than the Sidama and Arsi. Cultural and linguistic similarity had promoted the interactions. There were exchanges of women, especially among those living in border areas.

The Sidama-Guji relationship in Wondo Genet was very different from the relationship of the two groups in the south. Their relation in the Sidama hinterland was characterized by bitter hostility and war since their first encounter. Economic factors, mainly the expansion of the Sidama into the domain of the Guji in search of resources, were considered as the initial and major causes of the hostile relationship that had persisted until the beginning of 1940's. The political, social and economic developments of the Post-War period, however, reduced the hostility in favour of mutual understanding and cordial relationship between them (Berhanu, 1993).

In Wondo Genet, however, the relationship between the Sidama and Guji had been peaceful and based on mutual benefit since their initial contact. It is believed that contact between the two groups had started with the northward expansion of the Sidama to Wondo Genet from the highland areas. They developed a relation based on reciprocity in which the agriculturalist Sidama were supplying the Guji with agricultural products, mainly *qocho*, while receiving dairy products from the pastoralist Guji. The increasing interactions resulted in cultural integration and assimilation of the Guji with the Sidama. In some KPAs in the southern and southwestern parts of Wondo Genet, such as Yubo, Arama and Edi, most of the Guji are highly assimilated into Sidama culture and some of them speak only Sidama language. The high degree of interactions also allowed extensive marriage alliance between them. The Guji tradition attributes the positive relationship

between the Sidama and Guji to the genealogical relationship with one of the Sidama clan, Malge, and the marriage alliance with the remaining Sidama clans.

Generally until the 1975 revolution, the Sidama-Arsi and Guji-Arsi relationships were characterized by competition, conflict and war, while the Sidama-Guji relation was more cordial and strengthened by their alliance against their common enemy, the Arsi. However, the degree of animosity between Arsi on the one hand and Sidama and Guji on the other was decreasing with the expansion of increasing settled way of life and the decline of some of traditional values that instigated homicide.

On the other hand, contact between the early settler and latecomer groups was began with the settlement of the latter in Wondo Wosha. In spite of the physical proximity, initially there was limited social interactions. Most of the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita had been seasonal migrants. Cultural, social and linguistic barriers did not allow meaningful interaction between them. The relative abundance of natural resources, clearly defined access rules and difference in way of life and economic occupation hindered the development of competitive feeling and threat between the two groups. lack of items for exchange.

As the number of the latecomers increased and scarcity of resources became apparent, the early settlers began to see the latecomers, mainly the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita, in suspicion. The 1975 Land Reform profoundly changed the interethnic relations with the changes in the rural social organization, access rules and status of the late settler groups.

CHAPTER FOUR

LAND TENURE, ACCESS RULES, RESOURCE SCARCITY AND ETHNIC RELATIONS DURING THE DERG PERIOD.

4.1 THE 1975 LAND REFORM AND CHANGES IN INTERETHNIC RELATIONS

The 1975 land reform is a major landmark in the history of the land tenure systems in Ethiopia. The reform nationalized all the rural land and abolished any form of private ownership of land by individuals or institutions. Land became 'public property of the masses' and all farmers were granted 'equal' usufructuary rights to arable land and related natural resources. Large-scale farms were confiscated and turned into state or cooperative farms or parcelled out and given to individual farmers. The reform also eliminated outsiders, mostly northerners, who controlled the land and, consequently, changed the former socio-economic relations based on *gebbar* system with the obligations the peasant owe to landholders (Dessalegn, 1984).

The reform proclamation allowed for the establishment of a Peasant Association in an area of 800 hectares, called *Kebelle* Peasant Association (KPA). The KPAs were responsible essentially for administering the land, enforcing law and order and tax collection in the *Kebelle* which had been executed by *chiqa shum* (low ranking rural resident official) and other overlapping offices in the past. The KPAs were empowered to establish judicial tribunals and defence squads to arbitrate and enforce the decisions of the tribunal and KPA leadership. Therefore, the 1975 land reform had drastically changed the political, social, economic and administrative structure of the rural community. Membership to KPA became the only formal way of having access to arable land (Dessalegn, 1984; 1993).

Just like in other area, the reform abolished the previous land tenure systems, including all forms of private land ownership, and proclaimed equal access of usufructuary right to all farmers in Wondo Wosha. The area was divided into four KPAs, each being, at least in principle, 20 *gasha*. Initial land distribution was held by the respective KPAS leadership with the assistance of the *Zemachoch* (campaigners of Development Through Cooperation). Family size was taken as the major criterion for the size of land allocated for each household. Most of the *chisegna* were given the plots they were operating before the reform. New claimants and the agricultural labourers were given the land operated by entrepreneurs and *rist* holders.

The initial size of farmlands given to each household varied across KPAs with the smallest in Wosha Soyama (less than one hectare) and the largest in Gotu Onoma (up to two hectares). In fact, since the number of people in the area was limited, there was no serious land shortage at the time. Later, the land held by the Norwegian Mission was distributed to new land claimants and land-hungry farmers in the four KPAs. However, the Government later transferred this land to the Wondo Genet Agriculture and Livestock Development Enterprise.

The dominant feature of ethnic relationships in Wondo Wosha immediately after 1975 was the antagonistic relation between the Arsi Oromo and Sidama. With the collapse of the old political system, the traditional conflict between the two groups relapsed. The Wondo Wosha area was one of the fronts where armed confrontation took place. Later, as the new Government expanded its administrative control and with the dissemination of the revolutionary sentiment that attributed the causes of the conflict to the "shrewd machinery of the counter-revolutionary forces", the conflict gradually subsided.

The land reform, on the other hand, had profoundly changed the relationship between the early and late settlers. The new access rule changed the settlement pattern and economic status of the latecomers. The previously *chisegna* and, more importantly, labourers became small peasant producers settling permanent in Wondo Wosha. Membership to KPAs and similarity of economic occupation and status brought the various previously aloof groups into close contact. Consequently, suspicion and avoidance characterized the relation between the two groups, especially after the gradual increase of the latecomers in number. The latecomers, primarily the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita, were regarded as unwelcome 'intruders' by the early settlers, mainly by the Sidama. In the initial land distribution the early settlers objected to the idea that the latecomers could be KPA members and acquire farmlands. The latecomers, especially the agricultural labourers, were labelled as 'berary' (flayers) implying that they were not permanent residents of the area. These people had come largely as daily labourers less than a decade before and most of them retained strong attachments to their home areas. Thus, the people who considered themselves as 'indigenous' to Wondo Wosha could not tolerate the idea of allowing 'intruders' to own land with equal status.

In spite of the opposition of the early settler groups, the existence of seemingly sufficient land for all groups at that time, and partly with the influence of the *Zemachoch*, the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita were given farmlands and became KPA members. The Sidama were in the forefront of

the opposition because they constituted the largest portion of the population of the area and regarded Wondo Genet as Sidama land. Moreover, the increasing population of the latecomers created a feeling of threat against the Sidama.

Generally speaking, the relations between the early and the late settlers, mainly the Sidama and Kembata/Hadiya during the first few years of the revolution (1975-79/80) were characterized by mistrust and aversion. As the former farm labourers became settled members of KPAs and claimed equal access rights to resources, the early settlers developed a feeling of economic threat and psychological insecurity. With the existing socio-political condition, the power balance was in favour of the early settlers. Since the Government did not yet stretch its political influence down to the KPA level and stiffened its grip on rural land and people, KPA leaders were elected in democratic ways. The people exercised their power to put individuals they needed in office. Consequently, the early settlers with the support of their allies, the Amhara, succeeded to control KPA leadership using their numerical superiority. The latecomers were refrained from being involved in any action that might adversely affect the early settlers in any way. They were also kept out from KPA offices. The development of negative attitudes towards each other and the need to ensure their security led the latecomers to strengthen their ethnic solidarity. They later exploited the political and economic policies of the Derg to reverse the threats imposed on them and to change the balance of power.

4.2 FACTORS THAT INTENSIFIED RESOURCE SCARCITY

As correctly argued by Mitchell (1991), besides population growth, diminishing of natural resources initiated by political, economic and environmental factors causes population pressure which, in turn, aggravates scarcity of resources and the competition for resources. In Ethiopia, although the 1975 land reform entitled every farmer to a right of holding farmland, it lacked the necessary legal frameworks to ascertain farmers' right over their holdings. The reform gave the state a strong hold on rural land and a potential to displace farmers for various reasons. Rural land was also subject to periodic redistribution to accommodate new claimants. This factor resulted in a high degree of tenure insecurity expressed in displacement and dispossession of farmers, which Bruce and his colleagues censured as "the most damaging aspect of the reform" (Bruce et al., 1993:2).

In Wondo Wosha, besides population growth, the Government's decision to reopen some of the former organizations, forest project and the implementation of socialist agrarian policy had aggravated land scarcity. These processes had initiated frequent land redistributions, in which many

farmers either lost part of their holdings or were made absolutely landless. Although the problem was common to all four KPAs, it was more pronounced in Wosha Soyama, where most of the organizations are located.

It is possible to categorize the factors that caused resource scarcity, chiefly land shortage, in the area into two. The first factor comprises organizations and the state forest project that hold vast land and, consequently, reduced the size of arable land available to the farmers as a whole. The second set of factors are the Government's agrarian policy which generated disparity of holdings among the farmers.

4.2.1. Organizations that Reduced the Size of Farmers' arable Land

A. The Essential Oils Research Centre

The Wondo Genet Essential Oils Research Centre is one of the governmental organizations that competes for available natural resources in the area. It is located in Wosha Soyama KPA. It was first established in 1961/2 by a Belgian named Mr Justin Van Billon who had been engaged in a coffee farm as well. Later, it was taken by another foreigner, Mr Hard (French). The availability of privately owned fertile land, the rich water resource, the relatively better road and the geographical closeness of the area to Addis Ababa, where the market was supposed to be, facilitated the establishment of the scheme in Wondo Genet. Some labourers, mainly Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita, were hired to work in the farm and in distillation section. Before the scheme began to produce at its full capacity, the 1975 land reform nationalized the land and, consequently, the scheme was terminated. The farmland occupied by the industry was distributed to farmers including those who were working as labourer in the farm. The compound, including the distiller and other equipments, remained idle until it was reopened after a decade.

Stressing the importance of the industry for the national economy, and partly with the repeated insistence of one of the former worker, in 1985/86 it was reopened as Wondo Genet Essential Oils Production Project under the then National Chemical Corporation (SHWAO). With the closure of the National Chemical Corporation, the project was put under the Ministry of Industry and turned into a research Centre. The Wosha Soyama KPA handed over 80 hectares of land around the compound in the most productive part of the *kebele* by displacing about 50 households. Of the displaced farmers, 21 households remained landless at least until 1990, while most of the others were relocated in marginal lands. The project also affected the neighbouring KPAs, which handed

over land to Wosha Soyama to accommodate the farmers displaced by the project.

B. Wondo Genet Collage of Forestry

The Wondo Genet College of Forestry was established in 1977 in a compound set up by a Norwegian Lutheran Mission as an Agricultural and Handicraft School before the revolution. The Mission had bought the land from Haile Sillasie I Foundation, which had been granted it by the Emperor. When the Mission left Wondo Genet in 1975, the compound, with the materials and buildings, was put under the custody of the Ministry of Agriculture, while most of the farmlands were distributed to landless and land-hungry farmers from the four KPAs. When it was soon reopened as Wondo Genet Agricultural and Livestock Enterprise under the National Livestock Development Enterprise, the KPAs were ordered to take back all the farmers settled in the former Mission farmland to their respective *kebelles*, where they were given farmlands by redistribution. In 1977 the compound (including the farmland) was turned into a Forest Institute under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Wild Life Conservation and Development Authority, to train foresters at a diploma level.

In 1987 the Institute had owned around 540 hectares of land in and around the campus, of which land, 370 hectares (58.5% of the total land) was forest and steep slopes, while 16 hectares (2.9%) was residential area and the remaining 154 hectares (28.5%) was farmland (Erikson and Stern, 1987). Later, the College acquired additional forest land for a demonstration site from the forest land held by the State Forest Development Project. In the farmland the College produces cereals such as maize, *teff* and wheat. It also has a coffee farm, bee section and dairy farms. It uses the weir constructed by the Norwegian Mission for irrigation. The current holdings of the College are estimated to be 16 *gasha* (640 hectares), of which about one fourth is farmland.

C. Wondo Genet Wabi Shebelle Resort Hotel

Wondo Genet Wabi Shebelle Resort Hotel is located in Wosha Soyama KPA. It was first constructed as a country house for members of the royal family to stay in when they came to Wondo Genet for recreation (thus, it is still called *bete mengist*- Royal Palace). After the revolution, the Palace was initially put under the National Resource Development Enterprise. Later, considering the readymade facilities (building, road, hotel equipment, swimming pool etc.), and the natural tourist attractions of Wondo Genet, it was turned into a resort hotel.

In the new reorganization of state hotels, the Wondo Genet Hotel was put under Wabi Shebelle Hotels Administration Enterprise. With the gradual increase of visitors, the Hotel initiated an upgrading project in 1984. The project included construction of additional guest rooms, restaurant and bar, swimming pool and, more importantly, developing a large garden and woodlot around the Hotel. To make the project feasible, the Hotel required an additional 42 hectares of land in the most productive parts of the *kebele*, near the source of the irrigation water. The Government issued an order to the concerned parties, including the Wosha Soyama KPA, to hand over the land to the hotel by relocating the people on it to other areas. The Hotel was instructed to pay compensation for the houses and perennial crops of the farmers.

Accordingly, in 1985 the houses and perennial crops of 33 farmers were estimated by experts at a total of *birr* 26,422.10. In spite of their fierce resistance, 15 farmers were forced to take compensation and settled in other, mostly marshy, lands. The remaining 18 farmers declined to leave their houses and farmlands on the pretext of the smallness of the compensation for their properties. The KPA was also reluctant to enforce the order partly due to the acute land shortage to relocate the farmers. Some of these farmers had been displaced more than once by other factors (PPC, state forest project, and villagization) before they finally settled in the land now demanded by the Hotel. Later, as the Hotel failed to protect the land to which it paid compensation, additional farmers displaced by villagization, PPC and state forest project began to reside on it.

In late 1980's and 1990, encouraged by the indifference of the KPA leadership, the farmers openly defied the government's decision and the claim of the Hotel on the land. More people had settled on the land after the fall of Derg and at present the hotel is confined to its pre-1984 holding.

D. Munessa-Shashemene State Forest Development Project

The other institution that aggravate resource scarcity in the area is the State Forest Development Project which was established with the objective of reforesting the deforested forest resources of the area. Needless to say that, deforestation and soil erosion are serious environmental problems of the country as a whole and Wondo Wosha in particular. The forest resource of Wondo Genet and adjacent mount Abaro were seriously affected both by extensive exploitation by sawmills and clearance for settlement, farmland and for energy.

To save the remaining forest resources and reforest the degraded land, an extensive project had been initiated as early as 1969 in a vast geographical area that included parts of former Shewa, Sidamo and Arsi Administrative Regions. In 1970's the project had been divided into two organs run by Forest and Wild Life Authority and Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU) respectively. The Forest and Wild Life Authority, with the assistance of the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), had been commissioned with the conservation and reforestation programs in and around Shashemene area (including the research area), while CADU was responsible for the activities in Munessa area. In 1983/84 the Authority had made a survey of the Regions and prepared a top map indicating the area of operation (ZWAo).

Lack of clearly set aims, objectives and organizational structure, shortage of trained man power and, above all, absence of coordination between the two organs hindered them from attaining the intended objectives. To solve the above mentioned problems and promote effective forestation and conservation program, the two previously independent organs were merged to form the Munessa-Shashemene State Forest Development Project in July, 1987. The Project had three branches in Shashemene, Gambo and Munessa whose offices were located in Sole, Gambo and Degaga respectively. In 1988/89 it had demarcated 101,539 hectares of land (about 2540 *gasha*) in the former Arsi (59,547 hectares), South Shewa (28,685 hectares) and Sidamo (13,307 hectares) Administrative Regions (ZWAo).

The project had been in severe conflict from the outset with the farmers living in the territories demarcated as an area of operation. In a good part of the land demarcated as forest land, farmers had been settled since long before the land reform. The Shashemene branch had a claim of land in 31 KPAs in former Hayqoch *awraja* (the present Shashemene and Arsi Negele *Woredas*), of which four KPAs were completely under the domain of the project (ZWAo). In addition to open forest and marginal lands, the project had been conducting reforestation program by displacing farmers from lands under cultivation. Local Government officials were often pressurizing KPAs leadership and farmers to cede their lands to the project. The displaced farmers were usually given small and marginal lands by redistribution or were made landless. The acquisition of more land by the project and the subsequent diminishing of farmland in some KPAs often initiated rearrangement of KPA boundaries to offset the highly affected KPAs (Yibeltal, 1992).

It was the Shashemene branch that was responsible for the conservation and reforestation program in Wondo Genet. In Wondo Wosha, the three study KPAs, except Shesha Kekele, were affected by the program directly. The program was begun in the area in 1985/86, before the establishment of

the Munessa Shashemene Project, in Gotu Onoma near Belle in 4 *gasha* (360 hectares) land. Although the land includes hill sides and degraded land, farmers had been settled in some parts of it for many years. To give the land to the project, about 50 farmers were relocated to other parts of the KPA and given farmlands by redistribution.

In Wosha Soyama, the project claimed 9 *gasha* land, which was largely held by farmers. The project was requesting for more land from the farmers annually (SHWDA). Although the requests were partially met by the influence of the *woreda* officials, there were strong complaints both from the KPA leadership and individual farmers. The protest was stronger when the project claimed and took 3 *gasha* land near the Wabi Shebelle hotel, where about 50 households were evicted and relocated mostly to marshy lands or made landless. Although the land is gentle slope and part of the domain of the project on the top map, farmers had been using it for cultivation and pasture for years. The project indirectly affected other KPAs as they repeatedly handed over some hectares of land to Wosha Soyama to alleviate the serious land scarcity caused by the project and other factors to the KPA (SHWAO).

According to the Shashemene *Woreda* Department of Agriculture, in 1990 the project claimed 9 *gasha* (360 hectares) of land in Wotera Kechema KPA, out of which, 300 hectares (66.7%) was used for farming and pasture and only the remaining 16 hectares (16.7% and mostly located mainly in hilly parts of the KPA) was forested land. As the project took some of the land it claimed, the displaced farmers, as usual, were relocated by conducting additional redistribution. The Shesha Kekele KPA was also affected by the project indirectly. It lost a good deal of land to Wosha Soyama by the order of the *woreda* officials to accommodate the displaced farmers in Wosha Soyama (SHWAO).

The project totally retained about 14 to 17 *gasha* (560 to 680 hectares) land that includes, of course, highly deforested and eroded hill sides and hill tops. However, a considerable size of it was (still is) considered as pasture and farmland from the farmers' point of view. Currently the project terminated and its area of operation and the plantation forest in Wondo Wosha are put under the Awassa *Woreda* Department of Agriculture. The operation in the remaining Oromiya Region is continued with a new organizational structure as Munessa-Shashemene Wood Industry Enterprise under Oromiya Region.

The role of community forest development program in aggravating land scarcity, on the contrary, was limited. Even if every KPA was obliged to undertake a community forest development program, the plots assigned to it were usually unproductive and small. The size of the community forest plantations in Wosha Soyama, Shesha Kekele, Wotera Kechema and Gotu Onoma were 8, 5, 2.5 and 10 hectares respectively (SHWDA).

E. Others

In addition to the above mentioned organizations and forest project, Wosha town and two other Non-Governmental organizations retained some land. Even if the size of the land held by the NGOs is relatively small, it has definitely contributed for the diminishing of farmlands in the area.

i. Mana Family and Community Development Organization

Mana Family and Community Development Organization was first established as Edola Family and Community Development Organization with the assistance of World Vision Ethiopia to carry out family and community level development programs. To begin its activities it was given 25 hectares of land in Shesha Kekele KPA by relocating some 25 to 40 farmers. All of them were given farmlands in other areas and compensated for their houses and properties on the land.

In 1987 the organization transferred 15 hectares of land to another NGO, Patmos International, and continued to operate with the remaining 10 hectares. The organization is under Edola Hiywot Birhan Church and gives assistance to poor families by establishing connections with supporting families abroad. It also provides cloth and food aid to poor families and conducts some social services and development activities, such as constructing roads, a weir, running a kindergarten and a grinding mill. Except for the few hectares used for building the church, kindergarten, wood workshop and offices, most of the land is used for farming. Currently it is covered by sugar cane, maize and Eucalyptus trees. The organization was registered in this name as a local NGO in 1995/96.

ii. Patmos International

Patmos International was established by the Finnish Government in July, 1987 with the objective of supporting orphans by establishing an orphanage. To start its operation, the organization had requested 25 hectares of land in Shesha Kekele KPA. However, the KPA leadership, including the

kebele WPE secretary, declined to evict farmers as land scarcity had reached its climax (SHWAO).

Consequently, an agreement was reached between the organization, Edola Family and Community Development Organization and *woreda* administration to give the organization 15 hectares of land from the Edola holding. The orphanage began its operation by collecting orphans from different parts of the country. In addition to the orphanage, it has a training program in embroidery for girls. Part of the 15 hectares of land is used for producing various crops and a small nursery.

iii. The town of Wosha

Wosha is a small town located in Wosha Soyama KPA along the main road to Kella Town. Although information indicates that the town had been established in the 1940's as a small village, it did not grow enough to obtain town status by the Ministry of Urban Development or in the National People and Housing Census. However, the introduction of commercial agriculture and the subsequent flux of people increased its population and size, especially after the land reform. Since it is under Wosha Soyama KPA, the villagization program had once jeopardized its very existence as KPA leaders wanted that the town dwellers settle in villages, a move which was later rejected by higher government officials.

The increasing displacement of farmers, shortage of farmland to be given to new claimants, expansion of cash crop production and increasing migration steadily enlarged the population of the town. Service giving institutions (hotels, shops, cafeteria, wood and metal workshops etc.) are also increasing in number. The ultimate effect of population growth in the town was the gradual expansion of the town domain at the expense of farmlands around it. In 1990 the *woreda* Urban Development and Housing Office tried to demarcate a large area as urban territory. Instructions were given to KPAs not to allow people to plant perennial crops in this territory. The decision was later called off by the *woreda* WPE office, mainly due to the failure of the Urban and Housing Development Office to request "revolutionary guidance" of the Party. Recently the population of the town is growing more and the town is expanding at the expense of farmlands around it.

Table 4.1: Size and type of land held by organizations

Organization	KPA	Land size (in hectare)
Essential Oils Research Centre	Wosha Soyama	80
College of Forestry	Wosha Soyama and Gotu Onoma	360
State Forest	Wosha Soyama Gotu Onoma Wotera Kechema	240
Wabi Shebelle Hotel	Wosha Soyama	42
Mena and Patmos International	Shesha Kekele	25
Total		747

Source: Shashemene *Woreda* Department of Agriculture and Survey made by a special Committee, August, 1990.

4.2.2 Government Agrarian Policy

The agrarian policy of the Derg Government has adversely affected farmers' access to agricultural natural resources. The promotion of Peasant Producers Cooperatives (PPC) and Peasant Service Cooperatives (PSC), state farms, villagization and grain requisitions were the major components of the 'socialization' agenda intended to transform the relations of production in rural areas. The policy had altered previous patterns of resource allocation and led to changes in social relations. It often aggravated land scarcity and decreased productivity (Bruce et al., 1993; Dessalegn, 1994; Beyene, 1992). In Wondo Wosha the impacts of the agrarian policy were clearly observable. The establishment and expansion of PPCs and the implementation of villagization program were the two major components of the policy that influenced resource allocation in the area.

A. Peasant Producers Cooperatives (PPCs)

The attempt to transform the agricultural production in socialist lines was steered in two related directions. The first one was developing and expanding large scale mechanized state farms, and the

other one was organizing rural farmers in Peasant Producers Cooperatives to enable farmers produce collectively (Dessalegn, 1993).

In Wondo Wosha, PPCs were established in all KPAs in August, 1979. Although PPCs were started with few members, limited means of production and land, soon valuable resources, including former community grazing land, water points etc. were reserved for them. In the absence of free land, PPCs expansion was realized by displacing private farmers. The displaced farmers were often relocated in marginal lands or made landless. The attempt to expand PPCs at the expense of private farmers had aggravated the land scarcity and, more importantly, escalated farmers tenure insecurity and, consequently, changed the relations among themselves. The effects of PPCs in resource competition vary across KPAs. It was more pronounced in Wosha Soyama and Shesha Kekele where Regional and *Woreda* Administration and Ministry of Agriculture officials were trying to make them model PPCs for the Region.

The size of the PPCs holding had been steadily increasing, while the share of private farmers was consistently diminishing and the number of landless farmers was increasing. For instance, the Wosha Soyama PPC, established with 47 members and 20 hectares of land, had reached 87 members and 170 hectares of land within four years. Similarly, the Shesha Kekele PPC had expanded to 272 members, 416 hectares of land and 93 oxen from 15 members, 10.5 hectares of land and 10 oxen within a decade (SHWDA). The intensive pressure from the Regional and *Woreda* officials to organize the farmers in PPCs and, particularly the intention to make the two PPCs model cooperatives, made the endeavour to consolidate them in members, land and other resources very intensive and haste. Immense technical, financial and material assistance were given to them.

To discourage private agricultural production in favour of collectivization, membership to PPCs was based on an indirect compulsion. Those who refused to be members were often deprived of equal opportunities. PPCs held more lands beyond their actual production capacity under the existing system of production. Furthermore, the intention of consolidating PPCs' farmlands displaced private farmers adjoining them. The general consequences of the PPCs' expansion were scarcity of farmland, pressure on the remaining available resources, increasing use of marginal land and, ultimately, conflicts between PPCs and private farmers.

B. Villagization

Villagization was the other component of the agrarian policy of the Derg Government. The major objectives of the program were to organize the rural people in villages so as to give them social and economic services easily, enhance extension services, strengthen collective security and promote rational land use and resource conservation. In Shashemene *woreda*, all the peasants of the 81 KPAs (including the 4 KPAs of the research area) were organized into 112 villages (Yibeltal, 1992).

The program was initiated in Wondo Wosha in 1985/86 in all four KPAs. Villages with a capacity of hundreds of households were planned by experts. Each household was allotted with 1000 square meters of land for house making and a backyard plot. Farmers living in scattered villages were forced to abandon their houses and make new ones in the villages. Some farmers also lost their farmlands as the areas were selected for establishing villages. Those who were reluctant to join the newly formed villages were pushed to marginal lands. In addition to aggravating land scarcity, villagization was also a factor for more land redistribution that usually ended up with diminishing the available land for a given household. It was also a basis for nepotism and favouritism. Generally, the program augmented the number of landless farmers, decreased productivity by increasing farm distances and diminishing farm size and quality.

Table 4.2: Number of farmers made landless by PPCs and villagization.

Program	Wosha Soyama	Shesha Kekele	Wotera Kechema	Gotu Onoma	Total
PPC	30	15	17	---	62
Villagization	13	8	6	---	27
Total	43	23	23	---	89

Source: Survey made by a Special Committee, August, 1990.

4.3. RESOURCE COMPETITION AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

Scarcity of resources, as Jiobu (1990) indicated, would lead to competition among users which, in turn, shapes the relationship among the competing parties. Competition for scarce resources leads to twofold developments. Firstly, it often leads to changes in resource use pattern and economic organization at household and community levels. This includes agricultural intensification and search for other means of income generation. Secondly, and in the mean time, it shapes the relationship between competing parties. Whether competition for scarce resources leads to cooperation or conflict is largely determined by the intensity of the problem, the type of resources strived for, the availability of other economic alternatives and the social mechanisms of resource allocation. In Wondo Wosha, competition among different parties has shaped their social relationship. The competition was exhibited in two levels. The first one was between farmers and organizations and the second level is among farmers themselves.

4.3.1 Relations between farmers and Organizations

The relations between farmers and the different organizations in the area varies from close cooperation to open conflict and sporadic encounters. The type of relation an organization develops with the people is largely determined by the type and size of its holding, the way it acquired it, the effects it brought on the lives of the people, the power the organization has or is perceived to have and the economic and social benefits it renders to the people. Based on these factors, it is possible to divide the organizations into two: those which developed relatively harmonious relations and those which have incompatible relations.

The Wondo Genet College of Forestry is one of the organizations that have little problems with the people around it. It was established on land that had been occupied by the Norwegian Mission and it did not displace farmers from their farmland. Those settled on the current College holdings soon after the land reform were displaced by the National Livestock Development Enterprise before the establishment of the College and were given a fair amount of land in their respective KPAs. Moreover, although the size of its holding is very vast, a good portion of it is hillsides and rugged lands that are inconvenient for agricultural activities.

The College also created job opportunities for the people. Currently, it has 235 employees (135

permanent and 100 in contract base). Some of the permanent and most of the contract base workers (largely farm labourers and guards) are from the surrounding areas. Some of them are also KPA members and possess farmlands. They supplement their agricultural income with the earnings they made from the College. The job opportunities created by the College helped to alleviate the problems created by scarcity of land.

The social services the College renders to the community also contribute to develop harmonious relationship between the College and the people around. The College has constructed water pipe line for the people in front of the main gate that solved the problem of travelling long distance to fetch drinking water. Its clinic has been giving emergency medical service to the people. The elementary school in the College campus played a key role in integrating the interests of the College and some portions of the community. Especially after the new educational policy that made the instructional media the Sidama language, many children (mostly non-Sidama) are attending the College elementary school which teaches in Amharic. The positive relationship between the College and the people was observed during the 1992 social turmoil in which the College had been serving as a sanctuary for children, women, old people and unarmed adults. The people also perceive the College as an institution with immense Government interests and attention, and refrained from taking adverse actions for fear of possible Government measures.

In spite of the relative cordial relationship of the College with the people around it, confrontations over the use of resources occasionally occur. A number of people had settled within the domain of the College before the land reform. Some of them were settled by the Norwegian Mission as watchmen and remained there after the establishment of the College. In 1988 the number of the settlers had reached 39, of whom 18 were College employees and transferred workers, and the rest 21 were individual farmers living as cattle herders. None of them were KPA members, and 18 of them were living in partly demolished College houses, while the rest had built their own houses. Even if their number was reduced to 27 the College was unable to dislodge them from its domain until they were relocated by giving them farmlands in Gotu Onoma KPA in 1990.

The other issue that spoils the relationship between of the College and the people is the intrusion of some farmers into the College's domain for pasture. They are pushed by shortage of pasture and repeatedly confronted with the College. However, partly owing to the strict guarding of the College domain, the problem so far is not out of the control of the College.

Mena Family and Community Development Organization and Patmos International, likewise, have

relatively good relationships with the people around them. The size of land they held, compared with others, is relatively small (25 ha.), and the farmers relocated from it were fairly compensated for their properties. Like the College, the two NGOs created job opportunities for some people, mainly in their farming sections. Moreover, the practical humanitarian and developmental activities and social services they render helped them to build a positive images among the people. However, the more important factor for the cordial relationship between the organizations and the people is the religious attachments between them. Mena Family and Community Development Organization is under the Hiywot Birhan Church to which many people adhere.

The relationship of the farmers with the Wabi Shebelle Resort Hotel, Essential Oils Research Centre and State Forest Project are generally characterized by high degree of competition, accusation, mistrust and conflict. The Hotel had requested additional land in a situation where the people had been already suffering from acute land shortage. The requested land was held by farmers since the land reform. Moreover, some of the people on it had been displaced more than once by other factors. On the other hand, the farmers were not convinced about the kind of activities the Hotel wanted to do on the land. Although the Hotel claimed that the land was required to expand the tourist attractions of the area, the farmers complained that it was intended to produce agricultural products (mainly vegetables), so as to supply the Hotel and the nearby Wabi Shebelle branch Hotels (Awassa No.1 and No.2 and Langano Wabi Shebelle Hotels) with the products. The leadership of Wosha Soyama KPA was (still is) supporting the position of the farmers and repeatedly overlooked the order of the *Woreda* officials to relocate the farmers from the requested land. In addition, the Hotel offers little job opportunities and social benefits to the people around it.

The Essential Oils Research Centre also faces similar problems. It had displaced more than 50 households from the farmlands they had been using for more than a decade. Some of them were made landless. The people are barely benefiting from job opportunities the Centre created due to the very low wage the Centre pays compared with other institutions and the labour market (currently it pays 3 *birr* per day for farm labourers). The other factor for developing negative attitudes towards the Centre is that the farmers are not convinced about the priority of the objectives of the Centre. Their suspicion is strengthened by the land use of the Centre. Currently, only half of the 80 hectares of its holding is covered by eucalyptus trees and lemon grass and the remaining land is either idle or used to produce other cereals, such as *teff*, which have nothing to do with oil production.

Intrusion into the centre's farms for pasture is the other main source of conflict between the Centre and the farmers around it. The Centre's officials argue that they are not against farmers use of the grass under the eucalyptus plantation, but complain that the cattle destroy the upper soil with their hooves. To solve the problem, they allowed the workers to cut and take the grass. Moreover, as the chemical nature of the dropped leaves deters good growth of grass, shepherds, who know this from experience, usually pull out the seedlings planted by the Centre. Theft of trees from the plantation is also quite common.

As the problem became more serious after the 1991 political change, the Centre was forced to employ more guards (currently it has about 20 armed guards that constitute one sixth of the total employees). Previously, fear of harsh measures from the *Woreda* Administration and Party Offices restrained farmers from taking actions against the Centre. The Centre officials complain that currently the measures taken by local Government officials against those who intrude into the centre's farms are not swift and effective, and thus, encourages more adverse actions. Diminishing of pasture land seems to be the real reason for the intrusion. The increasing shift from crops such as potatoes, maize and other cereals to sugar cane production has significantly reduced pasture land and forced farmers to encroach into the centre's domain for pasture.

Similarly, the relationship of the State Forest Project with the surrounding farmers is not cordial for the same reasons. However, the endeavour of the project in Gotu Onoma KPA, in Belle area, did not result in indignation from the farmers for two basic reasons. Firstly, the land taken was largely hilly and exposed to severe erosion for years. The farmers living below it were suffering from the flood from the hills and they welcomed any attempt to solve this problem. In Gotu Onoma, land degradation and lack of soil fertility due to erosion, are the major problems of most of the farmers. Secondly, the farmers displaced from the land were given farmlands in other parts of the *kebele* which were generally better in quality than the previous ones.

In Wosha Soyama and Wotera Kechema, where land scarcity is very acute, situations were quite different. In Wosha Soyama the land taken by the project in a village locally known as *Kenterri* (just above the Wabi Shebelle Hotel), had brought serious conflict between farmers and the KPA on one hand and the project on the other. The land was considered by the project as one of the areas threatened by erosion and badly needing forestation, while the people and the KPA still consider it as a land suitable for agriculture and pasture. In one of the many petitions written to the South Shewa Administration Office in 25 June, 1990 the KPA office insisted on the return of the land to the farmers.

--- በክልላችን የሚገኘው የጎረቤት ቀበሌዎችና እንዲሁም ከዚህ በፊት የቀበሌው ሕዝብ ይጠቀምበት የነበረ የእርሻ መሬትና የግጦሽ ቦታ በደን ፕሮጀክት የተከለለ መሆኑ ሲታወቅ የፕሮጀክቱ ክልል የያዘው 9 ጋሻ ስፋት ከቀበሌያችን የተወሰደ መሆኑ ይታወቃል። በዚህ መሠረት በቀበሌው የሚገኘውን የሠፊውን ህዝብ ችግርና ስቃይ በመመልከት የከብቶች መኖር የግጦሽ ቦታ እንዲከለልና መብታችን እንዲጠበቅ የደን ፕሮጀክት ክልል የከለለው አላግባብና ህገወጥ መሆኑ ታውቆ በመጀመሪያ ጊዜ የነበረው የገበሬዎች ይዞታና የከብቶች የግጦሽ መሬት ለቀበሌው የፕሮጀክት ክልል እንዲመልስ ይደረግ ዘንድ (እናመለከታለን)።

.... It is known that the forest project has taken 9 *gasha* farm and pasture land from our *kebele* which was used by our and neighbouring *kebele* farmers. Considering the problems and misery of the people and acknowledging the invalidity and illegality of the demarcation made by the project, we request [the Office] to make the project return the farm and pasture lands to the farmers and ascertain our right to have pasture land.

In another similar petition addressed to the *woreda* WPE, administration offices and Department of agriculture, the KPA complained about the absence of proper consideration for the farmers on the land.

የሙኔሳ ደን ፕሮጀክት ከዋቢ ሸበሌ ሆቴል ክልል በላይ ኬንተሪ ዙርያውን በመስኖ ሊለማ የሚችል ሶስት ጋሻ መሬት ከገበሬዎች ተረከቧል። እርምጃው የመንግሥት ደን ለማልማት ቢሆንም በወቅቱ በነበሩት አመራርና ባለስልጣኖች አማካይነት ሠፊና ጥልቅ ጥናት ሳይደረግበት ከገበሬው እጅ ሊረከብ ችሏል።

The Munessa Forest Project had taken from farmers 3 *gasha* irrigateable land above Wabi Shebelle [Hotel] around *Kenterri*. Even if [the action] was intended to foster state forest, the land was taken from the farmers through the then [Government and *kebele*] leaders and officials without undertaking deep and intensive study (SHWAO).

The land, in the eyes of the people, is regarded as farm and pastures land, not as marginal or degraded land which needs reforestation. The forest project had displaced a number of farmers from their farmland in Wosha Soyama and Wotera Kechema *kebelles* without paying compensation for their properties on the land, and some of them remained landless. The decisions to hand over land to the project were usually made through the interference of the *Woreda* officials who often did not have adequate knowledge and information about the socio-economic conditions of the area.

As a result, the project often encountered challenges from farmers to carry out its operation properly. Moreover, the project neither created significant job opportunities, nor provided any kind of social services to the people.

On the other hand, it should also be noted that all farmers' attitudes and reactions to the organizations discussed above was not homogenous. In fact, some portions of the community are beneficiaries of the job opportunities and social services the organizations are rendering, while others are negatively affected in the ways mentioned above. An organization's relation with the people is largely based on the balance between the advantages and opportunities it created and the number of people who benefited from them on the one hand, and the constraints it imposed and the number of people affected by them on the other.

4.3.2 Relations Among Farmers

It is evident that resource competition influences groups' social relations. Since there are people with similar motives, constraints, aspirations and opportunities, increasing scarcity of valuable resources and the resulting competition would create social groups with fluid boundaries. The levels and types of groups varies with the socio-political conditions in which the competition is taking place. Consequently, competition for resources can be manifested in different forms and levels.

In Wondo Wosha resource competition among farmers during Derg period was manifested mainly between landholders and landless farmers and, PPCs and private farmers. The competitions and the resulting conflicts finally took an ethnic form as a competition between early settlers and latecomers.

A. Relations Between Landholding and Landless People

As land became more scarce and other economic alternatives were not feasible, young people who formed new households were the primary victims of the problem. Young men who reached the age of establishing their own households were registered in every KPA as *wotat gebere* (young farmer) and given farmland during the periodic land redistribution. With the increase of the number of the landless people and diminishing of land, redistribution was abandoned. Parents offering farmlands to their young sons became the only means of acquiring land for construction of a house as well as for farming. Most of the old households had small plots to satisfy their sons needs of land to form their own households. Besides new claimants, displacement had increased the number of landless

and land-hungry farmers in the area. The landless people were forced to depend on other economic alternatives usually with marginal income (daily labour, migration to nearby areas, sharecropping, etc.) or remained dependent of their families and relatives for support.

The uneven distribution of farmland brought conflict between the landholding and landless people. The conflict remained latent until the abolition of the PPCs in 1990. The landless and land hungry farmers had insisted on the participation of elders and private farmers in the distribution of PPC lands among members. But both Government officials and PPC members rejected them. Farmers who had been made landless by PPCs also claimed their previous farmlands. Some of them tried to use force to farm the land left from distribution among PPC members. In the confrontation, some of them were arrested as ring leaders of "unrest among the rural mass".

The 1990 survey indicates that, in addition to the 117 farmers who were made landless by various factors mentioned before, there were 477 households which never owned farmland formally (200 in Wosha Soyama, 142 in Shesha Kekele and 135 in Wotera Kechema). Accordingly, the official number of landless farmers in 1990 was 594. However, it is strongly believed that the figure was much more higher than the official report.

Table 4.3: Number of Landless households in Wondo Wosha in 1990.

KPA	Number of Farmers		Total
	Made landless	Never had land	
Wosha Soya	71	200	271
Shesha Kekele	23	142	165
Wotera Kechema	23	135	158
Gotu Onoma	---	---	---
Total	117	477	594

Source: Survey made by a Special Committee, August, 1990.

B. Between PPCs and Private Farmers

The second form of manifestation of the conflict between the haves and have-nots was between PPCs and private farmers. As mentioned earlier, PPCs were established and expanded by displacing

private farmers, usually from the fertile lands. The holdings of the PPCs were increasing annually while individuals' farmland diminished steadily. For instance, the Wosha Soyama PPC which was established in August 1978 with 47 members and 20 hectares of land had augmented its holding 12.5 times with in 9 years, while the number of members increased only 3.6 times.

Table 4.4: PPC and private farmers landholding of Wosha Soyama and Gotu Onoma KPAs in 1990

KPA		Number of farmers	Total land Holding (in Hectare)	Size of land/ household (in hectare)
Wosha Soyama	PPC	169	250	1.49
	Private	373	252	0.67
Shesha Kekele	PPC	279	416	1.53
	Private	418	272	0.65

Source: Shashemene *Woreda* Department of Agriculture.

The intention of the Government to promote collectivization over individual production induced a number of actions that adversely affected the latter. For instance, the Wosha Soyama PPC had reserved 10 hectares of previous communal grazing land as its oxen pasture land and denied private farmers access to it. The PPC went further to the extent of asking the *woreda* Department of Agriculture to prohibit private farmers from selling their potato production until the PPC sold its own (SHWDA).

The conflict between the PPCs and private farmers remained latent until the policy of Mixed Economy was issued in March 1990. As the policy allowed for the abolition of PPCs with the consensus of their members, all the four PPCs of in the area were abolished soon after. In the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Agriculture on the abolition of PPCs, it was stated that all properties of PPCs, including farmland, would be divided only among members. However, it was asserted that the size of farmland allotted to members would not exceed the average holding of private farmers and the remaining land would be kept aside until further Government instruction is given (ZWAO). In the processes of redistribution of PPC farmlands, private farmers who had lost

farmlands to PPCs were anxious not to let their former holding become private property of other individuals.

In all KPAs, PPC members took fertile and more than the average holdings of private farmers. With this and the relative weakening of Government power in the rural areas by then, the already strained relation between PPCs and private farmers erupted into an open conflict which took an ethnic form.

4.4. THE JULY, 1990 INCIDENT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

In the morning of July 19, 1990, Mesfin Someno, 24, a Sidama from *Beleche* sub-clan, was found dead near his home in Wosha Soyama. He was stabbed in his stomach and uncooked *qocho* and a stick were put into the wound. It was later learnt that he was killed a night before. The deceased was landless and was working at the College of Forestry as a labourer. His family, relatives and the whole clan were furious about his death and began to look for the murderer. At mid-day, a rumour began to circulate that he was murdered by the ex-chairman of the Wosha Soyama KPA, Lefebo Biyero, a Hadiya, and his clique who were deposed from office a day before. The ex-chairman had deep rooted conflict with the deceased family, very close relatives and the sub-clan as he had dispossessed them of their fertile farmland.

The Sidama, mostly the *Beleche*, rushed to the home of Lefebo who rightly suspecting, fled to Shashemene. In the absence of Lefebo, the mob destroyed his house and properties and attacked other Kembata and Hadiya who were regarded as one group and collectively called Kembata. After many houses were burnt to ash and large numbers of people fled, a police force arrived from Shashemene and controlled the turmoil. With the departure of the police force, the next night, the Sidama killed two Kembata and fatally wounded one other. They also set fire to many Kembata and Hadiya houses.

As the conflict became more grave and caused mass panic, an ad hoc committee composed of people from the Region and *woreda* WPE offices, police public security and commissariat was set up. A military force led by the deputy administrator of the Region was deployed in the area. Eleven individuals, including the ex-chairman, his cousin and other ex-PA committee members, were arrested as suspects for the murder of Mesfin. In spite of the heavy military force deployed in the

area, the unrest and burning of houses had continued for five months. Large numbers of people were forced to run away from the area.

The report of the ad hoc committee indicated that until the unrest was put to an end in October 1990 using traditional conflict resolution methods, it cost the life of five Kembata-Hadiya and two other were wounded. 83 houses were burnt and 345 people were made homeless. It also caused the displacement of large numbers of people, mainly Kembata, Hadiya, and some Wolayita from Wondo Wosha (SHWAO). The conflict that lasted for five months, was regarded as an ethnic conflict between the Sidama and the Kembata, which, of course, includes the Hadiya as well.

4.5 FACTORS THAT GAVE THE CONFLICT AN ETHNIC FORM

As indicated above, the conflict which arose from resource competition between the haves and the have-nots was expressed in ethnic terms between the early and late settlers, mainly the Sidama and Kembata-Hadiya. It is important to scrutinize why the conflict took an ethnic form or, in other words, why ethnicity was involved in a conflict caused by resource competition among individuals.

Needless to say ethnicity, besides its psychological utilities, has practical political, economic, social and organizational functions. It is rightly argued that due to the strong influence of primary socialization people are susceptible to ethnic manipulations. However, the role of ethnicity in mobilizing collective actions should be explained in relation with other social processes that take place as people strive to make their living. The strong latent power of ethnicity can be manipulated to mobilize collective actions for certain political, economic or social ends at particular places and times. Ronald Cohen explains that the salient nature of ethnicity makes itself available for collective ethnic mobilization when some group of people who have already developed or have a potential to develop a common ethnic identity are deprived or perceive themselves as deprived from certain economic, social or political resources (Cohen, 1978:396).

Raymond Breton, when explaining this feature of ethnicity, remarked:

In the course of their experience in the larger society, members of ethnic groups pursue certain values and encounter problems and opportunities. The combination of aspirations, problems, and opportunities constitutes the basis of the group's system of interests in relation to the rest of the society. These can be collective phenomena because they are or could be part of the experience of a significant number of members of the group.... If they are sufficiently frequent, if they have a symbolic value for the group, or if the situation of individuals depends to a

significant extent on their group membership, individual problems and opportunities can become collective problems (Breton, 1990:196).

Moreover, other scholars (Jibu,1990; Gonzalez,1989; Durham,1989) indicate that ethnicity flourishes in a condition of resource scarcity and competition. In the processes, 'other' competitors will be considered as a 'threat' (it can be actual or imagined) and initiate an ethnic based reaction. The 'others' also logically take similar measures and solidify their ethnic solidarity. The whole processes will create an ethnically charged atmosphere between the contending groups which would ultimately confirms the first group's perception of the 'other' as a 'threat' and intensifies further ethnic reactions. This would lead to a series of actions and counteractions and possibly an ethnic war that may not be related with the initial causes of antagonism (Durham, 1989; Nnoli, 1989).

Likewise, in Wondo Wosha, certain factors in the process of land allocation and control of power of KPA, gave the conflict an ethnic form as a conflict between the Sidama and the Kembata. The major factors for the expression of the conflict in ethnic terms were, the following.

A. Initial encounter and differential responses to the agrarian policy: The relationship between early and late settlers was characterized by mistrust, avoidance and hatred from the beginning of their close contact in 1975. There was little social contact (through voluntary associations, social tie formation, marriage etc.) between them. In the initial years of the revolution, the early settlers had been generally better off than the latecomers. Most of them held relatively fertile and fair size of farmlands. During this period almost all key KPA posts (chairmen and secretaries of KPA and judiciary tribunal, commander of defence guards) were held by the early settlers. The latecomers refrained from any action that might adversely affect the former. In fact, until 1979 the balance of power, both in terms of land holding and KPA power control, was in favour of the early settlers.

After 1979, the Derg agrarian policy and politicization of rural organizations had changed the *status quo*. Initially membership to PPCs was almost open to all people who were willing to be member. However, there was a difference among farmers in their responses to the call to establish PPCs. Those who were landless or held insufficient and/or marginal land were often the first to respond positively to the endeavour in order to have access to better land. Those who held relatively fertile and large plots resisted it more strongly. The latecomers who held small and/or unproductive farmlands were the first founders of PPCs in all KPAs. Joining the PPC was, therefore, partly a response to resource competition. The possibility of becoming KPA member through membership

to PPCs initiated the arrival of more late settlers to Wosha Wosha. As recently arrived Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita became members and acquired land for house making and backyard farm, most of the early settlers who declined to join PPCs lost their farmlands. The steady expansion of PPCs in every KPA had expropriated the fertile land, mostly held by early settlers. Furthermore, joining the PPC was a response to the social insecurity that prevailed among the latecomers. Generally, the establishment of PPC, while giving the latecomers more security and land, dispossessed the private farmers who were largely early settlers. As most of the PPCs members were latecomers, the conflict between the PPCs and private farmers became a conflict between the early and late settler groups.

The following table shows the ethnic composition of Wosha Soyama and Gotu Onoma KPAs in which the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita constituted 56.2 and 85.4 percent of the total PPC members respectively. The list of the members is found from Shashemene *Woreda* Finance Department and ethnically categorized in the field using key informants.

Table 4.5: Ethnic composition of members of Wosha Soyama and Gotu Onoma PPCs.

No.	Ethnic Group	Wosha Soyama		Gotu Onoma	
		PPC members	Percent	PPC members	Percent
1.	Wolayita	53	31.4	41	54.7
2.	Kembata and Hadiya	42	24.8	23	30.7
3.	Amhara	32	18.9	8	10.7
4.	Sidama	30	17.8	1	1.3
5.	Arsi and Guji Oromo	9	5.3	2	2.6
6.	Gurage	2	1.2	---	---
7.	Tigre	1	0.6	---	---
	Total	169	100	75	100

Source: Shashemene *Woreda* Finance Department offices and field survey.

B. Corruption and nepotism: The system of appointment and lack of proper mechanisms to control the leaders created favourable condition for corruption and favouritism among KPA leaders. In Wosha Soyama, power abuse, corruption and nepotism were rampant. The ex-chairman,

who held power for 11 solid years, was alleged to be despot both at KPA and PPC leadership. He abused his power to favour his kin and supporters and harm his opponents. The villagization program, PPC expansion, national military service, grain requisition and, more importantly, the repeated land redistribution and relocation had been good pretexts to be corrupted and to favour kin and friends. The ad hoc committee established to restore peace and order after the July 1990 conflict charged him in its final report for partiality, bribery, illegal imprisonment and physical harassment against innocent people. He was also blamed for favouring his kin and relatives, he repeatedly evicting private farmers from their lands and houses. Moreover, he was accused of bringing his relatives and kin from other areas and giving them fertile land by relocating previous holders to marshy areas (SHWAO).

Although the injustice and corruption were committed against the whole community, private farmers, mainly some *beleche* sub-clan members, were the primary victims of the atrocity. Thus, the introduction of new Kembata and Hadiya into PPC and KPA, their appropriation of fertile land and the displacement of private farmers in favour of the chairman's relatives and kin gave the conflict an ethnic form.

C. Partisan politics and associating the negative effects of the national political and economic policies with the KPA leadership: As explained before, in the early years of the revolution key KPA posts were held by the early settlers and some Amhara. The politicization of rural organizations and the expansion of the Party (WPE) structure down to the *kebele* level changed the system of power holding in KPAs. Since 1979 loyalty to the political system and the ability to execute the orders and interests of the government became the major criteria to hold key KPA posts.

Thus, increasing number of individuals began to hold KPA offices without the consensus of the mass. The people could hardly depose them from offices. With this new political opportunity, the latecomers were able to have access to key KPA posts and counteract the threat they actually encountered or perceived that they encountered. It was in this way that the Wosha Soyama ex-chairman, Lefebo Biyero, came to power in 1979 and stayed until 1990. The Derg Government had also expanded its party structure down to KPA levels. Grassroot WPE offices had been established and were active in Wosha Soyama and Shesha Kekele KPAs.

The various notorious national policies of the Derg Government (PPC, grain requisite, national

military service, etc.), were implemented by KPA leadership who were regarded as loyal to the Government. The people began to associate the effects of the policies with the KPA leaders who were mostly latecomers. This exacerbated the already hostile relationship between the two parts.

D. Numerical significance of the latecomers: As indicated in the second chapter, the possibility of acquiring land as tenants and increasing job opportunities had attracted large number of Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita to Wondo Wosha. In spite of the opposition of the local people, in the 1975 land distribution they became KPA members and obtained farmlands. They gradually began to increase their population by bringing in their kin. The political condition, especially after 1979, and the establishment of PPCs gave an opportunity for more Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita to come and settle in the area.

Table 4.6: Ethnic composition of KPA members in Wondo Wosha in 1990

No	Ethnic Group	Wosha Soyama	Shesha Kekele	Wotera Kechema	Gotu Onoma	Total	%
1.	Sidama	211	168	182	113	674	31.0
2.	Guji Oromo	23	227	210 ¹	---	460	21.2
3.	Wolayita	82	36	83	94	295	13.6
4.	Hadiya	85	165	---	---	250	11.5
5.	Kembata	44	36	21	86 ²	187	8.6
6.	Arsi Oromo	34	15	---	104	153	7.0
7.	Amhara	45	30	25	23	123	5.7
8.	Gurage	15	13	---	---	28	1.3
9.	Tigre	3	---	---	---	3	0.1
	Total ³	542	690	521	420	2173	100

¹ It includes both the Arsi and Guji Oromo.

² It includes both the Kembata and Hadiya.

³ It does not include the landless and the non-farmers.

Source: Survey made by a Special Committee, August, 1990.

As Jiobu indicated in his competitive framework, group size has great significance in determining the type and intensity of responses a group develops towards other competing groups. As the competing group's size becomes larger, there is a high possibility for the responses to become more fierce. Moreover, the perception about the size of a group has more importance than its actual size in determining the intensity of the responses. A Groups perceived as having larger size will often faces more reaction than its actual size entails (Jiobu, 1990).

Table 4.6 indicates that the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita constituted about one-third (33.7%) of the total members of the four KPAs and about 39 percent (211) of the Wosha Soyama land holding farmers (exactly equal to the number of the Sidama). The Kembata and Hadiya collectively formed the largest group among the latecomers. Consequently, they were regarded as posing serious competitive threats and faced strong indignation from the early settlers.

E. Inequality of Landholding: The cumulative effect of the above mentioned factors was inequality of landholding among farmers in favour of the latecomers. Available data indicates that the disparity was much more pronounced in Wosha Soyama where ethnic heterogeneity and corruption were high. The existing power balance and political condition had concealed the inequality and the resulting conflicts until 1990. When PPCs land was distributed among members, those who had little or no land before joining PPCs became owners of fertile and larger land. As most of the PPCs members were latecomers, they were the beneficiaries of the land redistribution after the abolition of PPCs.

Table 4.7: Number of farmers, their land size in ethnic group in Wosha Soyama.

No	Ethnic Group	Total Number	%	Under half (in ha.)	% of half ha. holders		Made landless*	
					Out of the total half ha. Holders	Out of the eth. group	Number	%
1.	Sidama	211	38.9	95	50.3	45.0	34	47.9
2.	Hadiya	85	15.7	20	10.6	23.2	2	2.8
3.	Wolayita	82	15.1	14	7.4	17.1	10	14.1
4.	Kembata	44	8.1	15	7.9	34.1	2	2.8
5.	Amhara	45	8.3	19	10.1	42.2	16	22.5
6.	Arsi	34	6.3	17	9.0	50.0	6	8.5
7.	Guji	23	4.2	---	---	---	---	---
8.	Gurage	15	2.8	8	4.2	53.3	1	1.4
9.	Tigre	3	0.6	1	0.5	33.3	---	---
	Total	542	100	189	400	-----	71	100

* These are farmers who had been paying tax before they were dispossessed and the figure does not include the landless people.

Source: Survey made by a Special Committee, August, 1990.

A survey held in 1990 indicates that all 189 farmers holding under half hectare were private farmers. Out of them, 48 farmers were fully or partially located in marshy lands. 29 private farmers holding half or more hectare were also located in marshy lands. On the contrary, former PPC members had taken 0.7 hectare each from the former PPC holdings and 140 of them took a total of 23.1 hectares of land above the size decided for them.

There was also disparity in land holding along ethnic lines. The percentage of the Sidama holding under half hectare (45%) was almost two times larger than their Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita counterparts (23.2%). Similarly, the Sidama constituted about half of the farmers dispossessed by different factors. Disparity of land holding, coupled with other factors mentioned above, gave the competition and the conflict between the haves and have-nots an ethnic form as a conflict between the Sidama and Kembata/Hadiya.

The Sidama had represented the early settlers in the confrontation for three major reasons. Firstly, they constituted the single largest group (31%) of the population. Thus, large numbers of Sidama became victims of the problem and of power abuse. Numerical significance also enabled them to respond to the problem (which was regarded as an outsiders domination) more strongly. Secondly, over the past years, they have developed a perception that "the land" belongs to their forefathers and that they have a right to enjoy the resources in their "indigenous land". This perception was partly a result of their long lasting military superiority. Thirdly, they were the group most affected by the corruption and injustice which prevailed in the KPA. As it was the Sidama who initiated the reaction against the latecomers during the initial land distribution, the reaction of the latecomers against the threat they encountered was largely directed against the Sidama.

The Guji, Arsi and some Amhara had collaborated with the Sidama in the attacks against the Kembata and Hadiya. Both sides believe that many non-Sidama were involved in burning and looting of the houses of the Kembata and Hadiya in all the four KPAs. The Kembata and Hadiya are considered to be as one group and named Kembata mainly for the similarities of their language and original homeland. The conflict erupted in Wosha Soyama had expanded to other *kebelles* where inequality of landholding was less prevalent.

Before the July 1990 incident, as the conflict between the ex-chairman of the Wosha Soyama KPA and his clique on the one hand and his opponents on the other became intense and threatened the power of the former in the soon to be held general election. The ex-chairman tried to mobilize support using his ethnic identity. In a letter written to the *Woreda* Administration Office on May 15, 1990 and signed by 24 individuals (including Lefebo himself) who called themselves *yager shimaglewoch* (elders of the area). They accused the Sidama, mainly the *beleche* sub-clan, of instigating ethnic violence against the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita. They named 24 individuals (19 Sidama, 4 Amhara and one Gurage) as ring leaders in the attempt to oust the three groups from Wondo Genet. They urged the Office to keep Lefebo, "who has a good reputation of fighting ethnic discrimination, robbery and theft", as the KPA chairman in the soon to be held election (SHWAO).

Similarly, after the July 19, 1990 incident, both parties tried to manipulate their ethnic identities and gave the conflict an ethnic form. In a petition written to the State Council, WPE Central Political Bureau and Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Kembata and Hadiya claimed to be the first people to open up Wondo Wosha before the revolution as *chisegna*. They also explained that the Sidama

had developed hatred against them because of their "struggle" for the implementation of the agrarian policy and called on the Government to take 'revolutionary measures' against the Sidama (ZWAo).

As a counteraction, the Sidama made a similar appeal to the same authorities accusing the former of killing more than eight Sidama since they monopolized power for a decade. They charged the *woreda* and Regional Administrative and WPE officials of favouring the Kembata and urged the authorities to put Wondo Wosha under Sidamo Administrative Region where they could get fair justice (ZWAo).

As the above actions and counteractions of the two groups indicate, in the absence of fair and proper allocation of scarce resources, the competition for resources had turned into conflict which was expressed in ethnic terms. Both groups realized the importance of controlling political power to have access to resources and ensure social security. As the Sidama were larger in number and suffered from the injustice in an area they regarded as their homeland, ethnicity became seen as a legitimate means of organizing reaction against the "others". The ethnic based reaction of the Sidama also initiated similar responses from the Kembata and Hadiya as well.

Nonetheless, it is impossible to conclude that the conflict had a purely and exclusively ethnic dimension in which all members of an ethnic group were allied together. There were some Kembata and Hadiya opposing the ex-chairman and his clique and allied with the opposite groups. In a petition written to the *woreda* WPE office, Lefebo named 50 individuals as major instigators of unrest. Of them 30 were Sidama, 9 Amhara, 2 Oromo, 1 Gurage, 3 Wolayita and 5 Kembata and Hadiya. This shows that initially the causes of the conflict had not been intrinsically ethnic in nature. Ethnic identity did not exclusively determine an individual's position in the process of conflict. Individuals, in spite of their ethnic identities, may ally with the opponent of their ethnic group.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHANGES IN MODES OF ACCESS AND INTERETHNIC RELATIONS AFTER 1991

5.1 MODEIFICATIONS OF ACCESS RULES

The introduction of a Mixed Economic Policy and the related changes in agrarian policy in March 1990 had abolished some of the elements of the former notorious agrarian policy in rural areas. It policy relaxed the grip of the government on the rural people, and allowed farmers to lease their farmlands temporarily. The prohibition on the use of hired labour was also lifted. This paved the way for the operation of informal mechanisms of access to land (Dessalegn, 1993; 1994).

In Wondo Wosha, in the land redistribution following the abolition of the PPCs, most of the dispossessed farmers were given some amount land from the remaining Cooperatives holdings. Those who were highly affected and located in marshy and stony lands were also given additional land as compensation. However, the landless farmers, mostly the youth who had never possessed land before, were excluded in all KPAs for shortage of arable lands. In general, former PPCs members were still better off than most of the ex-private farmers both in quality and size of farmlands.

The introduction of the Mixed Economic Policy has changed the previous rigid formal way of access to land only through membership to KPAs. With the possibility of transferring land to others in lease and use of hired labour, previous landless farmers began to acquire farmlands in different forms. Contract, sharecropping and transaction are the three forms of land transfer.

Contract is a mechanism in which a landowner transfers his/her use rights on the land to the lessee for fixed amount of money for a specific years. It is commonly used by farmers who are short of capital and/or labour. The two parties make a written agreement that would be ratified by the KPA office. The lessor passes all the rights and obligations on the land (the right to use the land, paying government tax and KPA contributions etc.) to the lessee for the period of the contract. It is the widely claimed type of arrangement in the area, though not practically always true.

Sharecropping is the second form of securing access to farmlands, in which a landless farmer operates a land and hands over some amount of the produce to the landowner in return. Although the amount of the produce given to the landowner varies depending on their agreement, equal sharing between the two parties is quite common. Unlike contract, in sharecropping the landowner

does not relinquish his/her rights and obligations on the land. It is usually preferred by non-farmers who acquired land by purchase but live far from the farm. They often give the land to a trustworthy and industrious farmer in the village to operate it and give a portion of the produce in return.

The third form of access to farmland is through purchase. Although this was illegal both during the Derg period and remain so now, disguised as contract, land transactions prevailed in the area since the Mixed Economic Policy was issued. It is the most prevalent form of land transfer than the others (see details in next sub-topic). The increasing shift to sugar cane production and the possibility of employing hired labour made contract and sharecropping arrangements less significant, especially where irrigation is used. Scarcity of land and the smallness of available farmland for a household restricted the possibility of transferring land in contract. Contract and sharecropping are more common in cereal producing parts of Gotu Onoma, where an average land holding of a household is higher than the other KPAs.

Although land is scarce and sometimes too small to produce household consumption, poor farmers in a serious problem (debt, illness, death etc.) do not have other alternatives except selling their land or a portion of it to acquire money. However, those who leave the area for various reasons are the major source of land for sale. The persistent ethnic conflicts since 1990 have contributed to the expansion of land market. It is more frequent in Wosha Soyama and Shesha Kekele, where soil fertility is high and irrigation is used. Absence of water for irrigation and the social insecurity resulting from by ethnic discontent have reduced the magnitude of land transaction in Gotu Onoma. The existence of land market contributed to the further increase of KPA members in most *kebelles*.

5.2 DYNAMICS IN ETHNIC RELATIONS AND ETHNIC ALLIANCES AFTER 1991

As mentioned earlier, the relationship between the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita on the one hand and early settlers on the other during the Derg period was unfriendly and characterized by mutual hatred. The Amhara who arrived relatively earlier than the other latecomers have developed better and friendly relations with the early settlers. The traditional mechanisms of social bond formation have helped the Amhara to strengthen their tie with the Sidama, Arsi and Guji. Most of the Amhara had shared the feeling of the early settlers in their conflict against the other latecomer groups.

During the Derg period, mutual distress against the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita had mitigated the deep-rooted uncordial relationship between the Arsi and Sidama/Guji for the time being. However, the change in the national political condition following the fall of the Derg in May 1991,

and the subsequent relative instability in rural areas had resumed the traditional conflict between them with new connotations. As indicated in Chapter 3, the relationship of the Arsi with the Sidama and Guji was largely marked by hostility, war and raiding. The Arsi had a long established animosity and conflict with both the Sidama and the Guji. The protracted enmity usually turned into open armed conflict with minor pretexts ignited by individuals. The Sidama and the Guji allied against the Arsi and the Arsi also did not differentiate the two in fighting. The protracted enmity between the Sidama and Arsi is responsible for the recurrent conflicts and armed confrontations between them.

Unlike the relations between the early and late settlers during the Derg period, the post-1991 interethnic relations cannot be explained in economic factors alone. Just after May 1991, this common confrontation between the two parties broke out. The protracted enmity is one of the major factors for the new conflict. Nnoli (1989:25), in explaining the strength of protracted enmity, wrote:

....Ethnic hostility, loyalty and identification are passed on to successive generations through the process of socialization. The family, press, private and public conversation and other agencies of socialization are infected by ethnicity. Therefore, even when the original basis of ethnicity, socio-economic competition among classes and individuals, is eliminated, there remains the problem posed by the internalized dimension. Under such conditions the persistence and sometimes growth of ethnicity is assured (Nnoli, 1989:25).

In the first encounter between the Arsi and Sidama after their unpremeditated alliance against the Kembata in 1990, the Guji were on the side of the Sidama. The Arsi in adjacent *kebelles* of Shashemene *Woreda* (such as Borera, Sole, Giggessa and Meddo) were said to have participated in the fighting. Although the fighting was rapidly put under control by EPRDF force, it erupted again in 1993 with new political connotations. Information from both sides indicates that the conflict cost the life of many people from both sides and more than five hundred houses were burnt to ashes, mainly in the adjoining areas of Gotu Onoma and the other KPAs. The people residing in the area were forced to flee to other places.

The conflict was related with the new national political policy and regional demarcation. Both the Imperial and the Derg government had been adopting almost similar policy on the question of ethnic identities and ethnic nationalism and adopted a centralized policy in which no recognition was given to ethnic identities. Ethnic and linguistic boundaries were barely used to organized administrative regions. The EPRDF led transitional government made a radical policy change on

the country's political system as soon as it held power in May 1991. The new policy was based on federalism, and federal regions based on ethnic and linguistic boundaries were organized. The policy of self-government was implemented in all newly established regions where local political and administrative posts are held by the local people themselves. Ethnic based political organizations have also flourished. Thus, the new policy paved the way for glorification of ethnic identities and ethnic nationalism.

The 1993 conflict was related to this political development at a national level. The major cause of the conflict was the question as to where Wondo Genet should belong in the new division of federal Regions. Previously, all parts of Wondo Genet, except the four KPAs of Wondo Wosha, had been under Awassa *woreda*, Sidamo Administrative Region, while Wondo Wosha was under Shashemene *Woreda*, Shewa Administrative Region. In the new division, the Sidama and their allies wanted the whole area, including Wondo Wosha, to be put under Sidama Zone of SNNPR, while the Oromo (both the Arsi and Guji) argued that large parts of Wondo Genet (up to Bossa) should be under Shashemene *Woreda* of Oromiya Region.

According to the new policy of federalism and self-government, putting an area under one's region offers some advantages to the people or some portion of the group members. The first issue related to regional demarcation was the possibility of holding political power at a Regional, Zonal, *Woreda* and KPA levels. The idea of self-government was understood as preserving the political power of a region exclusively for the "indigenous people, to whom the region belongs". Thus, the regional demarcation of Wondo Genet was perceived as having significant importance for controlling the political power and asserting claim as "indigenous" to the area.

The past years experience had provided a lesson to both groups about the importance of political power in resource allocation and obtaining "fair" justices. One of the repeated appeal of the Sidama to the government in the conflict against the Kembata and Hadiya in 1990 was to put Wondo Wosha under Sidamo Administrative Region, where they are "similar to the people of the region in language, culture and way of life" (ZWA0). Thus, the new policy and particularly the idea of 'self-determination' was taken as a suitable justification to put Wondo Wosha under Sidama Zone so as to avoid further similar threat of "others" (ZWA0).

Other measures taken by both regions also reinforced the strive. Both Regions had changed their respective working and educational languages in elementary schools. Oromo and Sidama languages (written in Latin scripts) were introduced as working languages of the respective regions, including in courts. This action strengthened the opinion that only "the people of the region", whose language became the working language, would control political power. Furthermore, the introduction of local languages in elementary schools made the contention more intense. The decision as to where the area would belong determines whether the Oromo children would be taught in Sidama or *vice versa*. The resentment of both groups about using the other's, particularly the opponent's language, made the competition in the regional demarcation of Wondo Wosha more vigorous. Thus, the regional demarcation of Wondo Wosha had political, economic, social and psychological significance for both parties.

One of the major new developments in interethnic relations after 1991 was the changes of alliance among the groups and formation of new coalitions between some of former conflicting groups. The Guji, who had been fighting the Arsi for years along the Sidama, have reversed their position and joined the Arsi. The Kembata and Hadiya, who had confronted with the Sidama just a couple of years ago, have allied with the Sidama against the Oromo.

The influence of ethnic based political organizations and the related revival of ethnic identities and ethnic nationalism were responsible for the formation of alliances between the previously conflicting Arsi and Guji Oromo. The Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO) cadres were working among the Guji to incite Oromo ethnic nationalism and strengthening their ethnic feeling as an Oromo. Six OPDO cadres were working in Wondo Genet in a newly opened office in Entaye KPA from July 1992 to January 1993. They played a crucial role in inciting Oromo nationalist feeling among the Guji. The active political work and revival of ethnic nationalism as an Oromo, finally led to a reconciliation ceremony between Arsi and Guji in which notable elders from both sides participated. In the ceremony it was stressed that as both groups are fellow Oromo, belonging to the same group and speak the same language, the conflict between them so far had been an act of fratricide. Both groups pledged to treat each other as brothers and from now onward.

However, other factors also played a crucial role in bringing about an alliance between the two groups. The intention to have better access to political and economic resources is the other major factor which dictated the formation of the alliance. The introduction of local languages in offices and schools brought the interests of the two groups together. Both sides, thus, had reckoned the advantage of making reconciliation for their mutual interests.

As the Guji changed their position and sided with the Arsi, members of the latecomer ethnic groups allied with the Sidama. Certain factors had dictated the decision of the latecomers in allying with the Sidama against the Oromo. The first factor was the geographical location of the area. The number of latecomers living in Sidama dominated areas is larger than the Arsi inhabited Gotu Onoma. They also share most of the problems and consequences of the fighting against the Arsi. As settlement plays a crucial role in determining one's position in conflict, they sided with the group with whom they live very closely. Moreover, Wondo Wosha was temporarily put under Sidama Zone at the time of the conflict (a special committee had made a brief survey about the area and the ethnic composition, according to which the Sidama and their allies outweighed the Oromo). Thus, the previously conflicting Hadiya and Kembata had already made peace with the Sidama.

Estimation of balance of military power between the major combating parties was the other factor for choosing the Sidama against the Oromo. The Sidama constitute the single largest group and are considered as winners in the competition for the regional demarcation of the area as well as in military combat. Thus, the latecomers decided to side with the winners. There was also a long established general perception among the latecomers of considering the Arsi as militant and aggressive. Some Oromo activists accuse the Amhara for spreading propaganda which depicts the Arsi as barbarious and warlike. Religion was also involved in the propaganda to get support. As most of the Sidama and late settlers are Christians and the Arsi are predominantly Muslim, a rumour was spread that if Wondo Genet were put under Oromiya Region and if the Arsi controlled the political power in the area, they would impose religious discrimination against the Christians.

Perhaps, one of the most important factors why for the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita sided with the Sidama was the massive displacement of their fellow group members from the Oromo dominated KPAs of Shashemene *Woreda*. Large number of Kembata, Hadiya and the Wolayita were displaced from their farms and houses by the Oromo in 1991 and denied the right to return until now. According to the Shashemene Branch of Ethiopian Red Cross Society, which was giving them aid, about 1770 households (with 6911 members) were displaced from 14 KPAs of the *woreda*. Out of the total displaced households, about 87 percent (1540 households) were Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita (ERCSSHB). Some of the KPAs from where they were driven out are close to Wondo Wosha and had experienced sporadic skirmishes with the Sidama. Thus, the displacement of Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita from Oromo dominated KPAs of Shashemene had threatened the already escalated insecurity of the latecomers if the area would be put under Oromiya Region.

In spite of the formation of new ethnic alliances, some individuals have sided with the enemy of their ethnic group for different reasons. Some of the Guji and Arsi living in deep Sidama dominated areas and/or affiliated with the Sidama refrained from actively involving in the conflict. Place of settlement, social bonds (through marriage and blood) and fear of possible retaliation prevented them from joining the fighting. Similarly, some late settlers in Gotu Onoma (mainly Amhara), remained with the Arsi or retreated to other Arsi inhabited KPAs for safety.

One of my Amhara informant living in Gotu Onoma KPA is a good example of the ethnic cross-cutting alliance. He came to Wondo Wosha in 1965 in search of land from North Shewa. He developed good relations with the Arsi living in the area. He established social bonds with many Arsi families some of whom are living in other *kebelles*. In the 1990 conflict, he passively remained with the Arsi. When the conflict was expanded to his living area and threatened the safety of his family, his family took refuge in Meddo KPA in one of his friends (*jala*) home. His young children remained in Meddo even after the conflict was over until peace is completely restored.

5.3 SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPACTS OF THE CONFLICT

The new ethnic conflict has brought certain social, economic and demographic consequences. The most observable effect of the conflict was the increase of the cleavage between the conflicting groups. The traditional conflict between the Arsi and Sidama has recently been given a new political dimension. It also escalated the feeling of insecurity among the latecomers, especially among those who arrived relatively recently and were not yet fully integrated with the community. Many of them had left the area, especially those who were living in, mainly from Gotu Onoma. The decentralization of the administrative regions, the increasing ethnic nationalism among the early settlers and the impact of the only year old collective retaliation against them have further escalated the feeling of insecurity among the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita. In deep Oromo dominated villages of Gotu Onoma, the Arsi forcefully took the farmlands of some of the Sidama and their allies.

The conflict has also changed the pattern of settlement. As explained earlier, the larger part of Gotu Onoma is inhabited by Arsi and most of the Sidama in the *kebele* were living in areas adjoining Wosha Soyama and Shesha Kekele. The Belle area is regarded as a traditional borderline between the Sidama and the Arsi. The houses and properties of the Sidama and their allies Gotu Onoma and the western parts of Shesha Kekele and Wotera Kechema were burnt and looted. They were forced to retreat into the Sidama inhabited areas, mostly to Wosha Soyama where many of them later

bought small plots for house making and settled permanently. Even after peace was restored, they declined to return to their previous areas. However, most of them still retain their farmlands in Gotu Onoma and are members of the KPA. Consequently, in Gotu Onoma the number of taxpaying farmers is larger than the number of the households registered in the 1994 national Population and Housing Census. The number of households in 1990 was 420 (with 2363 members), while in the 1994 census only 377 households (with 1,752 members) were registered (CSA, 1994). Currently the number of tax payer farmers of the KPA is 464 (AWDF).

The discrepancy between the number of the households living in the *kebele* and those registered as KPA members is the result of the resettlement of the Sidama and some of their allies in other *kebelles* where they were registered in the Census, while remaining KPA members of Gotu Onoma.

One of my informants from Gotu Onoma, T.Q, is an example of the settlement strategy adopted by the people in the conflict. T.Q is a Sidama living in Gotu Onoma near the College of Forestry. He became member of the KPA in 1978 as a *wotat gebere* (young farmer) and given one hectare of land in Belle. When his land was taken by State Forest Project in 1984/5, he was given 0.6 hectare of land in Gotu area as a substitute. Later, 0.15 hectare of it was taken in a redistribution and he was farming 0.45 hectare until he was given additional 0.4 hectare near his home in the 1990 general redistribution. Until the 1993 ethnic conflict, he was operating the two plots in Gotu and near his home. In the conflict between the two groups, T.Q and his family were forced to retreat to Wosha Soyama, where some of his relatives are living. After peace was restored, he was afraid of a possible Arsi attack and did not farm his land in Gotu. The people in the area took his land in Gotu, along with the lands of some other Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita. In the uncertainties that prevailed on him and his family, he bought 0.1 hectare of and from an Oromo (from Harar) in Wosha Soyama and built a house. Currently he is living in both houses.

Likewise, the Oromo in Sidama dominated areas were victims of similar actions and retreated into Gotu Onoma. Many Oromo who were threatened by the conflict sold their lands in Wosha Soyama and settle along with their kin, mainly in Gotu Onoma. As the Arsi living in Sidama dominated KPAs were few, the number of people displaced from other *kebele* to Gotu Onoma was smaller than the non-Oromo retreated from Gotu Onoma.

In Shesha Kekele, the areas adjoining Wosha Soyama is inhabited by the Sidama and other late settlers, while the western side adjacent to Gotu Onoma is dominated by the Guji and Arsi Oromo.

There were few Sidama and Arsi in areas dominated by the others respectively. Moreover, other few Sidama displaced by community forest development were relocated in areas adjoining Gotu Onoma. During the conflict, these people residing in the areas dominated by the other group were the first victims of the attacks from the opposite group. Thus, they were obliged to withdraw into areas where their kinsmen lived. But, unlike those living in Gotu Onoma and Wosha Soyama, they did not settle in other *kebele*, but simply changed their place of residence within the KPA.

Table 5.1: Ethnic composition of Wosha Soyama and Gotu Onoma KPAs in 1990 and 1998.

No	Ethnic Group	Wosha Soyama				Gotu Onoma			
		In 1990		In 1998		In 1990		In 1998	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Sidama	211	38.9	548	46.1	113	26.9	96	20.7
2.	Oromo (both Arsi and Guji)	57	10.5	126	10.6	104	24.7	195	42.0
3.	Wolayita	82	15.1	142	11.9	94	22.4	89	19.2
4.	Kembata and Hadiya	129	23.8	132	11.1	86	20.5	51	11.0
5.	Amhara	45	8.3	199	16.7	23	5.5	28	6.0
6.	Gurage	15	2.8	19	1.6	--	--	2	0.4
7.	Tigre	3	0.6	2	0.2	--	--	--	--
8.	Unknown	--	--	22	1.8	--	--	3	0.7
	Total	542	100	1190	100	420	100	464	100

Source: 1990 Survey, Awassa *Woreda* Department of Finance

The other change related to the new political policy and shift of Administrative Region of the four *kebelles* is in the KPAs power holding. In the general election held just before the fall of Derg, the Sidama, Arsi, Guji and Amhara held key PA posts. A few Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita, who had been victims of the previous system and had a good reputation among the people, were included. After 1991 the key posts in the three KPAs, except Gotu Onoma, were held by the Sidama, whose language is the working language of the Zone. In Gotu Onoma, most of the KPA leadership members are Oromo.

Although Sidama language is an official working language of the Zone, it is not strictly observed among those who do not speak it. In all four elementary schools of the area, however, it is strictly used since September 1992. The Doqe elementary school in Gotu Onoma is reported as temporarily closed because of the controversy. It is now working in Sidama language, though most of the students are said to be Oromo speakers. The change of instructional language in elementary schools, along with the prevalence of insecurity, has contributed to the departure of many Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita young dependents.

The conflict also increased the prevailed ethnic tension and discouraged the arrival of additional late settlers into Wondo Wosha. As indicated in previous chapters, the socio-political condition during the Derg period had facilitated the coming of Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita to the area using their ethnic networks. The new political development and the escalating ethnic tensions have forced some of the latecomers to leave the area. The departure of the latecomers and the arrival of new members of the early settler groups changed the ethnic composition of the population of the area. In the three KPAs, except Gotu Onoma, the Sidama constitute the majority of the recently arrived people.

In fact, the confrontation between the Sidama and the Arsi in Wondo Genet is the continuation of the conflict of the two groups along their common border areas. Along the borderlines of the two groups in Alaba, Siraro (north of lake Awassa), Kofelle, Guguma and Shalo are the common battle grounds of the two groups. In time of conflict they exchange support with their kin in other areas. For instance, in the violent armed confrontation between the two groups in 1991/2 in Guguma, the Sidama in Wondo Genet were supporting their kin in the fighting. Their allies in Wondo Genet, mostly the town dwellers of Kella, made financial contributions to the Sidama fighting against the Arsi in Guguma. Actions and counteractions in other areas, therefore, affect interethnic relations and particularly the relationship of the two groups in Wondo Wosha.

5.4 FICTIVE ETHNIC IDENTITY AND SOCIAL BOND FORMATION

Ethnicity and ethnic identity are glorified and flourish in time of competition and conflict among groups. Ethnic identity is manipulated to mobilize support and initiate collective action. Thus, the strength of ethnic boundaries is determined by the rewards for which groups compete. As Jiobu remarked (1990:182), ethnic boundaries are directly proportional to the privileges a group maintains and wants to preserve. Accordingly, a group controlling more scarce economic and

political resources develop hard boundary, while others deprived of them usually create soft boundaries.

In spite of the persistence of ethnic boundaries, as Barth noted (1969:23), people always move across them and change their ethnic identities collectively as well as individually. The movement of personnel across ethnic boundaries and adoption of new identities, however, are subject to the approval and acceptance of the members of the group. As boundaries become rigid in times of competition and conflict, mobility is usually difficult.

On the other hand, there are certain mechanisms of creating fictive ethnic identities and formation of special social bonds. These mechanisms affiliate an outsider with members of another group and entail certain rights and obligations to all or some of the group members. Outsiders manipulate these mechanisms in order to gain certain economic advantages and social security.

In Wondo Wosha, among the Oromo (both the Arsi and Guji) an outsider can embrace fictive Oromo identity in a tradition called *lelleba*. *Lelleba* literally means to declare or announce loudly, but its other metaphoric meaning refers to a mechanism in which an outsider (not necessarily non-Oromo, but non-Arsi or non-Guji), becomes a fully fledged member of the group with the rights and obligations membership entails to him. To get into *lelleba*, the outsider should first develop an intimate friendship with certain notable family of the group, and extends similar relation with other members of the group. After sometime, he may ask for *lelleba* through his friend. Considering his trustworthiness, moral, and good conduct, the elders of the group may finally allow him to inter into *lelleba*. Then, he performs a ceremony in which he slaughters an ox and is blessed by elders and accepted as a member of the group. There after, he will be treated as a member of the group both by the group members and outsiders. He will take all the kin and sub-clan (*belbela*) of his friend as his kin and *belbela*. It is incestuous for him and his family to marry from the sub-clan. *Lelleba* also entails certain rights and obligations on the person. He has a right to get support from the group members in times of problem, conflicts, feuds, etc.. Similarly, he is accountable in the group's conflicts, feuds and actions pertaining to collective responsibility on the group. He is also obliged to contribute for blood money.

Lelleba is performed mainly for security and economic reasons. An outsider, coming from other areas and detached from his/her original ethnic tie, usually confronts certain physical and psychological insecurity living amidst of other group's members. Thus, affiliating oneself with the

local group by embracing fictive ethnic identity reduces this insecurity. Economic factors also encourage *lelleba* as outsiders wish to possess properties in deep rural areas dominated by other ethnic group members.

As privileges emanating from clan membership become less important and as other factors, mainly settlement area, become more important in determining an individual's social and economic positions, the social significance of *lelleba* is currently declining.⁴ In Wondo Genet, in the past decade only two individuals are reported as adopting fictive Guji and Arsi identities through *lelleba*. The first one was an Amhara and motivated by economic factor as he possessed property in deep rural area. The second one was an Oromo from Wollega and active in the current Oromo-Sidama controversy. His active involvement in inciting Guji nationalist feeling as Oromo has resulted in hostile attitude and threat from the opposite groups. To counterbalance the threat, he increasingly attached himself with the Guji and, finally adopted fictive Guji identity of *Abaye* sub-clan through *lelleba*.

The second and less strong form of establishing relations among the Oromo (both the Arsi and Guji) is called *Harma* (literally meaning breast). In *harma* an outsider establishes fictive paternal relationship in which he becomes equivalent to a son. *Harma*, like *lelleba*, is the result of a long time friendship between the outsider and a member of the group. The families of the two persons will treat each other like blood relatives. *Harma* also involves a ceremony in which the outsider will take gifts, including honey and a bull or goat/sheep, to the home of his friend. In the ceremony the nipple of the man will be smeared with honey and the outsider suckles it the way a baby suckles his mother's breast. It symbolizes the adoption of the man as a son. There after, the two families would create strong bond and help each other in times of problem. However, unlike *lelleba*, *harma* entails limited rights and obligations on both sides. The outsider will remain with his/her original ethnic identity. He/she is also free from accountability in actions that entail collective responsibility (such as feuds, homicides), contributions for bridewealth or blood money, and incest with the patron sub-clan. *Harma* also does not require the approval and blessing of the clan leaders and elders. The Sidama also have an almost identical tradition of forming social ties, called *unino qenino* (suckling breast) with similar rights, obligations and ceremony.

Harma and *unino qenino* were common during the Imperial regime, mainly between the early settlers and the Amhara, but currently their effectiveness and magnitude declined. They may not help to protect individuals in time of ethnic conflict between the two groups. Information indicate that in the post-1991 ethnic conflict, many Amhara who had developed *harma* relation with the Arsi were attacked by the Arsi or forced to flee from the area. During this time, the Arsi were reported as saying "*Harman Gogan Jirra*" (now the breast has dried) to indicate the failure of the system to protect outsiders.

The third and simplest form of social bond formation is called *Jala* (friendship). It is an ordinary bond of friendship formed between the families of an outsider and member of a dominant group. It is informal and does not have a specific ceremony associated with it. *Jala* also does not entail specific rights and responsibilities except moral obligations of visiting each other, invitation in ceremonies and exchange of gifts. However, it is the first step for the other types of bond formation (*Lelleba* and *Harma*). Just like *harma* and *unino qenino*, *Jala* is less effective during ethnic conflicts between the groups of the two individuals.

Besides ethnic identity, be it original or fictive, settlement also has an important role in making decisions in times of ethnic conflict. Individuals usually strive a balance between loyalty to their settlement area and ethnic identity in deciding their position in a conflict. In addition to economic factors, degree of ethnic sentiment, direct involvement in the confrontation and the living area of close relatives also influence an individual's role in an ethnic confrontation. Moreover, social interactions and possible marriage alliance with members of other ethnic groups affect an individual's involvement in ethnic conflicts.

In the post-1991 ethnic conflict, as the case example in page 78 illustrated, even if the Amhara were said to be on the side of the Sidama as a group, some of them living in Gotu Onoma had remained with the Arsi and later fled to deep Oromo areas for safety. Likewise, many Guji remained with the Sidama. However, this does not mean that they had changed their ethnic identities. Calculating the advantages and constraints it entails, they passively remained in their area, while others were forced to flee to where their kin are living.

5.5 CHANGES IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

5.5.1 Cash Crop Production

One of the major changes induced by scarcity of natural resources was a growing shift to production of high yield and high price cash crops. Cash crop production is introduced in Wondo Wosha long ago. Sugar cane, *chat*, *enset* (false banana), potatoes, coffee, carrots, cabbages, red beats, tomatoes and other vegetables and fruits have been familiar products of the area for a long time. Although coffee had been the primary cash crop before 1975, the coffee disease that spread rapidly in the area reduced the significance of its production. In addition, the repeated displacement of farmers for various reasons reduced the production of coffee and other perennial crops (avocados, papayas, *chat*, etc.) that take long time to grow.

The availability of water for irrigation promoted the shift to cash crop production. In fact, the use of irrigation enabled farmers to sustain their livelihood with a very small amount of land (sometimes as small as 0.1 hectare), by producing high price crops two or more times annually. The lucrative market for the products also encouraged the shift to cash crop production. Many merchants and brokers usually come to Wondo Wosha to purchase agricultural products directly from farms.

The agricultural knowledge of the latecomers also contributed to the shift, particularly to the expansion of production of carrots, red beats, cabbages and other vegetables. The homelands of the Kembata and Hadiya are well known for high population pressure and shortage of arable land. As a result, the people developed different adaptive strategies over time, including labour intensive agricultural systems and production of selected crops. They applied their knowledge in Wondo Wosha where the environment and the rich resources are conducive for production of these crops. Currently, in irrigatable areas, sugar cane surpasses other crops, including potato, which was the dominant crop grown a few years ago. The expansion of sugar cane production is related with the current high price for the product in the market. In Gotu Onoma and other areas where irrigation is not developed, maize is the dominant crop produced with rain-feed agriculture.

The intensive agricultural production and the capacity to produce two or more times annually requires more labour than rain-fed cereal farming. In other words, as farmers strive to produce more yields from a unit of land, they apply more labour on it. Thus, irrigated farming needs more labour than rain-fed agriculture. Traditional labour exchange mechanisms, mainly *debo* and *wonfel*, have been common in the area for long time, though their importance is now declining.

In *debo*, a farmer summons other farmers (usually his friends, kin and neighbours) to help him in his farm for a day. He prepares food and drinks for them. The degree of his social relationship and the amount of labour he requires determine the number of people participating in the *debo*. He is indebted to the farmers for their labour and works on their farms in return when they require labour. In *wonfel*, the farmers form a working party in which they work on each others' farms in turn. The number of the people participating in *wonfel* is usually smaller than that in *debo*. There is also an oxen exchange, called *meqenajo*, among cereal producing farmers, in which farmers with only one ox yoke and plough each farm for equal days.

Diminishing of farmlands, shift to sugar cane production and the possibility of using hired labour reduced the importance of the traditional labour exchange methods. Household labour is often enough to cultivate the usually less than half hectare of land owned by a household on average. Those who face labour shortage hire landless farmers and seasonal migrants. Large numbers of seasonal labourers, mainly Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita, were came to Wondo Wosha during harvesting seasons, especially when potatoes and maize were the dominant crops produced. They arrive in June, to harvest maize and depart in September and comeback in November for harvesting potato which lasts until January. The decline of maize and potato production in favour of sugar cane (which needs less labour than potatoes), and the past years ethnic conflict are responsible for the decrease of seasonal migrant labourers in Wondo Wosha.

Scarcity of land also led farmers to apply more fertilizer and abandon fallowing. Yibeltal's survey conducted eight years ago indicated that the fertilizer application of Wosha Soyama KPA was 79 percent, while fallowing was only 0.1 percent of the total arable land (Yibeltal, 1991). Currently, with the shift to sugar cane production, fallowing seems to be none at all as every inch of land is covered by sugar cane, *enset* and other crops.

5.5.2 Land Transaction.

The introduction of the Mixed Economic Policy in March 1990 paved the way for land transfers in different forms, including transactions. Land transactions, disguised as contracts, are prevalent in Wondo Wosha. The social conflicts since the early 1990's and the subsequent displacement of people, have reinforced the land markets. They also affected settlement pattern as explained in the previous sub-topic.

Ethnic conflicts and the prevalent social insecurity forced some of the late settlers to leave Wondo Wosha. In the 1990 conflict, many late settlers, especially those who were involved in the political system of the Derg or were believed to have involved in it, had felt insecure and sold their lands to leave the area. The change of Government and the new ethnic politics have increased the anxiety of the late settlers living amidst early settler groups, and many of them preferred to sell their land and leave the area. The early settlers and some of the late settlers, who are well integrated with the local community, purchased the plots.

Land transactions also enabled large numbers of non-farmers to hold land through purchase. Some of them are town dwellers engaged in different businesses, but registered as taxpayer farmers. In addition to population increase, transactions intensified fragmentation and diminishing of farmlands. Some of the farmers, on the other hand, are engaged in different economic activities including trade, and, in fact, it is difficult to apply the term farmer to some of them.

Land markets also initiated the arrival of members of the early settlers, mainly the Sidama, from neighbouring areas. The number of taxpayer farmers in all KPAs has shown striking increase in recent years. The increase is more dramatic in Wosha Soyama. The following table shows the growth in the four KPAs for a decade.

Table 5.2: Number of taxpayers in the each KPA for the years.

Year	Number of Taxpayers			
	Wosha Soyama	Shesha Kekele	Wotera Kechema	Gotu Onoma
1986/87	558	--*	--*	383
1989/90	542	690	520	420
1992/93	558	716	540	---
1996/97	1190	816	728	468

* data is not available.

Source: Shashemene and Awassa *Woreda* Departments of Finance .

As the table indicates, the growth is highest in Wosha Soyama followed by Shesha Kekele and least in Gotu Onoma. Soil fertility and the resulting variation in productivity of the land are the major factors for the difference in population size among KPAs. In Wosha Soyama, the availability of rich water resources and fertile soils attracted more people into the *Kebelle*. Non-farmers also preferred to acquire land in Wosha Soyama where high production of cash crop is possible using irrigation. Consequently, land transactions are much more prevalent in Wosha Soyama followed by Shesha Kekele and Wotera Kechema. As a result, population density and land fragmentation are more pronounced in Wosha Soyama. On the contrary, absence of irrigation, less fertility of the soil and the impact of the recurrent ethnic conflict reduced the intensity of land transactions in Gotu Onoma, and resulted in relatively lower population density and land fragmentation.

However it is striking that the number of tax payer farmers grew very significantly in 1996/97. In Wosha Soyama, the number of farmers in 1995/96 was 765. In 1996/97 it increased by 425 (55.6 percent) to reach 1190. In Shesha Kekele and Wotera Kechema, similar increases are reported by the KPAs leadership. One of the factors for the increase in this particular year was the registration of the previously tax exempted farmers and non-farmers, who acquired land in purchase, as taxpayers. As tax is paid on the basis of annual income, those who hold 0.1 hectare were exempted from the obligation. The Wosha Soyama KPA leaders indicate that in 1996/97 these people requested to pay and registered as taxpayers and augmented the total number of taxpayers in the KPA.

The request to pay tax and the subsequent increase of the taxpaying farmers, are the results of the reactions of the people to possible future Government actions. They expect some kind of general land redistribution in the near future by the Regional State. This expectation is strengthened by the similar action taken by the Amhara Regional State in 1996/97. The people learnt a lesson in the 1990 redistribution, in which the landless farmers were excluded from it. Only those who were paying tax before they were made landless and those who were transferred from the College domain were allotted land. Thus, those who possess very small plots of land and were exempted from income tax recognized the importance of paying tax to be considered as fullfledged farmers and to be eligible in the future possible redistribution.

Those who hold more than average land also took similar actions to maintain their holdings in the possible redistribution. They usually parcelled out their land and registered them in the name of different household members, usually wives and children who are sometimes very young to be

registered as farmers. These actions have increased the number of farmers in the KPAs without equivalent actual increase of households.

In addition to fertility, the price of a plot of land is determined by the relative security of the time and where the plot is located. In areas where conflict is high and skirmishes are frequent, prices are low. Also, when ethnic conflict and social tension are mounting, land prices decrease. During the 1990 conflict between the Kembata and Sidama and in later period of Arsi-Sidama conflicts, land was sold for low prices. A very fertile half hectare plot of land is reported to have been sold for *birr* 1,000 in 1990/91. Currently, similar land costs *birr* 12,000 to 16,000. However, in spite of the increase in price, land is hardly available for sale at present. Increasing land transactions resulted in diminishing of farm size and inequality of holdings. The size of farmers' holdings has shown significant decrease since the last redistribution in 1990.

Table 5.3: Distribution of households of Wosha Soyama and Gotu Onoma by landholding.

Land Size (in ha.)	Wosha Soyama		Gotu Onoma	
	Frequency	Size of Land (in ha.)	Frequency	Land (in ha.)
0.10-0.15	365	36.75	11	1.10
0.20-0.30	325	79.85	99	25.90
0.35-0.40	140	54.85	68	27.20
0.45-0.50	138	67.65	43	21.50
0.55-0.60	124	73.75	22	13.20
0.65-0.70	35	24.40	69	48.30
0.75-0.80	21	16.70	43	34.40
0.85-0.90	7	6.25	1	0.90
1.00-1.25	27	28.05	101	101.00
above 1.25	8	12.50	7	10.50
Total	1190	400.75	464	284.00

Source: Awassa *Woreda* Department of Finance .

As the above table shows, the inequality is more pronounced in Wosha Soyama where 58 percent of the total population (690 farmers) hold only 29.1 percent of the total arable land (i.e. 0.1 to 0.3 ha. each and a total of 116.6 ha.). Currently the average holding of a household in Wosha Soyama is 0.33 hectare, while in Gotu Onoma it is 0.61 hectare.

5.5.3 Cattle Production

Diminishing of land, shift to cash crop production and ethnic conflict have had some effects on cattle production. Absence of pasture land brought tremendous changes in cattle resources of the area. Individuals had already abandoned reserving land for pasture long ago and land preserved for community grazing are mostly unproductive (marshy and rocky). With the decrease of grazing land, farmers have greatly reduced the number of cattle they keep. The cattle population is found to be indirectly proportional to agricultural intensification. In Wosha Soyama, where intensive agriculture using irrigation is common, the cattle population is small. In cereal producing Gotu Onoma, farmers possess a greater number of cattle and pasture them in the uncultivable lands and at the bottom of Abaro mountain. In Shesha Kekele and Wotera Kechema, where small community pasture lands exist (mostly marshy lands), farmers have more cattle than in Wosha Soyama. Scarcity of pasture, as explained in the previous chapter, is one of the basic causes of conflict between farmers and organizations.

The recurrent ethnic conflict is the other factor accounting for the decrease in the cattle population in the area. In ethnic fighting, cattle are the major war booties. Increased ethnic fighting resulted in a high degree of cattle raiding on both sides. Fear of raids led some of the farmers, especially the latecomers, to reduce the number of cattle they keep. The shift to sugar cane production also lessens the importance of oxen for agricultural production. Thus, the people resorted to keeping milk cows only. In cereal producing areas, oxen are still the crucial means of production and farmers still keep them alongside cows. On the other hand, sugar cane production helped to alleviate the problem of pasture as its upper part is used for animal feed.

5.6 COOPERATION AS A RESULT OF SCARCITY

Although competition for scarce resources is often associated with conflict, it is also a means for developing cooperation among users in order to exploit the limited resources fairly and efficiently. In Wondo Wosha, use of irrigation water has obliged the users to develop efficient means of cooperation to use the resource fairly equally.

It should be noted that the rich water resource is the major factor that makes Wondo Genet attractive for settlement, agricultural production, tourism and establishment of institutions. Thus, access to this valuable resource is essential for the survival of farmer households on a small farmland. Cooperation in water use is exhibited among farmers, Peasant Associations and between organizations and individual farmers.

Farmers of every KPA cooperate among themselves in clearing canals and respecting the rights of one another in the use of the water. All the farmers using irrigation participate in the clearing of the canals from the sources to farms in their respective *kebele*. They elect *kebele* Water Committees and set regulations about how to use the water, which include penalties on free-riders. The Committee divides the *kebele* into sub-areas, called *buden* (groups), and assign a leader for each. It arranges a distribution programme in which each *buden* is allocated specific days, and every farmer, in turn, is given specific hours (depending on the size of the farm). The KPA leadership is not directly involved in water distribution. It rather, controls the Water Committee, which does the actual job. Every farmer is expected to comply with the program. Those whose turn is violated are strictly forbidden from taking their own action, but appeal to the Committee. Members of the water Committee inspect the farm of the accused and if found guilty, penalize him in accordance with sets regulations. Currently, fine in cash and imprisonment for hours or a few days are common penalties on free-riders. However, denying access to water as a penalty is strictly avoided since it ruins the farm of the accused and jeopardizes the life of all the household members.

Scarcity of water also initiated cooperation between farmers and organizations. The Essential Oils Research Centre and the College of Forestry are the two major users of the resource for irrigation. Since the College has its own small weir constructed by the Norwegian Mission and an independent water line, it enjoys the resource without many competitors. The limited number of farmers below the College also minimized the competition. The Essential Oils Research Centre, on the other hand, has developed effective cooperation with the Wosha Soyama Water Committee on the use of the water. The Centre participates in clearing the canals along with the people, while the Committee arranges fixed dates for the Centre in the program. In times of extreme need the Centre may requests the Committee to arrange for more days in the distribution programme. Thus, unlike the uncordial attitude of some farmers towards the Centre, the KPA has managed to develop cooperation with the Centre to use the resource effectively and fairly.

The use of water also necessitates cooperation between KPAs located near the source and far from it. The mutual arrangement between Shesha Kekele and Wosha Soyama is an example of cooperation generated by scarcity. Wosha Soyama is advantaged as it is located near the source of the water. The farmers of Shesha Kekele are situated far from the source and suffer from shortage of water. The Committee and leadership of Shesha Kekele explained the problem to their counterparts in Wosha Soyama and the two KPA leaders agreed to share the water fairly. They increased the amount of water that goes to Shesha Kekele by taking a limited amount from every line going to farms in Wosha Soyama, including the farms of Essential Oils Research Centre.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

High productive potential of agricultural natural resources usually attracts migration and social and economic investments into an area, and augments the population density of the area. In Ethiopia, interregional movement of people and rural resettlement were common experiences of the long history of the country. The route of movement was usually from the relatively dense populated and low economic opportunity areas (usually the northern highlands), to the less populated and better economic opportunity areas, mainly in the south. Rural agricultural settlement is also determined by the possibilities of having access to agricultural natural resources and rural job opportunities.

Population growth, without improving the existing level of technology and/or introduction of agricultural intensification, creates population pressure and scarcity of natural resources. In addition to population growth, economic, political and environmental factors that decrease the amount and/or quality of natural resources, result in disparities in allocation among users and create scarcity of resources, sometimes even without actual population growth.

Scarcity of resources induces social and economic changes. It leads farmers to develop adaptive behaviours in their daily life and production systems. In order to survive with limited resources, they try to adjust themselves to the social, ecological and economic realities around them. A shift to high productive and high price cash crops, curtailing fallow land and periods, resorting to other income generating activities, increasing labour intensification, applying more fertilizer etc. are some of the adjustments to cope with resource scarcity (Barlett, 1980:553).

Scarcity of resources, in the mean time, initiates competition among users. The competition can be expressed in various forms and at different levels. In areas where different ethnic groups live together and exploit similar resources, there is a high possibility for the competition to be expressed at group level and in ethnic terms.

Apart from the economic, ecological and demographic consequences, migration brings peoples of different ethnic origins, religions, languages, cultural traits, social and economic organizations, etc. into close contact. Migration also affects the ethnic diversity of the host area. In other words, migration brings two or more previously unfamiliar culture systems into close contact (Durham, 1989). Thus, migration and rural settlement will bring different ethnic groups together and lead the competition for scarce natural resources to be expressed in ethnic terms.

6.1 PRE-1975 PERIOD

In Wondo Wosha, the rich agricultural natural resources (fertile land, rich water resources, favourable climate etc.) attracted people from different directions, mainly from the densely populated areas of Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita, to the area. It also drew private commercial farming and agro-industry investments. The job opportunities created in the schemes, in turn, brought more people as labourers and contributed to growth of population density and ethnic diversity of the area. The existing *rist* and private land tenure systems which allowed migrants to have access to land as tenants on a contract base facilitated the arrival of spontaneous settlers and labourers as well as the establishment of commercial farms. Thus, the arrival and settlement of Amhara, Kembata, Hadiya, Wolayita and Gurage was made possible by the rich productive potential of the natural resources, the access rules that allowed spontaneous settlers to have land as *chisegna* and the job opportunities created in the commercial farms and agro-industries. Consequently, the population of Wondo Wosha grew rapidly. Meanwhile, in addition to the existing Sidama, Arsi and Guji, the arrival of these groups ethnically diversified the population of the area.

The resulting ethnic relationships among the different ethnic groups during the pre-1975 period ranged from conflicts, war and raiding to cooperation and symbiotic relationships. The most visible aspect of interethnic relations during this period was the relations between the Sidama, Guji and Arsi. The relationship of Sidama and Guji with the neighbouring Arsi was characterized by persistent hostility, war and raiding since their encounter. Competition for pasture and water was responsible for the initial development of uncordial relationships between them. However, cultural factors and the long years of hostile attitude towards each other, which were transmitted from generation to generation, were equally accountable for the persistence of the enmity. Moreover, the relationships between the Sidama and Arsi in Wondo Genet were also affected by the relations between the two groups in other neighbouring areas. Thus, the type of relations formed between these early settler groups was determined not only by the micro level economic relations among the people living in the area, but also by the relationships between members of the two groups in a wider geographical area.

On the contrary, unlike their relationships in the Southern parts of Sidama and Gedeo Zones, relationships between the Guji and Sidama in Wondo Genet were cordial and based on mutual interests. The symbiotic economic relations facilitated the development of friendly relationships. Furthermore, unlike the Arsi, the Guji in Wondo Genet are cut-off from the major Guji groups

living in the south. Thus, their relation with the Sidama in Wondo Genet were barely affected by the developments between the two groups in other areas. Moreover, the demographic and military supremacy of the Sidama in Wondo Genet and their mutual hostility against the Arsi promoted the development of cooperation and cordial relationships between the Sidama and the Guji.

On the other hand, in spite of physical proximity, economic and social interactions between the early and late settler groups (mainly the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita) were very limited. Linguistic and cultural barriers had hindered the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita from developing significant social interactions with the Sidama, Guji and Arsi. Unlike the later period, the presence of the late settlers also did not create a feeling of competition for resources among the early settler groups.

The rules of access were one of the major factors that hindered the development of feeling of competition or prevented the competition from being expressed in ethnic terms. As land and related resources were the private properties of individuals and institutions, the resources were available to members of all groups through different arrangements, in which ethnic identities had little or nothing to do with allocation. Individuals, irrespective of their ethnic identities, could have access to land as long as they fulfilled their obligations as tenants. Thus, the social tensions, cleavages and conflicts over resource ownership and allocation were expressed along class line between those who controlled the resources and those deprived of them.

Availability of relatively abundant resources for the existing population was the other factor that prevented a feeling of competition from arising between the groups. Some of the early settler group members, particularly the Guji, were leading a different way of life as pastoralists and exploiting different "ecological niche", while large numbers of Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita were labourers.

Thus, abundance of resources and the rule of access hindered the development of competitive feeling between the early and late settler groups. Ethnicity was ascribed minor role in resource allocation and control. Other forms of social organizations, mainly class, were the factors that determine peoples access to resources. The psychological utility of ethnicity was predominant than its practical material utilities in the relation between the two parties. Besides economic factors, cultural factors had significant roles in shaping the relation between the Arsi and Sidama/Guji.

6.2 DURING THE DERG PERIOD

The 1975 land reform profoundly transformed the previous land tenure systems and access rules. Consequently, the social relations among users were equally changed. As private ownership of land and commercial farming were abolished, the previous *chisegna* and farm labourers established themselves as permanent residents of the area and became KPA members. Membership of KPAs, which allocate resources and administer the *kebele*, brought the previously aloof early and late settler groups into close contacts through the process of resource allocation and daily life.

As the land reform entitled every individual to own farmland, the possibility of the latecomers (mostly the farm labourers), holding farmlands created a feeling of competitive threat among the early settlers. With the change of their status from rural farm labourers to peasant-farmers operating their own land, the number of Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita claiming access to farmland greatly increased. This fact, in spite of the existence of more or less enough land, intensified the feeling of "imagined threat" among the early settler groups.

As an initial reaction to this "imagined competitive threat", ethnicity was evoked to secure exclusive rights to resources and expel 'others' from the competition. The early settlers tried to use Ethnic identity, disguised as permanent settlement, a criterion for KPA membership and access to farmlands. Even if the attempt to exclude "others" failed due to external pressure and the relative abundance of resources, the social meaning of ethnicity was crystallized and the boundary between the latecomers and early settlers became harder. This also sowed the seeds of mutual suspicion and hatred. This shows that to create a perception of competition, as Durham noted (1989:139), actual scarcity of resources may not always be essential. "Imagined threat" of scarcity can also create a feeling of competition and affect groups' reactions and responses towards one another.

During the first few years of the revolution (1975-80), the national socio-political conditions had little to influence the balance of power between the two competing parties. As a result, using their collective numerical superiority, the early settlers (including some Amhara) controlled key KPAs posts, while most of the latecomers were less privileged both in terms of local political power control and land holdings.

The rapid population increase and the reopening of the previous institutions and state forest project turned the "imagined" threat of resource scarcity into a real problem that jeopardized the lives of many people. The latecomers, who had already been anxious about the attitude of the early settlers

towards them, responded to the problem of resource scarcity and the threat from the early settlers by identifying their economic interests and social security with the state's economic and political policies. They exploited the agrarian policy and partisan politics of the Derg to satisfy their resource needs and ensure social security.

The Derg Government's political and agrarian policies brought about dual, but related, consequences. Firstly, the major components of the agrarian policy, particularly collectivization and villagization programmes restricted farmers' access to resources. By controlling considerable portions of the KPAs' fertile arable land, PPCs displaced large numbers of private farmers from their holdings. The attempt to enhance state owned economic and social organizations and the related expansion of the governmental organizations exacerbated the displacement of farmers. In the meantime, using partisan politics, the latecomers succeeded in controlling key KPA positions and averting the threats they perceived from the opposite groups. They often abused their power to satisfy their resource needs and to dominate the other groups. The implementation of PPC and villagization programmes escalated the already acute problem of resource scarcity. Since PPCs were strongly supported by the state and acquired significant resources and social services, they were used to respond to the problem of scarcity. Those who held small and unproductive lands were the first to join PPCs.

Thus, the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita responded more positively to the establishment of PPCs in order to get social security and land. As the Sidama, Guji and Arsi perceived themselves as being barred from equal access to resources, ethnic identity was further crystallized and used to mobilize opposition against the latecomers. As a result, competition and conflict between the PPCs and private farmers were transformed into competition and conflict between the early and late settler groups.

In spite of the fact that all latecomers compete for similar resources, the reactions of the early settlers towards the different latecomer groups were not similar. The Amhara who had arrived in Wondo Genet since the conquest of the area at the end of the 19th century, developed close relations and relatively strong social ties with the indigenous people since their arrival. As a result some of the Amhara *r/s* holders have continued to live in the area as KPA members after the land reform. Many of them are cut-off from their original places and regard Wondo Genet as their homeland. Accordingly, they have developed friendly relations with the early settler groups. In fact, most of the Amhara shared the feeling of the early settlers against the Kembata, Hadiya and

Wolayita. The reaction towards the Gurage was also mild. The small size of their group averted the development of strong reactions against them.

On the other hand, the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita evoked strong reactions from the early settlers. The numerical significance of their group size alarmed the early settlers. As Jiobu remarked in the competitive framework (1990:168), group size has a strong impact in determining the type and magnitude of response a group perceives in the processes of competition for scarce resources. Although groups with small size may face fierce reactions in some conditions, larger groups with a potential of large competitive threat usually receive strongest reactions, while small groups posing little competitive threats encounter mild reactions.

Because of the similarity of their languages, culture and homeland, the Kembata and Hadiya are ascribed and treated as a single group and collectively called Kembata. The size of their groups was increasing during the Derg period as additional members arrived and obtained farmlands. In 1990 the Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita constituted one-third (732) of the total members of the four KPAs (2173). Initial mutual suspicion and the responses of the latecomers by identifying their interests with the notorious policies of the Government increased the rift between the two parties. With the collapse of the power base of the Kembata and Hadiya, the latent hostility finally culminated into armed confrontation, in which many Kembata, Hadiya and Wolayita were forced to leave the area.

The political, social and economic changes related with the change of government also significantly transformed the roles ascribed to ethnicity. The abolition of class based resource control and changes of access rules brought the previously indifferent early and late settler groups into active contact. Scarcity of resources created by various factors gave ethnicity a focal position in the competition for them and ethnicity and ethnic identities were assigned new and dominant roles and positions. As the rigid access rule hindered the possibilities of solving the problems of scarcity of resources by intensifying agricultural production and resorting to other means of economic activities, the competition for resources easily degenerated into conflicts.

6.3 THE POST 1990 PERIOD

Like the previous period, in the post-1991 period, ethnicity and ethnic identities are used in the competition for political resources, which are crucial to assert economic advantages and social security. The political changes after 1991 altered the relations and alignments among the groups. In spite of the age-old hostility between the Arsi and the Sidama/Guji, their mutual distress against the latecomers during the Derg period overshadowed the animosity and brought them together against the 'others'. After the fall of the Derg, the traditional hostility and conflict between the Arsi and Sidama resumed with new political connotations.

Although the initial cause of the conflict between the Arsi and the Sidama is attributed to competition for economic resources (pasture, land, water, etc.), the prolonged malevolent feelings towards each other is equally responsible for the persistence of hostile relationships in the absence of the real causes for the animosity. As the existing socio-political *status quo* is interrupted, the latent hostility between them often erupts with minor pretexts.

The 1992 conflict between the Arsi and Sidama was part of this continuum, but with a new political dimension. The regional demarcation of Wondo Genet was the basic cause of the conflict. Other groups were also involved in the conflict in support of either side. Consequently, new ethnic bonds were formed. Some of the new bonds reversed the previous relations between some of the ex-belligerent groups. The Kembata/Hadiya and Sidama, who fought just two years earlier, allied against the Oromo. The Guji, who are culturally integrated with the Sidama and had been fighting the Arsi alongside them, changed their position and allied with the Arsi under a new and higher level of ethnic identity, i.e. as Oromo.

In the new ethnic bonds, every ethnic group calculated the possible opportunities and constraints in choosing sides. Thus, individuals' decisions, which form groups decisions, were targeted to preserve and maximize their social and economic advantages. The latecomers presumed they would be socially and economically insecure for their own reasons if the area had been put under Oromiya Region. The Sidama also welcomed the support of the latecomers in their contention against the Oromo once they overcome the threat inflicted by the newcomers during the Derg period.

The Guji and Arsi alliance was partly a result of the new political conditions which glorify ethnic identities. Ethnic identities are not always consistent and rigid. Groups or individuals develop different levels of ethnic identities that are evoked at different places and various contexts.

Explaining the hierarchy of ethnic identities, Jenkins wrote, "inasmuch as it is situational, ethnic identity is also likely to be segmentary and hierarchical. Although two groups may be differentiated from each other as A and B, in a different context they may combine as C in contrast to D" (Jenkins, 1996:816). Likewise, the Arsi and the Guji belong to the larger Oromo ethnic group and speak the same language, and have developed a common identity as Oromo. On the other hand, they regard themselves as distinct from each other and, consequently, developed distinct lower level ethnic identities as Arsi and Guji. In some conditions they use these lower level identities while in other contexts, they dropped the boundary between them and embraced a common ethnic identity as Oromo. In reality, they used both levels (the lower levels as Arsi and Guji, and the higher one as Oromo), situationally. In the conflict against the Sidama, this higher level identity was evoked to unite the two groups. However, besides common ethnic identity, expectation of real or imagined social, political and economic benefits had crucial roles to play in achieving the alliance between them.

The changes in the political and economic policies brought changes in access rules and conflicts caused by scarcity of resources. With the new socio-economic conditions, political factors gained the primary role in determining interethnic relations. As the new condition paved the way for the operation of different economic responses to resource scarcity, the problem primarily led to changes in production systems and other behavioural adjustments rather than instantly degenerating into conflicts.

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The roles and functions ascribed to ethnicity and ethnic identities vary in different periods and contexts. As the data indicated in the pre-1975 period besides economic factors, cultural factors had significant roles in shaping interethnic relations. While in the Derg period the changes in economic condition gave ethnicity crucial place. In the post 1990 period political factors became the important element in determining interethnic relations and ethnic identities. Generally, the data from the study area indicates that ethnicity, ethnic identities and interethnic relations are determined by political, economic, social and cultural factors. The factors that determine the role and significance of ethnicity and ethnic identities vary in accordance with specific social and historical contexts.

Although ethnicity is a form of social organization, it is not a hard and fast means of mobilizing each and every member of a group equally. Besides variations in ethnic sentiments among members, membership of other social groups and/or allegiance to other social identities creates individual difference of reaction to ethnic based actions. Moreover, individual members' particular conditions (way of life, area of settlement, economic occupation, degree of involvement in other non-ethnic networks etc.) influence ones' reactions to ethnically motivated actions and responses. In the 1990 as well as the latter ethnic conflicts, some individuals had either remained passive in the conflicts or sided against their ethnic group members. Loyalty to locality, in fact, is one of the strong forces that competes with people's devotion to ethnic sentiments.

Besides micro level political and economic conditions, national political and economic systems and state policies significantly influence interethnic relations at a local level. Modern states control and allocate resources to different users and, as a result, directly or indirectly control people's movement, production systems and social life. Alfred Darneld and Sunita Parikh suggested the following on the role of the state:

...Perhaps the most influential external force on ethnic groups and ethnicity in modern times is the state. As a major actor in social processes, the state is in a position to define the terms and content of interaction within ethnic group, between ethnic groups, and between an ethnic group and the state (Darneld and Parikh, 1984:270).

Furthermore, the various economic, social, political and environmental policies that the state adopts may directly or indirectly affect interethnic interactions at micro level. Thus, the state can relax or intensify the competition for resources and alter the forms and levels of expression of the conflicts emanating from resource competition.

In Wondo Wosha, the state had played a crucial role in changing the power of balance among competing groups during the Derg period. Similarly, in the later period the new political policy, which glorified ethnic identity, changed the types of relations among the groups and led to the establishment of new ethnic alignments.

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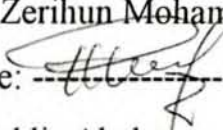
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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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