Politicised Communities:

Community-Based Adaptation
to Climate Change
in the Ethiopian Highlands

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Declaration

I, Jin-ho Chung, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis examines, through a study of UNDP's Small Grants Programme (SGP), how two different communities in the Ethiopian highlands are responding to the need for adaptation to climate change. Its overall aim is to use this example to contribute a critical analysis to studies of Community-Based Adaptation (CBA). The thesis analyses the politicised narratives that emerged as the SGP was being implemented that sought to explain why the two communities had different capacities to adapt. It also sets out the ways community members came to narrate their own experiences of the SGP. In both field locations, CBA has been adopted as a strategy. However, the argument of the thesis, based on field experience, is that this approach will have limited long-term success because it is conceptually under-developed and in particular depoliticised. To address this weakness, the thesis produces a new theoretical framework for the analysis of CBA that combines political ecology and resilience thinking. The thesis is based on significant qualitative research involving 8 months of participant observation, 7 focus group discussions and 73 semi-structured interviews with community leaders, peasant farmers, government officials and SGP management personnel carried out between September 2013 and June 2014. The thesis demonstrates the heterogeneity of communities and the complexity this brings to implementing standard models of CBA in specific field sites. It treats CBA as a discourse by analysing the relationships of power, scale and knowledge thereby revealing their political nature. The thesis argues that the diversity of social structures and individual agents, means that evaluations of CBA projects need to be flexible, context-sensitive and power-conscious. Placing politics at the centre of CBA, the thesis analyses the concept of 'community' in development practice, moving between the developmental viewpoint and the lived experience of Ethiopian peasant farmers. CBA is shown to be serving a dual purpose: it makes the socio-ecological systems of the communities in question more resilient to climate change, but also reinforces the existing socio-political structures of the communities, reproducing current inequalities. Lastly, the significance of CBA is analysed from the farmers' perspectives, showing how Ethiopian elites have historically deployed control over land to steer the behaviour of the Ethiopian peasantry. This has made the peasant communities in Ethiopia strongly hierarchical and internally divided in terms of rights and resources.

Acknowledgement

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Note on Maps

In most instances, I have obtained permission from the copyright holders concerned to use their maps on any version of the thesis (Map 1 – 7). For Map 8 and 9, it is acknowledged in *Ethiopia's Rural Facilities and Services Atlas 2014* that all information and maps in the atlas can be used by whoever concerns the improvement of the facilities and services in rural parts of Ethiopia.

List of Abbreviations

ACCRA: Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance

CAAG: Council of the Association of American Geographers

CBA: Community-Based Adaptation

CBO: Community-Based Organisation

CMIP5: Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 5 (2010-2014)

CPS: Country Programme Strategy

CSA: Central Statistical Agency

EHRS: Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study

EPDM: Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement

EPLF: Eritrean People's Liberation Front

EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

EPRP: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party

FFW: Food-for-Work

GEF: Global Environment Facility

IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

MoANR: Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NSC: National Steering Committee

OLF: Oromo Liberation Front

PA: Peasant Association

PC: Producer Cooperative

PD: Participatory Development

PMAC: Provisional Military Administrative Council

RCP: Representative Concentration Pathway

SCRP: Soil Conservation Research Project

SGP: Small Grants Programme

SNNPR: Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region

SPI: Standardised Seasonal Precipitation

TGE: Transitional Government of Ethiopia

TPLF: Tigrayan People's Liberation Front

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNOPS: United Nations Office for Project Services

WCRP: World Climate Research Programme

WFP: World Food Programme

Chapter One.   Introduction

> *Researcher: After all this time, do you think we can still call this project*
>
> *community-based?*
>
> *A former militia man: When we see it nowadays, it is not possible to say so.*
>
> *(Interview DR-13)*

Community-based adaptation (CBA) is a community-led intervention, which seeks to address climate change through participatory approaches, based on communities' priorities, knowledge and capacities. Particular emphasis is placed both on integrated adaptation measures capable of eliciting local knowledge and on understanding complex socio-ecological systems (Ensor et al., 2016). CBA, in this thesis, is also about development processes that, over and above supporting particular adaptation measures, bring participatory decision-making to the centre of climate change adaptation. Decision-making processes likewise may be about governing communities as much as increasing adaptive capacity. Given that communities are shaped by conflicting values and contrasting aspirations, CBA comes to be seen as a complex, multi-voiced process which gives rise to a variety of outcomes. As a generalisation, the ambition of CBA, that is participation and empowerment, is shaped by different actors, institutions, environments, ideas, traditions and hopes.

Power relations are inherent to the working out of Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) projects. The explicit goal of these projects is to help villagers to cope with the consequences of climate change through their own institutions and actions. However, this thesis argues that the CBA projects are also a crucible for competition over rights and the pursuit of differential access to resources in complex socio-ecological systems. These projects are shaped by power relations

on a small and a large scale – from profoundly local struggles between a wife and husband, through intra-community struggles between generations, and inter-community and inter-regional power struggles, to struggles between state bureaucracies and state populations. They are therefore an important opportunity to bring social reform to communities, but can promote inequality and maintain the status quo, with all its existing complexities and, some would say, social injustices.

CBA is an intervention that forces us to question the salience of pre-formulated understandings of community-based development as context-free and apolitical. Different actors and institutions shape the activities of CBA in different places as well as the variety of outcomes engendered by these projects. Power relations are seldom symmetrical and the decision-making processes of the projects are frequently dominated by a few patriarchal leaders. The thesis starts from this premise: power relations are asymmetrical and thus important in every community, but local context and power relations will shape both the way CBA is implemented and the outcomes at the end of the projects. Critical analysis of the power dynamics of communities is therefore necessary. In an era of shrinking international development budgets and rising climate change concerns, international donor agencies are increasingly referring to the need for practice to come 'from the community'. It is the task of academic work to interpret community action in the light of field research. This thesis sets out to accomplish this by looking at the dynamics of two interrelated aspects of CBA in specific field sites of Ethiopia.

First, it examines control of land as a central organising feature of Ethiopian governmentality. It shows how three successive Ethiopian regimes over two hundred years have deployed control over land to steer the behaviour of the

Ethiopian people, particularly the peasantry. It will be argued that a considerable number of rural communities in Ethiopia have never been internally equal or democratic, but instead has consistently been strongly hierarchical and internally divided in terms of rights and resources. Peasant farmers have not merely tolerated this inequality; they have given their consent and support to strongly hierarchical structures, in part because these connect villages to a distant central government. Such relationships will shape the way CBA works out in 21st century Ethiopia.

Second, the thesis offers a political account of adaptive capacity to climate change during the time the CBA projects were implemented in two different communities in the Ethiopian highlands. Attention is given to the details of the ways in which different individuals and interest groups at village level articulate their experiences of the projects. The peasant farmers who participated in the research are not regarded as a homogeneous component of a single-voiced community, but as complex social actors with a variety of forms of social, ecological, cultural and political assets and aspirations. The case studies in this thesis reveal that the CBA projects promote conflicting values and contrasting aspirations in terms of access to rights and resources, which gives rise to a variety of outcomes, with both winners and losers. Some individuals gain significant political assets through their participation in the CBA projects because of the extent to which the structures of community are inscribed into the way in which the projects are implemented.

Politics, in this thesis, is the (generally public) dialogue about the rules (both formal laws and less formal social regulations) by which a society lives and operates and through which scarce resources are allocated. Politics may be about rules within a family or within a village or within a nation-state. Government –

often seen as synonymous with politics - likewise may be about governing a village as much as governing a country. Given that these rules probably benefit some people more than others, politics is as much about conflict as it is about co-operation and as much about exclusion as inclusion. As a generalisation, the political debate, that is the debate about rules, is orchestrated by those who have authority and reflects their interests. Thus, the perpetual dialogue of politics is about identifying conflicting interests and seeking some kind of (often temporary or contingent) resolution or compromise.

Through these two lines of inquiry and argument, the thesis demonstrates the need for a flexible, context-sensitive and power-conscious analytical framework to evaluate CBA. It aspires to make a distinctive contribution to the field of studies of community development in general, and studies of CBA in particular, by developing an analytical framework that foregrounds underlying contexts and both local and national politics. The tradition of political ecology is applied as an initial conceptual toolkit through which this ambition to develop and apply a distinctive analytical framework can be achieved. It also requires engaging with varied power dynamics, socio-political milieu, physical environments, livelihoods and motivations which are shaping individual actors and institutions. In promoting the concept of 'politicised communities', the thesis aims to make a contribution to the field of political ecology and uses empirical insights gained from the Ethiopian highlands to do so. The thesis has approached the research setting not as a paradigmatic site for the analysis of a particular process, but as a location from which to build theories that might be productively applied elsewhere.

This thesis sets out to study two projects funded through the UNDP's Small Grants Programme (SGP) in the Ethiopian highlands. In both case studies, CBA

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has been adopted as a strategy, aiming to improve the capacity of the local communities to adapt to climate change through awareness raising, training and practice of conservation techniques. In particular, the thesis draws attention to the case of area closure,[1] one of the core activities of the CBA projects in Ethiopia, as a crucible for competing over rights and resources.

1.1 An Overview of Community-Based Adaptation (CBA)

This section of the introduction sets out to reflect on the emergence of CBA. It argues that CBA has proven useful in shifting the paradigms of the orthodox top-down approach in development practice but will have limited long-term success because it is conceptually under-developed and in particular is depoliticised.

1.1.1 Climate Change Adaptation

Anthropogenic climate change refers to medium and long-term changes in climate patterns that are a result of man-made greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2014). This includes a higher intensity and frequency of extreme weather events such as drought, cyclone and floods and greater unpredictability and variability of the seasons and rainfall. This unpredictability is of particular importance to an area where subsistence often relies on rain-fed agriculture.

The impact of climate change is likely to be distributed unequally both in social and spatial terms (IPCC, 2014). There is a tendency for countries close to the equator to be more exposed to various extreme climate events than those in

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[1] This activity closes off a certain area of land and its natural resources from human and cattle interference during the project period (two years) in order to prevent soil erosion from intense rainfall events.

the mid-latitudes (Leal Filho, 2011). In particular, communities in these countries that are heavily dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods (e.g. pastoralists and farmers) are identified as highly vulnerable to climate change (Toulmin, 2009). People living in slums and informal settlements are also considered as vulnerable populations as such places are often not adequately protected from natural disasters such as landslides (e.g. Mathare in Nairobi, Kenya) or floods (e.g. Dharavi in Mumbai, India) (Schipper and Burton, 2009).

Vulnerability to climate change is affected by diverse factors. Adger (1999) disaggregates vulnerability into the two aspects of individual and collective vulnerability. Individual vulnerability is determined by factors such as access to resources, diversity of livelihoods and social status of individuals. Collective vulnerability is determined by factors such as market structures, social security and infrastructure at a larger scale. Different-level factors may interact with each other. For example, although Korea has better market structures than Ethiopia at the country level, Ethiopians can be more resilient to climate change than Koreans at the individual level due to their past experience of climate variability and consequently their built-in social infrastructures that can produce responses to those challenges.

There is a growing sense of the urgent need to support climate change adaption worldwide (Pelling, 2010). Adaptation is a set of actions that aim to reduce the vulnerability of individuals or groups to the adverse effects of anticipated climate change (Satterthwaite, 2007). Unlike mitigation,[2] adaptation was considered as beneficial only in the short term in the past (Pielke Jr., 2005). However, many scientists have argued that the impacts from weather events are

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[2] Interventions to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases (IPCC, 2014).

already substantial in every region of the world and are likely to become greater in future years even if anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are drastically reduced. Adaptation and mitigation are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary. Failure to mitigate the drivers of climate change will have negative consequences on adaptation whilst failure to adapt will require far more dramatic levels of mitigation. Adaptation should not be something we only consider when we fail to reduce emissions; it is part of the ultimate goal of balancing resource use and development of socio-ecological systems, namely to improve or at least maintain the quality of life and the environment (Lomborg, 2007).

Adaptation takes various forms: 1) decreasing the possibility of occurrence of the problem by controlling relative factors (e.g. flood control systems in a river basin); 2) coping with the problem by reducing sensitivity to potential impacts and/or increasing adaptive capacity (e.g. livelihood diversification programmes for pastoralists); and 3) avoiding the problem by limiting its potential impacts (e.g. small-scale dam construction to reduce soil erosion) (Dodman and Mitlin, 2011). The first and third options are often chosen by developed nations that can afford relatively high cost and high technology strategies. By contrast, in developing countries, there is a growing interest in the second option as a low-cost strategy to climate change adaptation.

The concept of CBA has first been suggested for communities that are vulnerable to climate change, but have few financial resources. The effectiveness of top-down approaches to development has been called into question. The interest in the second option has emerged out of recognition that financial aid channelled through governments in many developing countries often fails to reach its intended beneficiaries (Huq and Reid, 2007). As a result, some

development agencies have started to work directly with local communities to identify the risks and factors that make them vulnerable to climate change (Ayers and Huq, 2009).

The emphasis on community is, however, more than just recognition that many low-income communities bear the costs of climate change, but reflects the significance of CBA in terms of the ownership of their own natural resources and the exercise of their rights as well as issues around governance at a nation-state scale. Many of those communities in developing countries are heavily dependent on local environmental conditions. Their natural resources, such as land and water, tend to be commonly owned, and so decisions related to the use and management of these resources have to be made at the community level (Forsyth and Ayers, 2009).

1.1.2 Definition of Community

Over the last ten years, a growing number of international donor agencies have incorporated climate change adaptation into local development work through the concept of CBA. This brings together long-standing ideas from participatory development and more recent resilience thinking. It is argued that local communities have the skills, knowledge and networks to promote locally appropriate activities for their own livelihoods. Advocates of CBA claim that it is the most effective framework for identifying, assisting and implementing local development activities in response to climate change, particularly in regions where adaptive capacity is highly dependent on livelihood strategies, such as sub-Saharan Africa (Dodman et al., 2010).

First of all, it is worthwhile reviewing the concept of 'community' as a precursor to the analysis of CBA. In the general sense, the term 'community' refers to 'a group of people living in the same place' (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2010). This taken-for-granted concept was re-examined in development studies following the wide scale interest in participatory development in the 1970s and 80s (Gregory, 2009). The difficulty of defining community is noted by many, but a useful starting point is that: a community is an entity that has geographic boundaries and a shared fate (Norris et al., 2007). This definition highlights two major uses of the term: 1) it is the territorial and geographical notion of community such as neighbourhood, town or city; and 2) it is relational, concerned with the qualities of human relationships and social ties that draw people together and hold them together over time (Gusfield, 1978). The focus of the second usage is on networks of individuals who interact within formal or informal institutions (e.g. a miners' association or a youth group in a small town). Although there have been social scientists that weigh relational criteria against locality due to their genuine interest in the notion, the two usages are not necessarily exclusive of each other (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

Heller (1989) adds a third dimension: community as 'collective political power', referring to a group of people who share some similar political interests. He argues that organising political actions is one of the few ways left for individuals to develop social structures in response to their needs (Heller, 1989). This notion is built on the premise that aggregated constituencies are potential levers for social change. A system of parliamentary democracy is a good example that effectively exercises collective political power by institutionalising the process of representing geographical communities into decision-making. This concept of community was found applicable to this thesis, as will be detailed in Chapter Six.

The relationship between politics and community reminds us that the term community can be used as a concept of exclusion as well as inclusion. Carl Schmitt (1932) stresses that being different is sufficient to create conflicts in the political sphere by drawing a distinction between 'the friend' and 'the enemy' or in this context those who are inside the community and those who are not. It is frequently assumed in development practice that people living in a specific location all belong to one community. Internal conflicts and heterogeneity are brushed over. But social institutions do not always protect the rights of individuals or specific groups inside the community. These institutions (e.g. traditional rulers) can uphold and reproduce local configurations of inequality and exclusion. Socio-political structures are so often left untouched during social, ecological and economic changes (Cleaver, 2001).

For instance, in a water supply development project in Machakos District, Kenya, that I participated in 2005, the unconditional right of access to water was exclusively granted to those who had assisted in the implementation of the project through the provision of labour or materials. In that case, village members who were poorer and lived further away from the project site were less likely to have participated in the work and were therefore denied the benefits. Although they could negotiate, their access to water was limited. This concept of community has proven to be useful in understanding conflicts over resources which will be detailed through the case study of area closure in Chapter Seven and Eight.

Communities need to be understood in terms of internal power relations (Voydanoff, 2001). Based on field experience, a community is frequently presented as a unified body that speaks with a single voice in the current practice

of CBA. A community is however made through a continual process of fabricating and refabricating multiple voices 'inside', and it is built on its unique mix of customs, history and socio-ecological circumstances. Community members are therefore unlikely to benefit from change on equal terms. It depends, among other things, on where they live, what they do for a living and to which social networks they belong, namely their day-to-day activities. This is not only true of the production and reproduction of communities in general, but is also true of the interventions made in the name of 'community interest' or 'progress' in community-based development approaches (Watts and Peet, 2004).

Communities, in the present thesis, are treated as collective political power which shares similar political interests and used as a concept of exclusion as well as inclusion, rather than just a group of people living in the same geographical space with a single voice. People belong to multiple communities defined by place, institution and activity. Communities are variously loci of knowledge, sites of regulation and management, sources of identity, repositories of tradition and embodiments of institutions (Norris et al., 2007; Watts and Peet, 2004). The term community often turns out to be a keyword whose meanings are wrapped up in unstable, contested and complex ways. Thus understanding communities is also about questioning representation, authority, governance and accountability among multiple and contradictory constituencies and alliances (Li, 2004). Communities are therefore not seen as internally harmonious and coherent; rather as riven by differences and competition in complex socio-ecological systems.

1.1.3   Key Features of CBA

The argument of the thesis, based on literature and field experience, is that the dearth of theoretical engagement has created two critical challenges for CBA. First, CBA has failed to address the multifaceted character of climate change in complex socio-ecological systems (Tschakert and Dietrich, 2010). Instead, it has only focused on one or two adaptation measures that respond to current predictions of climate change. Existing ideas about CBA treat climate change as a question of temperature and/or rainfall and fail to properly address the adaptive capacity of community in relation to complex multivariate climate risks (Forsyth and Ayers, 2009). Second, political structures within and outside CBA projects are frequently ignored (Dodman and Mitlin, 2011; Dumaru, 2010). Given that CBA approaches aim to empower a community by strengthening their participation in decision-making processes, an understanding the internal and external power relationships of communities and the human risks determined by political and economic factors is crucial.

The analysis of CBA can identify contradictions or assumptions that explain the relatively limited success of CBA in the field. A commitment to CBA is often effectively, an act of faith – something that is believed in and rarely questioned (Cleaver, 2001). The concept of participation embedded in CBA is seen as an intrinsically 'good thing' for beneficiaries; knowledge management and disseminating best practice are considered to be the most useful academic contribution; considerations of power and politics are thought to divisive and so best ignored (Cleaver, 2001). In practice, CBA is often presented as an array of adaptation options in a shopping-list style in which communities are asked to choose among a selection of alternative policies and practices without consideration of the systemic implications (Thomsen et al., 2012).

Conceptualising CBA is therefore a necessary first step in preparing adaptation strategies that are cognisant of wider scalar, temporal, political and developmental dimensions of socio-ecological systems.

In spite of the substantial public interest, there have been surprisingly few academic discussions on the conceptualisation of CBA. This is mainly because of the view that CBA only develops through practice in the field rather than through theoretical development in debates (Huq and Reid, 2007; Reid, 2009). For instance, Huq (2008:28) argues, "it is impossible to learn the theory of CBA in a university… learning comes from practice itself". As a result, most academic studies have focused less on conceptual development but more on responding to projects in the field by building knowledge management systems. Yet there is little evidence of the long-term effectiveness of CBA in improving the conditions of the most vulnerable populations (Dodman and Mitlin, 2011; Tschakert and Dietrich, 2010).

Of the academic contributions to reviewing the history of CBA and addressing its logistical problems, some have made more original theoretical contributions, particularly in terms of its socio-political implications. For example, Ensor and Berger (2009) interrogate the relationship between culture and adaptation from a political point of view in order to analyse how cultures are defined in adaptation processes. They show how CBA can recognise and respond to the different roles that culture plays, and in particular how culture appears to limit the freedom of individuals and groups. Dumaru (2010) also examines CBA to illustrate key lessons in terms of embedded power relations in a community. Dodman and Mitlin (2011) draw lessons from past experiences of Participatory Development (PD), and claim that CBA needs to engage with issues of power at various levels of governance, calling for attention to be paid to political

structures and institutions involved in adaptation policy. Forsyth (2013) analyses CBA as part of a trend of linking international development and climate change policies. Finally, at the 5th International Conference on CBA in 2011, Harjeet Singh argued that in order to fully address adaptive capacity in vulnerable communities, it is necessary to understand the current unbalanced power relations of the society of which communities are part since these are closely associated with pressing social problems such as poverty, health and education (Haider and Rabbani, 2011). Despite these conceptual interventions, CBA is still more often thought of as a strategy to be tried in the field than an idea to be analysed in the academy.

Bearing this in mind, three conceptual areas of CBA will be interrogated to problematise the existing definitions of CBA and identify the requirements for developing a more explicit conceptual framework: 1) environmental knowledge and its incorporation into project planning; 2) participation and the idea of a social process; and 3) the relevance and conceptualisation of politics.

Environmental Knowledge

What distinguishes CBA from standard development projects most is the role and treatment of knowledge. CBA starts by recognising communities' needs and perceptions in order to deliver livelihood benefits and reduce vulnerability to climate change. Although it may make CBA look similar to other bottom-up approaches, the way the intervention is developed is different. From the outset, it involves the valorisation of local knowledge and raises questions about how knowledge from inside and outside of communities is merged in the project process. In other words, CBA is concerned not only with *what* communities do, but with *how* they do it with what knowledge (Ensor and Berger, 2009).

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Two particular forms of environmental knowledge are considered: indigenous knowledge of local environmental changes, on the one hand, and scientific information acquired from climate change modelling on the other (Dumaru, 2010). Whilst both sources contribute to an understanding of climate-related risks, it is often unclear how they relate to building communities' resilience. Despite the increased number of studies in climate science, the vast majority still focus on annual global temperature and precipitation rather than the timing of rain and seasonal rainfall patterns in regions, which are of much more use to local farming communities (McGray, 2007). Where the data is available, the communities are often not able to access it. In the absence of local climate data, the recollection of village elders or local farmers is the only source of information. Such sources may be unreliable, for instance, when earlier climatic events are overshadowed by recent ones (Warrick, 2009). There is also a fear that the traditional methods of forecasting such as using wind patterns, cloud formations or animal behaviour become less accurate due to the impacts of global climate change.

What is more important, as Kothari (2001) argues, is that environmental knowledge in local communities is culturally, socially and politically produced. Not only is it continuously reformulated but also it is often conceived in normative terms. Knowledge is not treated as a fixed thing that people possess, rather it is an accumulation of social norms, rituals and practices that are embedded in people's lives in complex socio-ecological systems. This is why what is known about local environments cannot be separated from local power relations (Kothari, 2001; Sletto, 2011). When collecting and selecting the information, knowledge often works as a 'barometer' to reveal the socio-political dominance of locality. Information acquired from communities is still

valuable, but it has to be conceptualised in a different way from classical notions of scientific data (Berkes, 2004). This will be further discussed in Chapter Two and demonstrated with a case of discursively constructed understanding of climate change in Chapter Six.

Participatory Process

CBA aims to be a participatory process. Here we have two key points to consider: the first is that it is a 'process'; and the second is that it is 'participatory'. For those such as Huq (2008) who are of the view that a conceptual analysis has little to offer CBA, a term like 'process' is treated as straightforward and not meriting attention. In such a view, a process happens independently of time, space and human subjects. In contrast, the present thesis claims it is a major challenge to understand what is meant when somebody claims that adaptation is a social process. The notion of social process refers to "a flow of events or actions that produces, reproduces or transforms a system or structure" (Gregory, 2009:586). That is to say, a social process is a mechanism that weaves together agency, history, space and power of socio-ecological systems in order to reproduce a certain set of social relations (Gregory, 2009).

The credibility and efficacy of CBA is threatened when priorities are skewed away from long-term system viability towards short-term impacts. A social process has neither beginning nor end, but CBA is frequently conceived as a time-limited intervention. CBA workers often presume that once appropriate adaptation measures are identified and implemented, communities' development plans and activities can be secured against adverse effects of climate change. Such a view treats adaptation as a self-contained series of events and advocates discrete actions (Tschakert and Dietrich, 2010). It contradicts the

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conception of 'social process' and reflects a reductionist approach that separates system elements from one another and disconnects interventions from the systems they are intended to influence (Tschakert and Dietrich, 2010). It means CBA may struggle with the connections between interventions and outcomes and advocate narrowly defined adaptation measures such as a set of technical options focused on specific risks at an overly narrow spatio-temporal scale of the systems.

CBA also claims to be a 'participatory' approach, enabling individuals and groups, who were previously excluded by top-down processes, to be included in decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods (Ensor et al., 2014). The participatory approach has flourished in the aid industry since development policies built on local knowledge and experience were seen to be more appropriate and therefore sustainable (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2005). Its advocates believe participatory activities create a sense of commitment whereby community members will actively contribute their knowledge to decision-making processes. In practice, however, actors and institutions are attracted by their own self-interests. For example, in India, one development project was analysed to demonstrate how fundamentally different understandings of the project goals were clothed in a language of 'participation'. In this case, regional government used the term to meet expenditure targets through having free labour of local farmers; public work agencies understood 'participation' as an enticement for future projects; and NGOs were of the view that the term brought political credibility within the locality (Mosse, 2001).

In conclusion, the concept of participation in CBA is problematic. On the one hand, it makes CBA an heir to the previous participatory development approaches that are familiar to development practitioners. On the other hand, it

exposes CBA to the extensive body of critique that previously levelled at participatory approaches to development. This will be further discussed in Chapter Two and demonstrated through the case of area closure in Chapter Seven.

Relevance of Politics

Power relations are a key lens through which to analyse CBA projects. CBA approaches involve a variety of agencies and different degrees of participation. These often lead to friction among actors and institutions. First, the interests of outsiders such as international donor agencies often override the priorities of communities. In particular, once foreign development workers are involved, local people's opinions and priorities become easily undervalued. Outsiders frequently act as teachers or experts rather than as facilitators or coordinators. This trend has wide-ranging implications for professional behaviour, attitudes and institutional cultures and is, in fact, opposed to the principles of CBA (Ensor et al., 2014).

Second, more importantly and yet obscurely, communities are politicised by participating in CBA. To seek locally identified problems and locally appropriate solutions, CBA builds on existing socio-cultural norms and rules. Being rooted in communities, the process of CBA is designed to facilitate practices from within communities. It means that in order to be effective, CBA approaches necessarily need a highly developed appreciation of local power dynamics (Ensor and Berger, 2009). The socio-political structures of a particular community may oppress specific groups of people or/and disregard voices of the 'others' such as women and young adults. In particular, marginalised people can frequently be either 'invisible' to outsiders or formally excluded by local customary law. CBA itself

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may set out to avoid bias, but based on field experience it easily accepts dominant narratives of 'who we are' and 'what we need' that emerge from the established dominant groups such as community leaders and elders. Further to this, current trends in CBA frequently simplify the highly complicated socio-political relations around communities by constructing dichotomies of power. This will be further discussed in Chapter Two and proved with the case of area closure in Chapter Seven and Eight.

In sub–Saharan Africa, CBA has become one of the most widely used strategies for responding to what is, arguably, the most pressing and important issue facing the continent: 'climate change'. Whilst practical field experiments in CBA can be crucial in finding strategies to make CBA 'work', there is also a role for theoretical analysis and critique of the ideas underpinning the approach. This thesis consequently aims to develop an analytical framework for the critical analysis of CBA that restores politics and social context to central importance. The framework will be constructed in Chapter Two from a series of key components that include community, systems resilience, environmental knowledge, participation, power–relations, governmentality, representation and scale.

1.2   Theoretical Contributions

By and large, communities are politicised. This thesis sets out to contribute to the field of community development in general, and studies of CBA in particular, by developing an analytical framework that foregrounds underlying contexts and both local and national politics. Drawing on a wide body of literature, it demonstrates the heterogeneity of communities and the complexity this brings to implementing standard models of CBA in specific field sites. The

diversity of social structures and individual agents, the thesis argues, means that evaluations of CBA projects need to be flexible, context-sensitive and power-conscious. Framed around the evaluations of CBA projects and the challenges that have emerged, it illustrates this claim, placing politics at the centre of climate change adaptation at the local level. In so doing, it contributes a sympathetic critical analysis, rather than a dichotomous view of whether CBA works or not.

By bringing together resilience thinking with a political ecology approach, the thesis shows that the current practice of CBA will have limited long-term success. This is because it is conceptually under-developed, depending on an unrealistically depoliticised understanding of the communities involved. The thesis takes a critical approach, treating CBA as a discourse and seeking to analyse the relationships of power, scale and knowledge that underpin the production and operation of that discourse, thereby revealing their political nature. It analyses the standard theoretical foundations of CBA, showing how the participatory development (PD) discourse and the concept of resilience come together to formulate the notion of CBA. It conceptualises CBA through the alternative lens of political ecology, developing the argument that this approach responds to the weaknesses associated with resilience thinking – that is its limited capacity for political analysis. In so doing, the thesis set out to intervenes in current conceptual debates and make three theoretical contributions to the field of research on CBA.

The first conceptual innovation this thesis brings to the field is to understand participation and empowerment in specific local communities without neglecting the politics and socio-political structures and wider structures in which these local communities are embedded. The thesis takes this injunction seriously and

analyses the assumption that the idea of 'the local' has itself become hegemonic in some development discourses and needs to be treated more critically. At the same time, the role of 'the local' in development practice should be determined in relation to other scales. The thesis responds to this paradox by analysing the dynamics of specific CBA projects without losing sight of the dynamics of regional, national and global scales in terms of decentralised decision-making, effective knowledge management and participatory processes. Such an aspiration is the key, the thesis argues, to identifying appropriate solutions for Ethiopian peasant farmers, rather than merely stressing the physical impacts of climate change at the local village level.

A second analytical contribution to the research field is to link CBA with the idea of systems resilience. This defines communities and their surrounding environment as complex socio-ecological systems. In such systems, all components of the systems are intricately interconnected (Berkes et al., 2003). The notion of adaptive capacity – central to resilience thinking – involves cross-level and cross-scale activities that aim to formulate an overarching management system to guide climate change adaptation in a holistic sense, bringing together knowledge of systems, studies of institutional linkages and collective action in response to climate change (Folke, 2006; Walker and Salt, 2006). Considering adaptive capacity in terms of resilience thinking also implies the ability to respond to change and even transform systems into more desirable states.

The third analytical contribution of this thesis is to weave political ecology's understanding of relational power into resilience thinking in order to rethink questions of politics in the analysis of CBA. Here politics is the (generally public) dialogue about the rules (both formal laws and less formal social regulations) by

which a society lives and operates and through which scarce resources are allocated. There is a growing body of scholarly work paying attention to the ways in which power and the politics of decision-making inform development thinking and practice. This movement has been academically promoted by research initiatives such as Effective States and Inclusive Development (ESID) and the Development Leadership Program (DLP) (Mehta and Walton, 2014; Menocal, 2015). In the context of CBA, this is a recognition of the need to improve understanding of power relations around local communities in order to respond flexibly and collectively to climate disturbances in complex socio-ecological systems. Despite this growing interest, there is relatively little academic work addressing questions of power and politics in CBA projects that reveal how relations between actors and institutions affect the resilience of communities with regard to climate change. The thesis also draws particular attention to questions of authoritarian governmentality (Dean 2010), history and consent as a lens through which to think about how relational power operates through environmental interventions such as CBA.

1.3   Research Questions

This thesis sets out to examine, through a study of CBA, how two different communities in the Ethiopian highlands are responding to the need for adaptation to climate change. The overarching question that frames the thesis is,

To what extent do socio-political structures and practices shape the building of adaptive capacity in Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) projects in Ethiopia?

This question is built on the central hypothesis of the thesis: decision-making processes of CBA are shaped by existing complex socio-political

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structures within and outside communities. The overall aim of the thesis is to assess the significance of the socio-political factors that shape the adaptive capacity of the case study communities. Four such factors are identified: 1) the historical legacies that shape current Ethiopian politics; 2) the politics of scale and indigenous knowledge that shape the definition and capacity of communities in 21st century Ethiopia; 3) the internal politics of communities that reflect their heterogeneity and lack of consensus; and 4) the politics of community leadership in the contexts of neopatrimonialism that coexists with legal-rational legitimacy. Each of these is addressed in a separate empirical chapter, though the research questions may cut across these topics.

The fieldwork was guided by a number of research questions that examine first where local socio-political structures come from, and second, what consequences they have on project outcomes, in order to address the four factors above:

1. What processes form the political assets of actors and institutions in Ethiopia?

   a) How are the socio-political structures of a community constructed?

   b) To what extent do socio-political dynamics within and around a community shape the local accounts of adaptive capacity and with what consequences?

2. To what extent does the current practice of CBA shape complex socio-ecological systems of a community in Ethiopia?

   a) Who participates in the decision-making processes of CBA and how are their identities determined?

b)   To what extent do CBA projects change the geometry of power of a community?

1.4   Thesis Summary

Chapter Two, 'Theoretical Context: Thinking through Power and Politics', reviews the literature relevant to this thesis and outlines how the thesis contests and advances the work of others. This chapter sets out to further demonstrate the heterogeneity of communities and the complexity this brings to implementing standardised models of CBA in specific field sites. The diversity of social structures and individual agents, it argues, means that evaluations of CBA projects need to be flexible, context-sensitive and power-conscious. The chapter starts with the analysis of the orthodox theoretical foundations of CBA, showing how the participatory development discourse and the concept of resilience originally came together to formulate the notion of CBA. The chapter then attempts to reconceptualise CBA through the alternative lens of political ecology, reviewing the features of CBA through three key concepts drawn from political ecology: power, scale and representation. Here the chapter introduces the explicitly paradoxical concept of 'authoritarian governmentality' and argues that this captures the complexity of politics in Ethiopia. In so doing, the chapter produces a new theoretical framework for the analysis of CBA that combines political ecology and resilience thinking.

Chapter Three, 'Ethiopian Context', provides a summary of the background information on Ethiopia. The chapter starts with a brief description of the country's geography, climate change and modern history and then gives particular attention to the contemporary political debate on Ethiopia in the context of ethnic federalism and neopatrimonialism.

Chapter Four, 'Methodology, Research Design and Methods', lays out the methodological approaches and reflections involved in this thesis. Data collection, carried out between September 2013 and June 2014, is based on qualitative research involving 8 months of participant observation, 7 focus group discussions and 73 semi-structured interviews with community leaders, peasant farmers, government officials and management personnel of UNDP's Small Grants Programme (SGP).

The four empirical chapters that follow address four different factors that affect the adaptive capacity of the case study communities. They provide different ways of thinking about politics in a community that contribute to an overall explanation of why projects succeed or fail in delivering the goals of CBA, that is, improving adaptive capacity. Chapter Five argues that the political legacies of Ethiopian history are an important factor affecting adaptive capacity because they produce a specific form of political culture (authoritarian governmentality). Chapter Six argues that questions of scale and indigenous knowledge are an important factor because they shape the character of what constitutes a 'community' in 21st century Ethiopia. Chapter Seven focuses on the internal differentiation of the case study communities and the way different groups make decisions and allocate resources as a means of determining the goal of increasing adaptive capacity. Finally, Chapter Eight draws attention to the invisible politics of community leadership that is founded upon the historical neopatrimonial relationship that shapes the process through which adaptive capacity is built.

Chapter Five. 'Governmentality, Land and the Political Legacies of History' examines empirically how three successive Ethiopian regimes have deployed

control over land to steer the behaviour of the Ethiopian people, particularly the peasantry, over the past two hundred years. It focuses on one of the key problems with the application of CBA in 21st century Ethiopia: that CBA makes assumptions about a broad level of equality in a society. In answering the research question, 'how are the socio-political structures of a community constructed?', the chapter argues that a considerable number of rural communities in Ethiopia have never been internally equal or democratic, but instead has consistently been strongly hierarchical and internally divided in terms of rights and resources. In particular, it argues that over a period of two millennia peasant farmers have tolerated this inequality because they have no choice, and, beyond this, have given their consent and support to strongly hierarchical structures, which connect villages to a distant central government.

Chapter Six. 'The Politics of CBA: Competing Scales and Knowledge' explores how the scale of CBA is configured and how indigenous knowledge is regulated in Ethiopia. In answering the research question, 'to what extent do socio-political dynamics within and around a community shape the local accounts of adaptive capacity and with what consequences?', this chapter focuses on the socio-political accounts of adaptive capacity which emerged during the time CBA projects were implemented in two villages in Ethiopia. It details the ways in which the village members narrate their experiences of those projects. Here adaptive capacity is conceptualised based on the framework of resilience thinking and its political accounts are analysed through the lens of political ecology. In so doing, it adds political perspectives to the application of CBA and demonstrates how the socio-political structures of community shape the building of adaptive capacity through CBA projects in the case study communities.

Chapter Seven, 'Changing Power Dynamics *within* the Case Study Communities', draws on the finding of Chapter Six to explain how the politics emerged during the CBA projects in the two villages. In answering the research question, 'who participates in the decision-making processes of CBA and how are their identities determined?', it shows how the actors exercise various forms of political assets within the structures of community and to compete over access to resources around CBA. The chapter demonstrates the simultaneous decentralisation and recentralisation of power and authority, particularly through the case of area closure, which was one of the core activities of CBA. The first part of this chapter analyses a degree of local democracy in the case study communities in terms of socio-political components such as position, education level, wealth, age and gender. Based on this analysis, the second part of the chapter interrogates the change in power dynamics in the northern case study.

Chapter Eight, 'The Invisible Politics of Community Leadership', examines the politics of leadership in communities and their underlying contexts and processes. It sets out to demonstrate why leadership matters in the practice of neopatrimonialism that coexists with legal-rational legitimacy. In answering the research question, 'to what extent do CBA projects change the geometry of power of a community?', this chapter shows that there are ongoing political dynamics in the multi-layered clientelistic networks around the case study communities. The first part of the chapter analyses local people's perceptions of the politics of leadership, illustrated through discussions of elections and of nepotism. Based on this analysis, the second part of the chapter interrogates two different levels of neopatrimonial relationship, exemplified through the case study in southern Ethiopia and considers the consequences of these issues in terms of the community's adaptive capacity.

Finally, Chapter Nine, 'Conclusion: Towards a Recognition of Politicised Communities', summarises the distinctive contribution of this thesis to the study of community development in general, and CBA in particular, that is to say, the development of an analytical framework that foregrounds politics, scale, context and governmentality. This chapter summarises the findings presented in the four empirical chapters and relates them to the research questions in order to demonstrate the importance of socio-political structures and practices within and around local communities in shaping the building of adaptive capacity in CBA projects. By bringing together resilience thinking with a political ecology approach, the limitations on the long-term success of CBA can be identified, notably its conceptual under-development and lack of a political dimension. The chapter concludes with some reflections on the limitations of the thesis and identifies directions for future research.

Chapter Two.   Theoretical Context: Thinking through Power and Politics

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework on which the rest of the thesis is built and introduces the key analytical concepts. Drawing on a wide body of literature, it demonstrates the heterogeneity of communities and the complexity this brings to implementing standard models of Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) in specific field sites. The diversity of social structures and individual agents, the chapter argues, means that evaluations of CBA projects need to be flexible, context-sensitive and power-conscious. Framed around the evaluations of CBA projects and the challenges that have emerged, the chapter illustrates this claim, placing politics at the centre of climate change adaptation at the local level. In so doing, it aims to contribute a sympathetic, but critical analysis to studies of CBA, rather than a dichotomous view of whether it works or not.

Based on a variety of recent and canonical texts, this chapter produces a theoretical framework for the analysis of CBA that combines political ecology and resilience thinking. It takes a critical approach, which treats CBA as a discourse and seeks to analyse the relationships of power, scale and representation (knowledge) in socio-ecological systems that underpin the production and operation of that discourse thereby revealing their political nature. In so doing, the chapter addresses a series of questions: how (and to what extent) is the governance of CBA influenced by power and politics at different spatial and societal scales? How did CBA originally evolve as a set of ideas? How significant is resilience thinking in this narrative? What are the key concepts political ecology uses when approaching case studies like this? How has the existing political ecology literature helped our understanding of CBA? And

where does the political ecology literature fall short in elucidating the process of CBA in ways this thesis seeks to resolve?

First, the chapter starts with the analysis of the standard or orthodox theoretical foundations of CBA. It shows how the participatory development (PD) discourse and the concept of resilience came together to formulate the notion of CBA. The discussion of participation and empowerment is relatively brief as this is generally well-known in development studies. The section also describes the key conceptual features of resilience thinking. This section goes into more detail as this set of debates is central to CBA. Next, the chapter conceptualises CBA through the alternative lens of political ecology. This section starts by assessing the history, definition and policy-relevance of political ecology. It then develops the argument that this approach can respond to some of the weaknesses often associated with resilience thinking – specifically its fairly limited capacity for political analysis. This part of the chapter critically reviews the features of CBA through three key concepts from political ecology – power, scale and representation (knowledge) – and produces the theoretical framework by synthesising resilience thinking and political ecology. Here the chapter also introduces the explicitly paradoxical concept of 'authoritarian governmentality' taken from the work of Mitchell Dean (2010), and argues that this captures the complexity of rural politics in Ethiopia.

The chapter sets out to show where the thesis seeks to intervene in current conceptual debates about CBA. Explicitly it identifies three key ways in which it makes theoretical contributions to the field of research on CBA. The first conceptual innovation the thesis brings to the field is to understand participation and empowerment in specific local communities without neglecting the politics and wider structures in which these local communities are embedded. The goal is

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to analyse the dynamics of specific CBA projects without losing sight of the dynamics of regional, national and global scales in terms of decentralised decision-making, effective knowledge management and participatory processes. This second analytical contribution to the research field is to link CBA with the idea of systems resilience by defining communities and their surrounding environment as complex socio-ecological systems, which recognises that 1) all components of the systems are intricately interconnected and that 2) systems change may be non-linear and shift between stable domains when thresholds are crossed. The third analytical innovation is to weave political ecology's understandings of relational power, the politics of scale and the politics of the representation of indigenous knowledge into resilience thinking in order to re-think questions of power and politics in the analysis of CBA. In particular, the review explores the concept of 'authoritarian governmentality' and its value to understanding questions of public consent to elite dominance in 21st century Ethiopia.

2.1 The Theory of CBA: Participatory Development and Resilience Thinking

2.1.1 Participatory Development: Participation and Empowerment

CBA is one of the latest iterations that has emerged from the long history of participatory development (PD). It is also one of the fastest growing bodies of knowledge in the field of climate change adaptation (Field et al., 2014; Forsyth, 2013; Ensor et al., 2014; Percy, 2012). CBA often appeals to development practitioners' intuition, with its focus on small-scale and bottom-up practice. It is therefore important to understand the historical and theoretical contexts of these ideas in order to analyse the concept of CBA. This thesis interprets CBA as a recent manifestation in the long history of PD.

Participatory approaches have been widely studied in development studies though they are a more recent addition to studies of climate change adaptation. The concept of PD as a formal intentional development practice first emerged during the 1940s. It evolved as a response to peasant uprisings against the colonial government's incompetent land reforms in India and from self-help initiatives in West Africa (Page and Mercer, 2014; Rahman, 1995; Sachs, 1992). However, the role of local communities in development projects was largely ignored by donors, governments and development agencies until the 1970s. PD emerged again when development theorists and practitioners acknowledged that their activities had failed to bring about significant improvement in people's livelihoods due to the imposition of top-down nature and practices (Chambers, 1983; Desai, 2008; Francis, 2001). At this point PD was redesigned in order to promote: the remaking of state-citizen relationships, the involvement of the beneficiaries in development projects and the cost-effectiveness in development practice. Over the past seven decades, the PD ideas have been variably applied to development projects by international aid organisations and have brought about some positive outcomes. They encouraged socially and economically marginalised communities to get involved in the development projects designed to assist them. Their practice has empowered the communities by strengthening democracy and participatory governance in committed countries (Cleaver, 2001; Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2005).

Since the 1990s, a general trend in development studies has gradually moved away from overarching meta-level theorisations towards more empirical and localised approaches (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). Development studies has promoted the concepts of 'empowerment' as a goal to be achieved through participation. This trend has foregrounded 'the local' as the key site of

participatory development practice. Mohan and Stokke (2000) argue that this theoretical move reflects the growing influence of two apparently contradictory schools of thought: 'revisionist neoliberalism' and 'postmarxist critical development studies'.

Civil society was first suggested as the key social sphere for participatory development in the context of the rise of revisionist neoliberalism. The neoliberal approach in the 1980s and 90s brought a dramatic shift in development studies, proposing that the state was a barrier rather than a driving force in the development process (Kamat, 2004). Neoliberals criticised the idea of an overly-interventionist state and instead promoted a free market economy. In this context civil society provided the institutions that could correct market failures and deliver social development where state and market did not. Civil society would 'step in' to fill the gaps left by shrinking the role of states as the private sector delivered more services and governments fewer. In particular, NGOs were seen as the key developmental vehicle for civil society (Kamat, 2004) and, as often as not, 'participation' meant engaging in NGO activities. However, after only a few years it was already acknowledged that much of the capital generated by the free market approach failed to 'trickle down' to the poorest in Third World countries (Craig and Mayo, 1995). Over time the recognition that there was a need to re-regulate unfettered markets in order to deliver social goals further elevated the theoretical significance of civil society. That is to say, civil society institutions, such as NGOs and CBOs, could empower citizens to get organised in order to impose pressure on anaesthetised states and thereby foster good governance (Hyden, 1997).

Ironically this rise in the significance of participatory civil society was also supported by the ideological opponents of neoliberalism. For radical

development studies, the 'empowerment' of groups of people who were marginalised by the state and the market became a key goal (Craig and Mayo, 1995). The strategy for delivering empowerment was active participation in civil society and social movements and then the promotion of these institutions as effective agents of development (Chambers, 1983). This ambition was theorised by poststructuralist thinkers (Escobar 1996; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) as part of a critique of the earlier Marxist concern with global uneven capitalist development and the consequent neglect of local politics and the agency of people in the Global South. This trend in both theory and practice has later provided the foundation for revaluing local knowledge and local networks with an emphasis on local hybrid cultures.

What these two schools of thought share is that neither markets nor states should be solely responsible for social and economic development. In their rhetoric both revisionist neoliberalism and postmarxism recognise individual local actors and institutions as key features in the development process. The organised support for participation in terms of cost-saving and project efficiency in development practice also recognises the importance of empowerment, particularly with people's collective actions. From a range of radical ideological positions, as well as from the mainstream, both 'participation' and 'empowerment' are regarded as the main prerequisites of sustainable development.

To be clear, it is important to say that a shared normative interest in participation and empowerment is not the basis of an attempt to argue that it is possible to conflate these two radically different views. There are also important conceptual differences between these two schools of thought about participation. The revisionist neoliberals conceptualise participation as a shift from a singular

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emphasis on market deregulation to an additional emphasis on social development whereas the postmarxists promote a more fundamental form of change to society (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). The neoliberal stance pursues a rigid approach to institutional reforms of state agencies and NGOs that focus on efficiency and aim to *include* targeted groups in the development process at most. This approach implies that participation and empowerment can occur within the existing socio-political structures of society without any substantial challenge to the powerful. The fairly anodyne deployment of 'participation' within the Sustainable Development goals of the United Nations and the Participatory Poverty Assessments of the World Bank would be in line with this view, for example. However, the postmarxist notion of empowerment represents a more radical challenge to the dominant ideas and social relations existing in any particular society. Empowerment of marginalised groups means a fundamental transformation of the existing social, economic and political relationships of society (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). In this sense, bottom-up social movements get mobilised towards a more democratised society. The scholarly excitement around moves towards participatory budgeting in the city of Porto Alegre, for example, would illustrate this alternative view (Abers, 1998).

Even though this movement towards 'the local' seems promising as a means of addressing the heterogeneity of the Global South by taking the specificities of particular places seriously, two key critiques have been put forward. First, the tendency to idealise, if not romanticise, the local may downplay socio-political structures that are not necessarily progressive, just or equitable (Page, 2002). The interest in participation and empowerment is closely associated with an increasing interest in the significance of the local. Cleaver (2001) points out that there is a strong assumption among development practitioners that it is possible to identify who 'participates' because only one community is accountable in the

location of a project but in fact social, ecological and administrative boundaries often overlap. The community committee is usually established as a representative of 'the whole'. Critics argue that this simplified and uncritical notion of community disregards internal power relations within and between social groups that are to the advantage of some and discriminate against others, and lead to conflicts over resources such as land and water (Page, 2002). This ignorance of power relations in PD approaches entrenches, if not aggravates, the existing social injustice and marginalisation of resource distribution, and the socio-political structures of society that determine the allocation of rights and resources often remain fundamentally unchanged (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Dumaru, 2010; Hickey and Mohan, 2005; Page, 2002). These structures have achieved a kind of ontological status that means they are taken-for-granted and impervious to reform. Because a thoughtful consideration of 'dominance' in a particular society is often missing, these local PD approaches have been accused of involving only a few privileged members of community in the project processes and of causing the unfair distribution of the benefits. Thinking critically about these internal power relations is an area where this thesis makes a distinctive contribution to studies of CBA.

Second, the tendency to see 'the local' in isolation from broader social, ecological, economic and political scales may downplay the significance of place in relation to other places and other scales (Hordijk and Baud, 2011). For example, Mohan and Stokke (2000) argue that disconnecting the local from its relationship to government (at a variety of scales) is likely in many countries of the Global South to be misleading. Unless care is taken to draw out the connections between local case studies and their broader contexts, there is an impression given of a false autonomy, which fails to identify the constraints and limits placed on specific local communities by 'outside' forces and structures

(Page, 2007). Just as earlier Marxist development analyses paid little attention to the significance of local places and communities, there is a danger here of doing the reverse.

In summary, many development theorists have argued that research on participation and empowerment at the local level should pay more attention to issues of politics, scale and the relations between communities and the structures they are embedded within. The thesis takes this injunction from the literature seriously and starts its analysis from the assumption that the idea of 'the local' has itself become hegemonic in some elements of development discourse and needs to be treated more critically. At the same time, the role of the local in development practice should be determined in relation to other scales. Thus the first conceptual innovation the thesis brings to studies of CBA is to respond to this paradox by analysing the dynamics of specific local CBA projects without losing sight of the dynamics of regional, national and global scales in terms of decentralised decision-making, effective knowledge management and participatory processes. Such an aspiration is key, it is argued, to identifying appropriate solutions for Ethiopian peasant farmers, rather than merely stressing the physical impacts of climate change at the local level. This approach will be decisively deployed to address the political legacies of Ethiopian history in land tenure system, how these legacies have steered the behaviour of the Ethiopian people, particularly the peasantry, and how these connect rural villages to a distant central government, in Chapter Five.

Some researchers working on CBA who share these concerns have adopted the concept of resilience thinking, which is scale-sensitive, and paid attention to the connectivity of socio-ecological systems (Dodman and Mitlin, 2011; Ensor et al., 2014; Reid, 2012). This will be discussed in the following sections.

2.1.2　　CBA through the Lens of Resilience Thinking

Introduction: Moving from Adaptation to Resilience

Walker and Salt (2006:14) state that resilience thinking is about "understanding and engaging with a changing world". Resilience is "the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise whilst undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedback" (Walker et al, 2004:n.p). The concept of resilience has been gaining popularity both in academia and in practice since its birth within ecology in the 1960s. It has now become a central idea in various fields such as finance, development policy, urban planning, public health and national security (Chichilnisky and Heal, 2000; Lovins and Lovins, 1981; Walker and Cooper, 2011). In particular, the concept has been prominent in climate change studies where issues of shock, vulnerability and risk are critical (Forsyth and Ayers, 2009). For instance, the IPCC emphasises increasing resilience as one of the best ways of responding to the adverse impacts of climate extremes (IPCC, 2012). The growing reference to resilience by aid and development organisations demonstrates increasing interest in taking adaptation and resilience as the same, possibly replacing sustainability (Ayers et al., 2011).

This section analyses how resilience is related to adaptation in the context of climate change with a particular focus on community-based approaches. Adaptation involves change. Berkes et al. (2003) define adaptation as the standard practice of individuals, groups and societies that adjust their livelihood activities to external changes in order to take advantage of new opportunities. Adaptation aims to enhance the resilience of a system against disturbances by

both reducing vulnerability and increasing capacity. This thesis argues that climate change adaptation is adequately formulated as an issue of systems resilience, drawing on the notion of adaptive capacity, and delivered through CBA. In other words, it examines whether the concept of resilience offers an alternative way of understanding adaptation and of identifying appropriate strategies in response to climate change.

Adaptation refers to the set of actions undertaken to deal with both current and future change (Nelson et al., 2007). So far, there have been two relatively distinct approaches in research on adaptation: 1) Adaptation to specific environmental change and 2) Adaptation within systems resilience (Janssen and Ostrom, 2006). Each group of studies has developed somewhat in parallel from separate disciplinary traditions with relatively little 'cross-fertilisation' (Nelson et al., 2007). Whilst reviewing these two approaches, this section aims to address the reason why climate change adaptation needs to locate itself within systems resilience.

Academic interests in adaptation to environmental variability began with anthropologists in the early 1900s (Janssen et al., 2006). It has then become an object of study in diverse fields of scholarship such as ecology, sociology and economics. Scholars in social science disciplines began to use the term adaptation in studies of human-induced climate change in the 1990s (Schipper and Burton, 2009). The concept focuses on human adjustments to the adverse effects of climate change through implementing engineering approaches such as building dykes along rivers. This approach is essentially reactive or responsive as opposed to anticipatory or pre-emptive. This backward-looking adaptation usually places emphasis on actors and practice, and tends to be prescriptive and normative (Janssen and Ostrom, 2006).

In contrast, research into resilience first emerged in ecology in the 1960s, led by C. S. Holling (Holling, 1961 in Folke, 2006). Holling demonstrated the existence of multiple stability domains in ecological systems and how there could be sudden shifts between these stable domains driven by (sometimes random) events and spatial heterogeneity as critical thresholds are crossed (Holling, 1973). Through this study, he introduced the concept of resilience as the capacity of a particular stable domain of a system to persist in the face of change. He describes, "Resilience determines the persistence of relationships within a system and is a measure of the ability of these systems to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables, and parameters, and still persist" (Holling, 1973: 17).

The concept of resilience has become a theoretical framework that bridges social and physical sciences. This was a part of the movement against an understanding of adaptation that isolates climate change from the processes of social transformation that became popular in the 1990s (Folke, 2006). Much more recently such arguments have been central to the rise of the idea of the Anthropocene, which also argues that humans do not stand outside environments and are in fact an active agent in the production of nature (Taylor, 2015). Key to this analysis is the idea of 'socio-ecological systems' which provides "a mechanism to integrate the social and natural" (Pelling, 2010:40). This is useful because it allows researchers to think through the multiple, related ways in which specific systems have adapted to change and to analyse the factors that can make specific systems more resilient. That is to say, adaptation can be devised through examining the system's specific components (e.g. knowledge, experience and livelihoods) that are associated with adaptive capacity, rather than through reviewing impacts that have not yet come. This

approach therefore has its focus on progressive risk reduction and involves theoretical understandings of "what constitutes adaptive capacity" (Pelling, 2010:7).

According to the IPCC (2007), climate change tends to be non-linear and multidimensional. In other words, the impacts of climate change can be felt directly (e.g. sea level rise), indirectly (e.g. subsequent saltwater intrusion into coastal aquifers) and as social perturbations of the system (e.g. human migration caused by these events) (Taylor, 2015). In addition, climate change impacts often interact with other systems features in the region such as development policy, local livelihoods and socio-cultural norms. Overall, these aspects make it hard both to identify adaptation and to communicate the consequences of climate change in isolation from other elements of the socio-ecological system (Berkes and Jolly, 2001; Ebi and Semenza, 2008). However, as Tompkins and Adger (2004) argue, early attempts to understand adaptation tended to understand the impacts (e.g. cost-saving and project efficiency) of particular atomised policy actions on specific system components (e.g. local labour and natural resources) in isolation from wider changes and contexts.

The shift from an exclusive focus on adaptation strategies to resilience helps to guard against the tendency towards a focus on isolated factors because resilience prioritises systems thinking. Walker and Salt (2006) argue that the problem with thinking solely in terms of adaptation lies in the implicit belief that the ways ecosystems respond to human activities are linear and incremental, and so foreseeable. Unfortunately, this belief is ill-founded. The systems in which we live are often configured and reconfigured by extreme events. There have been a number of catastrophic climate events such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005 or the East African droughts in the mid-1980s that

shifted the region's socio-ecological systems from one stability domain to another. The speed of change also fluctuates. Climate events, such as the melting glaciers in the Arctic, often start slow and then speed up once its *threshold* – a level of a controlling variable in which a change occurs in feedbacks to the rest of the system change (Folke et al., 2010) – is crossed. Because some climate changes start small and only later become large they are not recognised in their earliest stages. Even if they are recognised, their significance is often underestimated (Pelling, 2010).

Adaptation remains a useful analytical concept. Pragmatically since it is a term that continues to be widely used by policy-makers (through labels such as Community-Based Adaptation) and is high on their agendas, it is an idea that cannot be ignored. However, the argument developed here is that some of its analytical failings (in particular its tendency to treat the elements of a locale in isolation and its assumptions about the linearity of change) can be addressed by understanding adaptation through the lens of resilience thinking. That is to say, climate change adaptation has to be not only climate change specific, but also holistic in regard to socio-ecological systems (Pelling, 2010). This thesis therefore sets out to make the second analytical contribution to the research field of CBA by embedding it within the idea of systems resilience and defining communities and their surrounding environment as complex socio-ecological systems, which recognises that 1) all components of the systems are intricately interconnected and 2) systems change may be non-linear and shift between stable domains when thresholds are crossed.

Resilience Thinking as an Analytical Framework

As resilience thinking has evolved it has produced an increasingly elaborate set of concepts and terminology. Within the empirical chapters of this thesis and in the final discussion the following dualisms and terms are used to structure the analysis and so they need to be defined here: specified resilience/general resilience, flexibility/integrity, adaptability/transformability, adaptive capacity, scale, level, surprise and thresholds and adaptive governance. This next section of the literature review provides an explanation and evaluation of these terms before turning to some of the critiques and continuing gaps in resilience thinking. Inevitably this section of the review feels somewhat descriptive as the discussion works through the list defining a vocabulary that feels slightly hermetic at times. However, the key claim here is that this relatively new academic framework can provide a distinctive way of analysing CBA projects because of its central concern with treating 'communities' and the contexts in which they are embedded as complex socio-ecological systems in which all system components are intricately interconnected and where it is assumed that systems change may be non-linear and dramatic.

Specified Resilience and General Resilience

What confers resilience on systems? The concept of resilience is generally defined in relation to a socio-ecological system – this is the central unit of analysis. Folke (2006) defines systems resilience as the amount of change a system can be subjected to whilst retaining its original functions and structure. In this context, resilience means the ability of a system to absorb disturbances and is generally classified into two approaches according to its range of application: *specified resilience* and *general resilience*. With regard to the former,

resilience is applied to problems related to particular aspects of a system that arise from a specific set of circumstances (Folke et al., 2010). In socio-ecological systems, this usage commonly appears in response to the questions such as 'resilience of what to what' (e.g. the resilience of pasture to salty groundwater levels) (Walker et al., 2006). However, focusing on a specified aspect of resilience may increase resilience of certain parts of a system but may diminish resilience of other parts of the same system at the same time. For example, in the Goulburn-Broken Catchment, Australia, local farming communities have pumped out salty groundwater to the Murray River since its rising levels started affecting dairy farming in the area, but this activity eventually increased the salinity of the river, which brought about the catastrophic consequences for agriculture on a wider scale (Walker and Salt, 2006).

In contrast, general resilience refers to the capacity of the whole system to respond to all kinds of shocks including unusual ones (Folke et al., 2010). It does not define either specific parts of a system or certain kinds of shocks but aims to deal with all kinds of uncertainty. This distinction is important because research on local communities often tends to focus on specified resilience and thereby limits the capacity and options of conclusions for coping with new or different shocks. In this thesis, the term 'systems resilience' refers to the idea of general resilience.

Flexibility and Integrity

Resilience has been founded on two main concepts: *flexibility* and *integrity*. Flexibility is situated at the heart of resilience as a simple tenet – things change (Walker and Salt, 2006). The state of systems is one of change rather than of equilibrium, and the type and magnitude of change are unpredictable. That is, if

we resist that change, our vulnerability will increase and so limit available options to respond. Socio-ecological systems therefore need to be managed for malleability and uncertainty rather than stability and specificity in respect of future events (Christopherson et al., 2010). Here, socio-ecological systems are characterised by the complex ways in which people shape their environment whilst the environment shapes the way that people live (Ensor, 2015). In terms of integrity, social systems and ecological systems cannot be understood in absence of one another, but as related (Nelson et al., 2007). A society has to consider the adaptation process as perpetual, from both social and ecological perspectives, when reviewing available options. For instance, when improving local irrigation systems, a village should take into consideration not only the impact of the project on the ecological environment such as groundwater levels and biodiversity, but also the socio-economic impact on people such as ownership schemes and sub-group dynamics.

In order to adapt to new circumstances, there may be a need for change, yet some systems are resistant to change. The concept of resilience emphasises the capacity of a system that absorbs change without losing its system functions. However, this characteristic can also refer to the undesirable states of the systems, for example, a heavily wooded hill may be undesirable for pastoralist communities. Some systems are often highly resistant to change, or withstand efforts to change, and so described in the resilience literature as being 'pathologically' resilient (Nelson et al., 2007). Adaptation therefore needs to consider both the capacity to respond to change and ability to overcome resilience in a system. For this reason, *resilience thinking* was conceptualised as a framework to address both the dynamics and emergence of complex socio-ecological systems (Deppisch and Hasibovic, 2011).

Adaptability and Transformability

In resilience thinking, adaptation refers not only to *adaptability*, but also to *transformability*, and these two aspects interrelate across multiple scales. First, adaptability represents the capacity to adjust responses to internal and external processes of change in order to maintain the current trajectories of development (Folke et al., 2010). It is based on past experiences and accumulated knowledge and tends to continue developing processes in operation. This type of adaptation can be applied to cases such as improving agricultural systems, redesigning the built environment or implementing a new management decision in order to reduce risks and improve the level of adaptability of a system.

Second, transformability refers to the capacity to cross thresholds of a system and to adapt to new development trajectories when the existing system becomes untenable (Berkes et al., 2003). In particular, not only ecological conditions but also social, political and economic features – such as social networks, governance structures, the global economy and regional politics – can affect the level of transformability of a system. For example, over the past three years, unusually heavy rains have created deep gullies in villages around Lake Awassa in Ethiopia, making some of them uninhabitable (SGP Ethiopia, 2011). Populations from those villages have abandoned their existing livelihood systems and moved to the other side of the lake where they have had to find new ways of living. This migration, namely the transformation to the new socio-ecological systems, was the outcome of not only the physical soil erosion, but also the political economic decision in regional development planning. The migration was the most cost-effective option for the villagers and local governments to choose. In this instance, we can see how the villagers have

adapted in the context of the crossing of a threshold and the move to a new stability domain, demonstrating transformability.

Both adaptability and transformability are essential to promote systems resilience at local levels. Making use of a crisis as a 'window of opportunity' for innovation, a local community can start to foster resilience at a smaller, and so more manageable, scale in order to explore novel options for deliberate transformation at larger scales (Folke et al., 2010) (e.g. the promotion of tourism industry in local communities where farming is not viable anymore in the region). Reflecting on empirical examples of CBA through the terms flexibility, integrity, adaptability and transformability will recognise resilience both as the ability to respond to typical small-scale change and as the means to take advantage of opportunities that arise during atypical dramatic changes in complex socio-ecological systems. In this context, even though climate change is generally portrayed in a negative light, it might provide opportunities for development and innovation in society. In particular, from a socio-political perspective, climate change adaptation could involve processes that stimulate social reform by calling into question those values in a society that promote inequalities in development practice and unsustainable relationships with the environment (Pelling, 2010; Smit and Wandel, 2006). This is proposed as an idea to be considered through this framework and the empirical chapters and particularly exemplified through the transformation of community leadership in Chapter Eight. However, in any case adaptation is seldom permanent (Janssen and Ostrom, 2006) as the level of adaptation actively changes on the basis of the type, frequency and intensity of systems disturbance. A system may be highly adapted to the current environment, but may become incapable of responding to new variables in the future.

Adaptive Capacity, Scale, Level, Surprise and Threshold

Adaptive capacity is the ability for a system to employ resources to adapt to disturbances (Smit and Wandel, 2006). This section considers adaptive capacity in the light of its relationship to scale, level, surprise and thresholds, which are the key analytical features of complex adaptive systems.

Scale as deployed in resilience thinking is defined as the spatial, temporal and quantitative dimensions used to examine any phenomenon (Adger et al., 2005a). *Level* refers to the unit of analysis that is located at different positions on a spatial scale (e.g. micro or macro levels of analysis) (Gibson et al., 2000). For example, the inshore tropical fisheries in island nations of the Caribbean are operated by small-scale fishing units that do not range far from a seaport (McConney et el., 2006). Fishers follow community norms, and these fisheries are community-based. However, many fishing areas are shared by different communities around the island and should be managed at a higher level, covering the whole island or several islands. Moreover, some of the fish travel across borders of these island nations which require management agreements at the bilateral or multilateral levels (McConney et el., 2006).

Scalar issues have become much more common subjects of research on resilience as adaptation to climate change is increasingly being observed at different scales and levels of socio-ecological systems (Adger et al., 2005a; Campbell, 2007; Folke, 2006; Lovell, 2002). In such research, analysis of adaptive capacity confronts questions of how to translate knowledge and data between scales/levels and how to portray the relationships of different components and domains across time and space (Cash et al., 2006). The ability of a system to adapt to disturbance, namely adaptive capacity, is specific not

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only to the spatial scale at which changes occur, but also to the institutional scale, because the scale at which adaptive capacity is analysed has implications for building resilience. In particular, the dynamics of cross-scale and cross-level interactions on climate change adaptation are critical in determining adaptive capacity (e.g. the relationship between local and central governments) (Cash et al., 2006).

Whilst the advocates of resilience are generally aware of the concept of scale, there has been relatively little attention given to how scale is defined and determined in the resilience literature (Béné et al., 2012). This is one area where the thesis hopes to show the value of integrating a political ecology approach with resilience thinking, since political ecology has considered scale in rather more depth. We return to the question of scale later in this review when we consider political ecology's encounters with the politics of scale, which, it is argued, provide a livelier account than the version used in resilience thinking, and this question will be exemplified through the difference in scale of community between government and citizens in the context of CBA in Chapter Six. This political ecology framework recognises that there is nothing inherently 'natural' about scale, but that these dimensions are social products that emerge through the choices made by human actors.

Surprise means any discontinuity between a socio-ecological process and the process that was expected to occur (Nelson et al., 2007). For example, drought is generally perceived as an expected event in many parts of the world with reference to the historical climate cycles in the region, but may happen at unforeseen scales and/or at unexpected points in time. According to the IPCC (2007), climate change is projected to increase the variability of events in an irregular manner, increasing the possibility of future surprises. This is because

whilst climate changes slowly and incrementally it has cross-scale effects that may cause other catastrophic anomalies at a different pace like increasing hurricanes and typhoons (Gunderson, 2003). Of course, future climate change is unknown. Although some climatic events have become, to some extent, predictable, or at least imaginable, trends in climate change processes still make socio-ecological systems vulnerable to surprise. This is a result of not only the difficulty in predicting climate change, but also the institutional and ideological blockages to identifying certain risks associated with such change (Adger, 2006). For example, the risk of drought increased by high water-consuming cash crop farming in Ethiopia, such as coffee and *khat*,[3] is frequently ignored in the name of economic development.[4] In other words, even if climate change starts surprises that take a similar form to previous events, and a system has learnt how to cope with those earlier events, the capacity of a system can be stretched by the political and economic forces (Miller et al., 2010).

The concept of *threshold* is central to resilience thinking. This is because the concept recognises a number of possible states (stable domains) in which the same socio-ecological systems can stabilise, albeit temporarily. It makes a case for moving beyond thinking in terms of climate change adaptation as reactions or adjustments along a linear continuum. This effectively increases the range of adaptation options rather than simply responding to disturbances because the framework can envisage the possibility of changing the system state itself. However, from a purely ecological point of view, no state is more desirable than another (Nelson et al., 2007). Instead, the desirability of a given state is usually measured by socially produced guidelines (Redman and Kinzig, 2003). For

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[3] Khat, or qat, is a plant native to the Horn of Africa causing excitement and loss of appetite in people. Its fresh leaves are chewed as stimulant. As a cash crop, it is widely planted in Ethiopia and exported to Somalia and Yemen.

[4] For more details, please see these articles (Kirby, 2007; Mekonnen and Hoekstra, 2010).

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example, pastoralist communities may prefer lands with plenty of grass and few shrubs for their cattle whilst communities depending on the forest have very different priorities for the same space. This human negotiation process, namely politics, is never complete as an array of socio-ecological variables changes all the time following the needs of a community at the time.

Thresholds are the boundaries where a system flips from one stable domain to another (Berkes et al., 1998). In other words, they are the points at which the "feedbacks to the rest of the system change - crossing points that have the potential to alter the future of many of the systems that we depend upon" (Walker and Salt, 2006:53). The notion is therefore closely related to the concept of transformability - the likelihood of a system crossing a threshold and moving into another domain. Easter Island is often cited as an example. It was covered by tropical forest around 800 A.D. when humans started to settle, but since then the trees had been felled for various uses such as firewood and canoes. The speed of tree felling exceeded the rate of regeneration, and the nitrogen-rich earth was washed away by rain. By the 17th century, the socio-ecological systems in the island were totally transformed into an eroded landscape, and today it is hard to see any signs of its original cover (Walker and Salt, 2006).

Thresholds can be addressed through the systematic monitoring of key socio-ecological variables and through the development of indicators of change (Robinson and Berkes, 2010). For resilience thinking, however, it is axiomatic that socio-ecological systems are characterised by non-linear and complex feedbacks, and so it is difficult to identify the precise location of thresholds. They may become evident only after the system transformation has started in the physical environment. The systems are also vulnerable to change in the social environment produced through system feedbacks such as policy,

development programmes and institution-building. In the context of CBA, communities are theoretically the main actor that defines the thresholds with their local knowledge and needs and tend to experience the current and next regimes of the systems most. However, the desired state of the systems is usually socially produced and guided by the geometry of power dynamics around a community. A critical challenge is therefore to understand how these institutions are influenced by, and in turn influence, climate change adaptation discourses (Nelson et al., 2007), and this process will be further investigated through the lens of political ecology later in this chapter and illustrated through local understandings of climate change in the case study communities in Chapter Six.

The terms scale, level, surprise and threshold set up a way of analysing how the socio-ecological systems of which the Ethiopian CBA projects are part adapt to change (adaptive capacity). Such an analysis pays particular attention to thinking about questions of where the boundaries of such systems lie (scale) and how they relate to other systems in which they are embedded (level). It also directs our attention to examining how these systems respond to unexpected change (surprise) and the points (thresholds) at which they flip to entirely new, relatively steady states (stable domains). Up to this point in the whole discussion of resilience the concepts discussed describe either what socio-ecological systems are like, what socio-ecological change is like or how systems react to change. In other words, they are, broadly speaking, concepts that this framework provides to enable the thesis to make ontological claims about the world – specifically about CBA projects in Ethiopia. However, at this point in this presentation of the framework there is a move in a more normative policy-relevant direction, with the introduction of ideas about adaptive governance.

Adaptive Governance

In addition to the analytical features discussed above, resilience thinking also addresses the practical challenge of climate change adaptation. The practical issues of resilience relate to the process of how human actors can steer or govern adaptation towards what are perceived to be socially desirable goals in response to a variety of socio-ecological disturbances. Resilience thinking raises questions of defining appropriate governance structures that connect actors and institutions at multiple levels, exploring options for renewal and the reorganisation of socio-ecological systems.

Adaptive governance refers to a governance system that organises adaptation by drawing on various knowledge systems and experiences for the development of effective policies (Folke et al., 2005). Governance systems are composed of multiple actors such as individuals, groups, state agencies and non-governmental organisations that engage each other through formal and informal arrangements (Pelling, 2010). Governance usually operates at multiple levels; for example, a local water management regime operated by communities is responsible for decisions made about water resources on a day-to-day basis, but they are often accountable to state-level regulators and international funding organisations. This nested quality of governance provides opportunities for the analysis of adaptation to capture the dynamics of institutional linkages across different scales.

Resilience thinking offers a set of criteria for assessing the success of adaptive governance. Folke et al. (2005) introduce four key steps to support complex socio-ecological systems that are resilient to disturbances:

1) Building knowledge of socio-ecological systems: responding to change requires knowledge of systems processes and functions. Governance of complex adaptive systems benefits from the combination of divergent knowledge systems in society.

2) Feeding knowledge into adaptive management practices: successful adaptation is characterised by continuous monitoring and evaluation that enhance adaptive capacity. Generating knowledge of systems should contribute to the development of adaptive management practices and be continuously updated through the processes of knowledge management (e.g. sharing best practices).

3) Supporting institutions for flexible and multi-level governance systems: the sharing of management and responsibility within adaptive governance involves multiple institutional linkages among individuals, groups, state agencies and non-governmental organisations. Comprehensive management initiatives rely on the collaboration of a diverse set of stakeholders operating at different levels through social and political networks.

4) Coping with external surprise: well-functioning adaptive governance is able to deal with dramatic external changes (such as hurricanes, disease outbreaks, global economic crisis or governmental policy changes). Resilient systems may even make use of disturbances as opportunities to transform into more desirable states (stable domains).

These principles summarise the process of adaptive governance in a holistic sense within the terms of this framework. They are also effectively compatible with the current trends in managing CBA projects such as 'learning from experience'. They necessitate linking a broad range of actors and institutions at multiple scales to manage the interrelated systems in the context of uncertainty. Analytically these principles of adaptive governance raise empirical questions

that can be addressed to the case studies of the thesis: to what extent can we see the elements of an adaptive governance system operating in the CBA projects under examination? How is knowledge of systems being accumulated? How is knowledge of systems being deployed? Are management roles being effectively shared among relative institutions? How well are projects helping communities to cope with surprises?

The argument of the thesis, however, is that there are also calls for scholarly research on how the climate change risks at local levels are amplified by specific socio-political relations and how the adaptive capacity of communities is addressed by these processes. Thinking about adaptive governance through the lens of resilience thinking implies the ability to respond to change and even transform systems into more desirable states. This notion involves cross-scale and cross-level activities that aim to formulate an overarching management system to guide climate change adaptation in a holistic sense. In contrast to the reactive backward-looking approaches, adaptive governance focuses on bringing together divergent knowledge of systems, studies of institutional linkages and collective action of a range of stakeholders in response to climate change (Folke et al., 2005). Adaptive governance, in this sense, is also about how the political assets of actors and institutions are secured and exercised in socio-ecological systems not only through complex forms of social hierarchy but also through a normative set of ideas (Peet et al., 2011). In the context of CBA, for instance, the role and responsibilities of communities among various stakeholders across scale need to be rigorously defined and examined in a specific place in the broader social contexts in order to devise flexible governance systems that are capable of adapting. However, it is still unclear how adaptive governance 'deals with' these socio-political relationships. It may reinforce existing inequalities and

perpetuate the interests of specific actors (Adger et al., 2005b; Armitage, 2007) but perhaps it will redistribute socio-political assets at the same time.

2.1.3 Critiques of Resilience Thinking

This review has argued that resilience thinking can add greatly to an analysis of CBA projects by providing a set of relevant concepts. However, it also argues that resilience thinking alone is not sufficient to develop our understanding of the empirical material collected during fieldwork in the Ethiopian highlands. This section of the review considers the two most prominent critiques that have been made of resilience thinking. The first part discusses the claim that resilience thinking is unable to capture socio-political dynamics. The second part interrogates the suggestion that resilience goes hand in hand with neoliberalism. The two issues are connected through the way in which the political assets of actors and institutions are perceived, but at different scales.

Whilst this thesis has found resilience thinking to be a very fruitful framework for interpreting the empirical data, it is not without flaws. Chief amongst these is the claim that socio-political dynamics in systems are not adequately addressed in these principles, a point that stands out particularly starkly in accounts of adaptive governance. Adaptive governance in complex systems is composed of actors and institutions with divergent degrees of socio-political legitimacy, who undertake at least some limited form of negotiation with each other. The outcome of negotiations is a product of the relative power relations between actors and institutions during the implementation of agreed rules. That is to say, the scope for aspects of governance to enable progressive adaptation to climate change is determined by the relationships between actors and institutions. In this context, actors refer to individuals, groups and

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organisations with stakes in a policy domain, and institutions refer to formal (laws) and informal (cultural norms) rules that indicate how actors relate to each other (Pelling, 2010).

Here institutions may not only constrain the behaviour of actors, but also facilitate change by legitimating processes of critique and reform. In other words, institutions, rather than actors, often determine decision-making procedures and therefore the scope for reform. This is an important distinction for CBA because the overarching regime of norms and principles at local levels is deeply rooted in social hierarchies and historically-embedded institutions without often being challenged. Menocal (2015) argues that these structural and institutional factors extensively determine the social distribution of rights and responsibilities in a society. Such as historical legacies of state formation and patterns of state-society relations (which will be illustrated in Chapter Five through the case of land tenure system in Ethiopia) frequently regulate decision-making procedures of CBA and a degree of systems transformation whilst engaging with the wider dynamics of systems at different scales. Yet existing accounts within the resilience school tend to underplay the significance of these institutional dynamics.

Governance systems tend to be caught between pressures for change and desires to remain the same. The inertia within governance systems can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, a certain degree of institutional inertia in the face of demands for adaptation is of benefit because it maintains stability and provides predictable policy environments. On the other hand, adaptation might also need transformative change, and institutional resistance in such a context is problematic because it is an obstacle to the necessary change (Pelling, 2010). The concept of resilience that emphasises the capacity of a system that

absorbs change without losing systems functions and structures can also refer to the undesirable states of the systems, described as being 'pathologically' resilient. Thus the focus of adaptation on transformative change - a transition between different socio-ecological states – need to draw attention to the balance between stability and reform in the institutional structures. This then necessarily becomes an empirical problem: how and why do governance systems change in the face of environmental perturbations? This perspective stresses the normative issues such as the social distribution of rights and responsibilities that are imposed by socio-ecological disturbances.

Successful adaptive governance involves steering processes of institutional changes. In promoting resilience, the notion of shared rights among institutions, mostly entailed by decentralisation, is considered a key issue. Berkes (2002) suggests that neither purely local-level management nor entirely national-level governance works impeccably itself, but community-based approaches with cross-scale institutional supports tend to be more sustainable. Here, the definition of community is a group of people who share similar socio-political interests that are shaped by conflicting values and contrasting aspirations in terms of access to rights and resources. The community-based approach is more likely to involve citizens who represent divergent interests but who also interact directly in the promotion of adaptive solutions within the communities where they live (Nelson et al., 2007). In this context, resilience thinking is a useful framework and provides foundational principles for CBA concerning the scale of systems in identifying the roles of each level of institutions.

At the same time, Ostrom (1990 in Berkes, 2002) urges the recognition of the rights of communities to devise their own institutions without being challenged by higher-level authorities. Resilience-oriented adaptive governance may create

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the possibilities of enhanced efficiency of decision-making and recognition of diverse knowledge networks. However, without acknowledging the complex 'relationships' between each level of institutions, it might not achieve better trust in government, greater participation of marginalised stakeholders and ultimately improved adaptive capacity of local communities. Governance systems can be resilient and therefore adaptable only by means of institutional arrangements and diversely sourced knowledge that are tested and revised in a dynamic and ongoing process of trial and error, particularly in the context of high levels of local autonomy and devolution (Ensor et al., 2016).

This complaint is not limited to discussions of adaptive governance, but to resilience thinking in totality (Béné et al., 2012; Leach, 2008). When adaptation is conceptualised through resilience thinking, the tendency is to focus on the social and ecological assets of the systems as indicators, not on the issues of agency and power. There are two principal reasons for this shortcoming: one is its inability to capture socio-political dynamics, and the other is its relevance to neoliberalism. The two reasons are connected through the way in which the political assets of actors and institutions are understood.

First, this inability to capture socio-political dynamics, it is argued, is inherent because the concept of resilience, from its ecological origin, focuses on the physical ability of the systems rather than human agencies within the systems (Davidson, 2010). Resilience thinking has been developed through attempts to incorporate ideas of complex systems and functions of actors 'as a whole'. The focus is on the interdependence between the systems actors, not on the individual agencies (Béné et al., 2012). Here, agency refers to the capacity of a human actor to mobilise and reproduce an array of resources (Sewell, 1992).

Human agency determines the essential character of socio-ecological systems (Blaikie, 1985). Adaptive capacity rests on people to make their own choices and develop their own plans. In resilience thinking, however, socio-political characteristics of individual human agency are frequently veiled since resilience-oriented strategies usually focus on improving the adaptive capacity of the whole systems rather than the choices exercised by individuals or groups of the systems. As a result of this relegation of human agency, resilience thinking pays less attention to power, justice and democracy (Duit et al., 2010).

Increasing resilience is frequently presented as a normative goal although the concept itself is actually neutral, neither good nor bad (Béné et al., 2012). In other words, resilience thinking is not necessarily concerned with interests of a specific group of people but simply observes systems as a whole over time to see its adaptability and transformability (Leach, 2008). For many theorists and practitioners, this unconscious normative assumption about systems integrity is central to the concept of resilience, and systems are simply "the heuristic device through which to model social and ecological dynamics" (Taylor, 2015:76). For instance, climate change adaptation projects require resolutions to questions such as 'what constitutes vulnerability?', 'whose vulnerability?' and 'who mobilises actions?', but resilience thinking does not automatically ask such questions. Instead, it is generally carried out a series of value assessment about, for example, 'where the socio-ecological boundaries of systems lie?', 'what counts as systems dynamics?' and 'what kinds of systems elements mobilise systems adaptability and transformability?'. As a result, adaptive governance often ends up reducing the vulnerability of people who are already best placed to cope with change by taking advantage of existing governance institutions rather than addressing the vulnerability of the socio-politically marginalised or the underrepresented, namely those most at risk (Nelson et al., 2007).

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Yet it is also true that the complaint that resilience thinking is apolitical is easily overstated. Resilience thinking does explicitly work with ideas of social vulnerability and brings into focus vulnerable groups thereby implicitly addressing political questions (Adger, 2000; Fabinyi, 2009; Miller et al., 2010; Smith and Stirling, 2010). The concept of resilience has been theorised as a framework that bridges social and physical sciences, not isolating climate change adaptation from the processes of social transformation (Folke, 2006). According to resilience thinking, development practitioners recognise that the outcome of interventions is determined by human actions based on self-interest and by how power is exercised in socio-ecological systems (e.g. Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA)) (Ludi et al., 2011). In the context of CBA, for instance, it is stated that people's social and political positions in a community could determine their experience of climate change adaptation (Ensor et al., 2016). Yet vulnerability is frequently conceptualised as inherent to certain groups, and power is treated as a quantifiable thing or resource held by certain groups (Cote and Nightingale, 2012). It is treated as fixed and unchanging. Women will always be more vulnerable than men, for example, because they have less power. There is little sense of vulnerability and power as dynamic, relational or networked. This preference towards static conceptions of vulnerability reflects the widely held belief among development practitioners that analysing power in a relational way does not always result in managerial solutions that can be developed into a policy (Taylor, 2015). As a result, there is a tendency in development practice to produce detailed but static descriptions of vulnerability. The concern here is that, resilience thinking is not oblivious to politics but has a rather unconvincing account of politics as expressed through fixed categories of vulnerability.

There have also been a few efforts to institutionally integrate socio-political dimensions into resilience thinking and to foreground agency (Brown and Westaway, 2011). These approaches involve cultural (Manyena, 2006), economic (Adger, 2000), social (Bahadur et al., 2010) and political aspects (Peterson, 2000) in configuring systems thresholds. Yet these papers are often composed without any explicit attention to politics – the dynamic dialogue about the rules – by which a society operates and through which scarce resources are allocated. Questions of power, contested interests and social struggles, which may benefit some people more than others, are merely given the status of externalities. In configuring systems thresholds, development practitioners tend to relegate the political dimensions that cannot be statically described and easily incorporated by the normative assumptions that more resilience is better for all (Béné et al., 2012; Taylor, 2015). Here resilience refers to general resilience that is the capacity of the whole socio-ecological system to respond to all kinds of shocks (Folke et al., 2010).

Paradoxically, what such accounts effectively show is that the configuration processes are inherently political. The concept of resilience itself is neutral, neither good nor bad, yet the boundaries of socio-ecological systems are socially produced (Redman and Kinzig, 2003). It is the reluctance to ask questions about power, justice and democracy that make resilience thinking capable of maintaining the political status quo, rather than promoting institutional changes when necessary, in the name of 'project efficiency'. Being 'pathologically' resilient, socio-ecological systems modelled according to this framework can be highly unjust, concealing the issues of equity, because the attributes of a 'resilient' system are the products of relationships that institutionalise the displacement of socio-political conflicts in the systems (Taylor, 2015).

Next, the major line of critique that is relevant to this thesis is that resilience thinking sits very comfortably with neoliberal political economy. Resilience has flourished as a key response to environmental risk management over the same period as neoliberalism has held sway over policy-makers (Leach, 2008). As an operational strategy, resilience is now found in a wide range of settings, reflecting a general consensus on the necessity of adaptation (Walker and Cooper, 2011). In particular, the science of resilience thinking has become a common theoretical reference point in the full spectrum of contemporary risk interventions by suggesting that we can improve our preparedness for surprise and thereby reduce potential exposure and vulnerability through scenario-based techniques and hazard modelling tools (Aradau and Munster, 2012).

Yet there have been a few academics claiming that the success of resilience thinking in colonising diverse realms of governance is due to its intuitive ideological fit with a neoliberal philosophy of complex adaptive systems derived from the legacy of the Austrian philosopher, Friedrich Hayek (Cooper, 2008; Duffield, 2011; Klein, 2007; Walker and Cooper, 2011). Duffield (2011) argues that taking its analytical starting point from complexity science and ecology, rather than statistics, ethnography and demography, the concept of resilience is concerned with promoting adaptation to life's uncertainties and surprises by associating itself with Hayek's unified theory of *spontaneous order* and *social evolution* (Hayek, 1988 in Walker and Cooper, 2011). In other words, instead of providing a modernist guideline for environmental management (e.g. the Brundtland Report's definition of sustainable development) which emphasises planned and state-led interventions, the concept of resilience is attached to a neoliberal belief in the freedom to embrace contingency which may justify manipulation and exploitation of environment (O'Malley, 2009). The command-and-control managerialism of sustainable development, it is argued, has given

way to 'neoliberalised ecological modernisation' that values life in terms of its resilience to the 'insatiable capitalist process of accumulation' (Cooper, 2008; Keil and Bourdreau, 2006). In short, the concept of resilience may condone capitalism's constant transgressions of human-driven transformation of socio-ecological systems (Duffield, 2011).

This critical perspective points to the reluctance in resilience thinking to engage with the wider dynamics of systems at different scales. Menocal (2015) argues that a society that is underpinned by more broadly inclusive institutions are more resilient and better at promoting prosperity, particularly over the long term. In a number of case studies, however, resilience appears deep-seated at a particular local scale in a way to isolate the level from other spatial and temporal dimensions inherent to the production of nature (Walker et al., 2006). It acknowledges other systems dynamics operating at different scales but often does not integrate them into formal analysis. In the context of CBA, the focus on social, economic and political spatiality and temporality at national and international levels is frequently dismissed whilst the attention to the ecological aspects at higher scales is adequately incorporated. Resilience thinking, for example, is more frequently used at considering the impact of global environmental change than at considering the impact of globalisation - that is the uneven geographical development that results from neoliberalism at a world scale (Taylor, 2015).

The concept of resilience provides a rich and distinctive language with which to think about CBA projects, yet it lacks political traction when it comes to questions about power, justice and democracy. In the context of the social distribution of rights and responsibilities, for instance, resilience thinking only partially understands the way in which power is expressed through actors and

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institutions in complex socio-ecological systems. This discussion of power raises questions for researchers that resilience thinking seems disinclined to address: 'how and to what extent are citizens' rights being affected by a drive to adapt?', 'who are those most likely to be affected by this drive?', 'who wins and who loses when a socio-ecological system changes?' and 'who causes systems change (for good or ill)?'. Political ecologists argue that adaptation is necessarily a matter of power and politics (Neumann, 2005; Paulson et al., 2005; Watts and Peet, 2004; Zimmerer and Bassett, 2003). Given that these questions have been at the core of political ecology from its outset, it explains why this thesis sets out to try and meld these two approaches together in order to generate a synthesis – one which takes a lot from resilience thinking, but adds these more explicitly political questions to it by also deploying the critical toolkit of political ecology.

2.2   Conceptualising CBA through the Lens of Political Ecology

2.2.1   A Field of Political Ecology

The Origins and History of Political Ecology

Political ecology first emerged in the 1970s in the work of anthropologists and geographers such as Eric Wolf (1972) and Grahame Beakhurst (1979) (Watts and Peet, 2004). They coined the term as a way of approaching questions of access and control over natural resources within a political economy framework, building on neomarxist critiques of conventional theories of development in the context of the marginalised Third World (Peet and Thrift, 1989). David Harvey (1974) also made a case for considering nature along with political economy by reviewing the scientific relationship between population and resources. His study became the foundation for the ideas of *the Production of Nature* (Smith, 1984) and

Social Nature (Castree and Braun, 2001), which sought to identify how 'nature' is reshaped by market capitalism as part of a social transformation. This approach rested on explaining the environmental crisis of the 1980s as a capitalist crisis. Overall, it was an attempt to subsume concerns of ecology within the context of the broader political economy (Turshen, 1977; Watts and Peet, 2004).

From the mid-1980s, scholars interested in political ecology began to shift their focus away from the neomarxian analysis, which underlined the structural links between capitalism and ecological crisis, by recognising the environment as an independent variable (McLaughlin and Dietz, 2008). They started to acknowledge causal forces moving between the environment and society whilst retaining the concern of general principles of political economy. Blaikie (1985), for instance, illustrated this idea through an analysis of soil erosion:

"*When the physical phenomenon of soil erosion affects people so that they have to respond and adapt their mode of life... it becomes also a social phenomenon. When this response affects others and brings about a clash of interests ... it becomes a political phenomenon as well*" (89).

He claimed that the major determinant of this response is "the degree of political power" of individuals, groups and institutions involved (Blaikie, 1985:89). The implication is that adaptation is primarily about social processes, and so socio-political barriers need to be weighed against technical constraints (Blaikie, 1985).

In the 1990s, the concept of political ecology started to incorporate poststructuralist analyses (Braun and Wainwright, 2001; Watts and Peet, 2004). A more nuanced account of political ecology "under the rubrics of liberation

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ecology" (Escobar, 1999:2) highlighted the interwoven character of the discursive, material, social and cultural dimensions of nature-society relations (Bryant, 2001; Watts and Peet, 2004). In particular, this started to analyse the relationship between ecological change and identity politics. Against the liberal idea of the bounded, autonomous and rational 'self', the field promoted the idea of a collectively produced 'subject' who was the product of historical discourses and social practices. These "anti-essentialist conceptions of identity" emphasise a process of a continually changing 'subjectivity' rather than a 'self' who emerges from a pre-existing core (Escobar, 1999:3). In relation to debates about environmental change, explanations sought to explain human actions and politics in these terms of identity, self and subjectivity alongside the categories of political economy.

Furthermore, a number of edited volumes and journals made important contributions to the evolution of political ecology by collecting scholarship from a wide variety of disciplines. They are often revealed as the result of either cross-disciplinary work or co-authorship: for example, the much-needed attention to ecology (Jacques, 2010; Vayda and Walter, 1999), the feminist insights and inspiration (Elmhirst, 2011; Rocheleau et al., 1996), the more fundamental break with conventional neomarxian assumptions (Escobar, 1999), the focus on urban landscapes (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003), and the analytical and practical association of civil society institutions (Batterbury et al., 2001). These works transcend the boundaries of disciplines and create more holistic approaches to political ecology that provide novel perspectives on complex environmental problems.

In conclusion, political ecology's originality resided in its efforts to integrate social, cultural, ecological and political approaches to the analysis of the

environmental crisis. Specific examples are such as the analysis of land degradation (Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987) and famine (Watts, 1983) and by deploying a set of theoretical procedures that address diverse circumstances and accommodate both local knowledge and general principles that operate at higher spatial scales (Watts and Peet, 2004). It retains the sense of a 'dialectic between society and nature' throughout but increasingly also derives ideas from poststructuralism that acknowledge cultural diversity and historical relativism (Blaikie, 1989; Braun and Wainwright, 2001; Bryant, 2001). The advocates of political ecology all share the hope that this approach may have the potential to identify pathways to achieve social justice (Hornborg, 2007; Watts and Peet, 2004). More systematic reconstructions of the history of political ecology have been undertaken by Peet and Watts (2004), Neumann (2005), Robbins (2006) and Peet et al. (2011).

Defining Political Ecology

The economist Juan Martínez–Alier (2003:70) defines political ecology as the study of "ecological distribution conflicts". Escobar (2006:8) elaborates on this definition by treating 'distribution' as "a political issue and related to social power" and 'conflicts' as disputes "over access to, and control over, natural resources, particularly as a source of livelihoods, including the costs of environmental destruction". In this perspective, political ecologists understand power as "a social relation built on an asymmetrical distribution of resources and risks" (Hornborg, 2001:1) and locate politics in the practices and mechanisms through which that power is expressed (Paulson et al., 2003). Such a conceptualisation of power reflects the influence of Foucault and sits comfortably with the approach taken in this thesis. To apply these notions, the field of political ecology generally uses multi–scale research models that

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articulate ecological phenomena and local social processes through the lens of forces at different levels (Paulson et al., 2003).

From its inception, despite there being a variety of political ecology approaches, there has been a shared set of ideas. The first is an emphasis on *marginality*, a precariousness which social, ecological and economic aspects may mutually reinforce (Watts and Peet, 2004:10). For example, Ravnborg (2003) argues that, with a case of the Nicaraguan hillsides, landscape is shaped not only by (not necessarily poor) individual farmer's resource endowments but also by social norms and relationships that govern access to and control over resources. The concept differs from the orthodox assumption of a vicious circle relationship between economic marginalisation, namely poverty, and environmental degradation.

The second shared idea is *pressure of production on resources* (Watts and Peet, 2004:10). What is different from the past fields of nature–society inquiry is that it argues that resource use is organised and transmitted through social networks and social relations that may impose excessive demands on the environment capability and sustainability. The legacy of political economy is clear here, and in many cases the social relations that place pressure on resources are characterised as 'capitalism'.

The third shared idea is the recognition of *a plurality of definitions, positions, perceptions, interests and rationalities* in relations to the environment (Paulson et al., 2003:206), for instance, a sense that one person's profit can be another's toxic dump (Blaikie, 1985). In other words, political ecology, whilst studied by a number of academics, opens discussion of how environmental problems are

represented from different positions and how policy and practice are devised in light of that representation (Watts and Peet, 2004).

The fourth shared element is that political ecology seeks ways to study phenomena across *scales* (Paulson and Gezon, 2005). For instance, it criticises the tendency among governments and development agencies to address environmental problems only at local levels and to disregard ways in which non-local policy interventions and capital flows influence local resource-use patterns.

Lastly, political ecology foregrounds a broadly defined concept of *justice* along with the politics of the environment. As opposed to the geographically narrowly focused and theoretically driven concept of environmental justice, it appeals to the centrality of political economic power relations in shaping processes of uneven socio-ecological conditions (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003).

In this frame of reference, the concept of political ecology aims to be both *analytical* and *normative*. It questions existing socio-political relationships in efforts to understand forms of environmental disturbance and degradation and to develop models for environmental rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable alternatives (Paulson et al., 2003). In other words, whilst retaining its focus on political economic systems, political ecologists have initiated the possibility of incorporating the analysis of social relations that may not be necessarily related to the physical conditions of the local environment directly. It was a move on from the conventional approaches, which seeks causes and solutions of environmental crises from locally based obstacles such as overpopulation and poor land management, because political ecology connects local stories to wider political-economic processes (Paulson et al., 2003).

Political ecology has become an established academic tradition, but can it contribute to practical policy-making? The challenge is that political ecology tends to advocate structural changes in the relations of production, which are both profound and radical and (as such) alien to the more modest ambitions of policy-makers. Political ecologists believe that the sources of environmental changes, particularly in the Third World, are rooted in the political and economic dimensions of society. Accordingly, they argue for the need of "the far-reaching changes to local, regional and global political-economic processes" (Bryant and Bailey, 1997:3; Watts and Peet, 2004). These changes, however, require a substantial amount of political effort because they inevitably involve the transformation of highly unequal power relationships upon which the present system is based. This is why political ecologists have been highly sceptical about the concept of sustainable development, which is built on the 'business-as-usual' agenda (Bryant and Bailey, 1997). In other words, the field of political ecology sees resolving environmental problems as a basis for radical change in the context of the developmentalist onslaught (Escobar, 1996). Such a position would seem easier to sustain at an academic conference than at an NGO workshop.

There are two main ways of thinking about the practical value of political ecology. On the one hand, political ecologists as individuals have always crossed the boundaries between academic and policy/activist work, and on the other, it is the necessity of a practical framework that makes the political ecology framework more applicable to environmental problems. First, political ecology has never been merely scholarly. Whilst most academic work suffers from the ivory tower syndrome, political ecologists have made a number of efforts to

escape the academy (Blaikie, 2012). This approach provides a sharp critique and a powerful methodological approach for analysing actual socio-ecological phenomenon that affect people's livelihoods in terms of history, geography and justice (Mann, 2009). Political ecology's accounts of the production of nature concern not only the political economic relations of production but also the *moral* field of social justice (Ekers and Loftus, 2013; Mann, 2009). In contrast, the concept of resilience aspires to neutrality - particular stable domains are neither good nor bad. It does not necessarily prioritise the needs of a specific group of people (e.g. the poor or marginalised). It means resilience is less willing to take a normative position and support specific social groups. But in climate change adaptation, enquiries into vulnerability (e.g. what constitutes vulnerability and whose vulnerability) are critical, particularly in the process of identifying *victims*. This is where political ecology falls into place in this thesis. Whilst resilience has its cornerstones in *adaptability* and *transformability* in the context of *surprise*, more sophisticated notions of *vulnerability* and *marginalisation* are drawn from political ecology (Watts and Peet, 2004). In other words, whereas resilience provides a framework for analysing community based adaptation by defining communities and their surrounding environment as complex interconnected socio-ecological systems, political ecology concerns social justice in 'ecological distribution conflicts' through identifying 'who loses and who gains'.

Second, there have been calls for the development of a conceptual framework that makes political ecology more applicable to practical policy problems (McLaughlin and Dietz, 2008; Tschakert and Dietrich, 2010). This is the time for political ecology to evolve again through the collaboration with the concept of resilience, continuing its openness to trans-disciplinary analysis. In climate change studies, the 'centre of gravity' is located between environmental and social sciences since both areas of scholarship consider transformation to be a

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critical part of adaptation. Both resilience and political ecology advocate radical change, where necessary, but they locate the site of change in different parts of socio-ecological systems. Whilst resilience thinking examines the transformability of physical conditions of the systems, political ecology scrutinises the discursive dimensions of nature-society relations. Integrating the concept of political ecology into resilience thinking therefore would (a) extend the practical applicability of political ecology whilst retaining its internal political vitality, and (b) fill the political gaps of resilience thinking.

What is the 'Political' in Political Ecology?

How do we conceptualise the 'political' in political ecology? Among both its advocates and critics, significant debates have been around methods and concepts used in addressing the political (Paulson et al., 2005). This question has been the central issue in political ecology from the first movement that replaced the 'human' in human ecology with neomarxian political economy, to the recent activities seeking social justice in the context of environmental change. Here, the political refers to "the practices and processes through which power, in its multiple forms, is wielded and negotiated" (Paulson et al., 2005:28), which is in alignment with the definition of politics of this thesis[5]. Political ecologists focus on the ways power circulates among and between different social groups, resources and places (Paulson et al., 2005). This involves the analysis of diverse manifestations of power such as the ability of an actor to impose their language on another, the capacity to control settings or domains in which people act and interact, and the capability to construct these settings and specify the direction

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[5] Politics, in this thesis, is the (generally public) dialogue about the rules (both formal laws and less formal social regulations) by which a society lives and operates and through which scarce resources are allocated. Politics may be about rules within a family or within a village or within a nation-state. Given that these rules probably benefit some people more than others, politics is as much about conflict as it is about co-operation and as much about exclusion as inclusion.

of socialisation/discipline within them (Wolf, 2001). In other words, in order to understand environmental conflicts, it is essential to understand the processes through which power is expressed, that is to say, 'the political'.

If 'the political' is any field where power relations are important, it exists in everyday practices (like eating) and structures (like families) as much as in parliaments, states and classes. Paulson et al. (2005:28) argue that, "All kinds of human relationships have political elements, often manifest in the strategic use of position, knowledge, or representations to gain differential access to resources". So, as Foucault (2009[1977]) insists, power is embedded in everyday human interactions. If the political encompasses not only the formal sense of politics but also people's day-to-day activities, power is not simply something we live with but also something we depend on for everyday life to function (Butler, 1997). Power relations are characterised by daily challenges and negotiations and are infused with historic and discursive meanings (Paulson et al., 2005). Developing a political understanding of environmental problems is about building theoretical methods for examining the political in those everyday phenomena (Kottak, 1999). In recent years, as a result of this perception, the recognition of how power relations embedded in everyday human interactions shape the environment have encouraged political ecologists to employ the methodological approaches of applied anthropology for collecting, analysing and using data (Paulson et al., 2005).

In terms of political proposals and policies, political ecology has a tendency to advocate actions that move towards a more equal distribution of ecological resources and risks (Martínez-Alier, 2003). This 'red-green alliance' often requires political ecologists to announce their own political positions in the analysis (Paulson et al., 2005). Particularly, in climate change adaptation,

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scholars often have significant influence on the processes of policy-making by producing discourses. Thus it becomes increasingly important for political ecologists to be aware of the power relationships embedded in the process of obtaining and interpreting social and physical resources. This movement emphasises the role of political ecology that translates "the knowledge of marginal or subaltern people into power, respect, and right" (Paulson et al., 2005:31) and provides the political understanding of socio-ecological systems that is absent in resilience thinking. In so doing, there is possibility for climate change adaptation to be the second opportunity (Pelling, 2010), after the movement towards sustainable development in the 1980s, to question the dominant form of development, particularly at the local level. That is to say, the concept of CBA is entitled to involve responses not only to the impacts of climate change in the biophysical spheres but also to the highly unequal power relationships of society.

2.2.2 Synthesising Resilience Thinking and Political Ecology: Power, Scale and Representation

Resilience thinking provides the analytical starting point for this thesis. Adaptation in resilience thinking is about the ability to adapt to current socio-ecological systems. In this sense, adaptation is formulated through relationships with other social actors who "strive to defend and create their own environments in a context of class, ethnic, racial and/or gender conflicts and power struggles" (Swyngedouw, 2006:106 in Taylor, 2015:83). Hidden beneath resilience thinking, 'participation' and 'empowerment' in CBA might become vehicles that increase inequalities and shape CBA according to the self-interest of a few actors. In contrast, political ecology engages normatively with the socio-political causes of vulnerability and struggles over assets.

Whilst resilience thinking provides a useful entry point in investigating how vulnerability is expressed, political ecology contributes a toolkit for understanding how power relations make and remake vulnerability over time. In particular, political ecology adds politics to resilience thinking in three distinct ways: 1) by explicitly conceptualising power in nature-society relations; 2) by politicising scale; and 3) by politicising representation, specifically representations of indigenous knowledge. The first of these is the most significant and receives the most extensive treatment here. The argument is that whilst it is important to question the unfair distribution of natural resources and the differentiated experience of climate change, what is even more critical is to reveal what kinds of socio-political practice determine the political assets of actors and institutions that shape their behaviour and willingness to give consent to those actions. Political ecologists have theorised power in multiple ways but in recent years have drawn extensively on the ideas of Michel Foucault.

Power

Within social science, there are at least two distinct traditions for understanding power: a conventional view concerned with the exercise of power and an alternative approach that understands power as relational (Scott, 2001). First, the conventional approach describes power as 'power over', conceptualising it as a quantifiable thing that can be possessed by individuals (e.g. x has more power than y). In this tradition power struggles are always a zero-sum game (Göhler, 2009). According to this view, power is stratified and hierarchical, often leading to the concentration of power in the hands of a few elites (Scott, 2001). This approach was, for instance, widely discussed in understanding patron-client networks based around a powerful individual or

party in contemporary African politics (Boas, 2001). Critics of such views set up an alternative way of understanding power in more subtle forms, such as coercion and manipulation, that do not necessarily involve conflicts or power struggles (Haugaard, 2002). Most contemporary political ecology draws on this alternative conception.

The alternative approach describes power as 'power to make something happen', rather than 'power over', perceiving it as a capacity that is socially produced. It is the effect of social networks, it is distributed across society and it is therefore *relational* (Haugaard, 1997). In particular, through a number of essays, lectures and books between the 1960s and the 1980s, the French social theorist Michel Foucault transformed the conceptualisation of power (Hannigan, 2006). He dismissed the previous conventional approaches that attempt to build "a general theory of what power is", and instead sought "where and how, between whom, between what points, according to what processes, and with what effects, power is applied" (Foucault, 2009[1977]:2). Power ceases to be a *thing* and starts to be understood as an *effect* or *relationship*. Foucault conceives power as something embedded in social relationships, the fundamental feature of everyday human interactions, rather than as a device permanently residing with institutions for the use of a certain group of people. He then conceptualises government in terms of the set of procedures of securing particular effects (Foucault, 2009[1977]).

Foucault argues that social relationships are seldom symmetrical (Lemke, 2002). In particular, where the effect of power is structured by formal institutions such as states and corporations, the relationships often appear in the form of *domination* – the unequal relations in which the subordinated party has little chance of exercising its will (Hannigan, 2006). In modern European

societies, Foucault argues, power is usually achieved through a life-long process of socialisation, which he calls *discipline*, which may reduce the resistance of the other interest groups whilst internalising social consent (Lemke, 2002). Power is often expressed through the production of knowledge which builds up certain ideas that are internalised and then embodied by individuals through their behaviour. By steering the behaviour of populations, this is a very efficient form of social control and government. Next, Foucault suggests the notion of *discourse* as a means of shaping discipline through the circulation of ideas that persuade individuals to give their consent to relations of domination (Hannigan, 2006). In climate change adaptation, for example, discipline is often practised under the supervision of 'experts' who are empowered by their scientific and technical forms of discourse to promote forms of behaviour – such as willingness to conserve water through changing everyday domestic practices (Mitchell, 2002). As individuals we are expected to internalise responsibility (discipline), express our consent (through behaviour) and are persuaded to do so by expertise (discourse). Overall the networks of the state/water company/scientists have had an effect on our behaviour – an expression of power. This exercise of socialisation/discipline is relevant to Foucault's concern over the extendability of scientific expertise to determining environmental risks, particularly at local levels, since control over discourse production can demarcate not only the participation of actors but also the issues that are subject to debate (Davidson and Frickel, 2004). We will return to this part of the argument when discussing the politics of representation.

This thesis defines power as the ability of actors and institutions to effect desired outcomes in competition with others (who pursue their own goals). Running through social networks of socio-ecological systems, power may affect people's values through processes of internalisation and subsequently represent

forms of domination (Scott, 2001). This perception of power is a key element of the thesis as it attempts to understand the socio-political relations through which CBA is implemented and how actors and institutions constitute complex socio-ecological systems for their own self-interest. The thesis explicitly explores the axes of power represented around CBA projects and examines the internalisation of values that validates and authorises the systems by indirect means such as information control and socialisation – particularly through, the voluntary participation of the peasantry in land management in Chapter Five, the discursively constructed artefacts of community and climate change in Chapter Six, different understandings of the area closure in Chapter Seven and the politics of local leadership in Chapter Eight. In so doing, this thesis aims to reveal the socio-political institutions of society that control the exploitation of the environment and steer the behaviour of people.

Much of the writing in this tradition has focused on the relationships between populations, elites and government and how compliance to a regime is accomplished. In this context, Foucault introduced the concept of *governmentality* (Hauggard, 1997). Governmentality describes how relations between elites and people take place both in and beyond the modern state. Foucault defines governmentality as the "conduct of conduct", that is how the behaviour of a particular population is orchestrated. Governmentality is about producing a certain kind of citizen, whose ideas and actions suit the ambitions of the government. Governmentality is a mechanism of administrative power "that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument" (Foucault, 2009[1977]:108). Foucault's own empirical work often relates quite tightly to Western Europe or even France. He was analysing modern liberal democracies and was particularly interested in how elites still tried to steer the behaviour of

the people even in those realms of their life which were judged to be 'private' and therefore (in terms of liberal political philosophy) beyond the reach of the state, for example, in relation to how many children they had.

There has been an increasing interest in how governmentality might be a useful concept when applied outside the European and American heartlands of liberal democracy (see, for example, Legg, 2007). Such ideas are sometimes explored under the concept of *authoritarian governmentality*, a term introduced by Mitchell Dean (2010:133-135). Dean was interested in the forms of governmentality in the colonies created by Europeans in the early part of the 20th century. He argues that authoritarian governmentality differed from governmentality within Europe in that it denied almost all individuals the rights of citizens and expected unquestioned obedience. Authoritarian governmentality used "sovereign instruments of repression" (Dean 2010:209), such as the security apparatus (police, army and prisons), which have a much more direct impact on individual behaviour than European forms of discipline to achieve social control. Applying authoritarian governmentality thus needs to be differentiated from its more familiar European formulation and be understood as a more-or-less directive form of political practice. In many ways, authoritarian governmentality is a deliberate contradiction in so far as it contains both the idea of direct control through force (authoritarian) as well as the idea of self-government and the population's consent for this form of government (governmentality). The thesis argues that this concept, though intended for historical use, seems intuitively relevant to contemporary Ethiopia. Another conceptual contribution this thesis wants to make is to interpret the political dimensions of CBA through the lens of authoritarian governmentality.

Authoritarian governmentality in Ethiopia is delivered through government laws and policies and is performed by implementation of these directives in order to shape, regulate and manage the conduct of individuals and groups for specific goals. Just as Foucault argues, modern forms of power come into effect not only by forcing people to act in certain ways but by turning them into accomplices of the process, a form of self-government that is in the interest of certain groups in society. In other words, whilst certain logics spread throughout a network of power relations, actors and institutions within that network come to naturalise and accept these logics as their own and in their own interest (Robbins, 2006). Through this lens of authoritarian governmentality, how ideas from Imperial and two post-revolution regimes of Ethiopia have all tried to devise the voluntary participation of the peasantry in land management that best suit the elite ruling class will be demonstrated in Chapter Five. The chapter will argue that although this control over land has been an intentional plan by the elites to serve their own interest, it was also a strategy to receive people's willing consent, a strategy based on cultural understanding. In so doing, it will consider how the land tenure system has been a central organising feature of Ethiopian governmentality and explain the rationales behind the introduction of CBA in the country.

Foucault (1991) also argues that governmentality provides the conceptual apparatus through which to analyse how the state configures its relationships with citizens of various types. Here this apparatus is one of the missing parts of resilience thinking that analyses the social distribution of rights and responsibilities in a society through such as historical legacies of state formation and patterns of state-society relations. The concept of governmentality continually redefines what is and what is not within the competence of the state as a government strategy in order to convince people to do what the state wants

them to do (Hammond, 2011). This is particularly important in countries like Ethiopia where the central government still remains a key player because its citizens can become easily instrumentalised in the interests of the elites. Cadres of the ruling party for example have a different relationship to the state than opposition party members; their experience of citizenship is different. Seen through this Foucauldian lens, these instrumentalised citizens cannot see the power relations in action because they have been normalised and accepted as legitimate even in conditions of extreme domination (Hauggard, 2002).

In the context of natural resource management, governmentality describes a process of how some people come to internalise the environmental mandates of the state as 'right', possibly at the price of their own interests. The relevant activities become normalised within actors and institutions through the process of socialisation (Lemke, 2002), that is to say, a series of attempts by government to guide, educate and control human activities relating to natural resources, which will be demonstrated through the case of discursively constructed knowledge of climate change in Chapter Six. As the political ecologist Paul Robbins (2006:75) puts it natural resource management becomes the "product of ritualised embodiment of environmental practice". Discipline is achieved through a combination of force and habit. Agrawal (2005) calls this application of governmentality *environmentality* – a set of practices and ideas instilled in the citizen-subject through participation in institutionalised environmental activities.

Agrawal (2005) described a process of decentralising the regulation of forestry to local communities with an example of community-based forest management in India. The political problem from the perspective of those in the state is that decentralisation appears to be involved in reducing their central

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control over what happens at a local level in provincial areas. The question becomes how to retain a capacity to steer behaviour in the periphery in the context of a policy that is specifically designed to reduce central bureaucratic control over the periphery. Agrawal argues that in his case studies relations between the state and society, whilst dynamically changing, produced new governmentalised localities by building a new decision-making process for environmental problems and new political structures called 'regulatory communities' (Agrawal, 2005). It means that, instead of coercing people, a process of devolving responsibility is done in a secretive manner through inducing them to do what the elites want but doing it by their own volition. Local communities also notice the changing whims or fancies of national or international actors and change themselves to garner more favour under this new regime (Sletto, 2005). Such a conceptualisation of how governments can organise practices in a way that continues to produce governable subjects, this thesis argues, is plausible in the Ethiopian context. This is because Ethiopia has frequently lacked the capacity to assert its authoritarianism across such a vast space with so few resources and thus has relied on its citizens obeying the country through their own volition.

This is where the critical toolkit of political ecology that adopts this way of thinking about how power works helps resilience thinking when it comes to analysing empirical material that covers both social and physical sciences. Agrawal (2005:318) points out that, "An analysis of governmentality orients attention toward the concrete strategies to shape conduct that are adopted by a wide range of social actors… questions about the nature of the state and about the extent to which states shape social processes". What are the strategies and technologies used in Ethiopia to turn its rural peasants into environmental subjects? They often become part of a network of power relations through

natural resource management and are easily made to be instruments of government even though they appear to decide and act on their own free will (Robbins, 2006). Through a process of turning them into environmental subjects, the Ethiopian state gets opportunities to extend its capacity to local communities and to increase its ubiquity and influence over their everyday life, despite claiming it is pursuing a policy of decentralisation. In other words, processes such as decentralisation or community-based management can be easily hijacked by the political desires of government through turning constituents into accomplices. Political ecology works as an approach precisely because it is specifically concerned with revealing the complexities of power relations, it sets out to elucidate whose interests are being served by particular ecological transformations of the environment and of the institutions used to govern natural resources (Page and Tanyi, 2015). Yet, whilst this political ecological approach is penetrating, most studies in the field focus on the power/knowledge issues at the site where a farmer's behaviour is assessed. Rather less attention has been given to the hidden rationales of government.

My analysis (in Chapter Five) casts the state (that is the bureaucracies and politicians that make up the central government of Ethiopia) as a central player facilitating governmentality through manipulation of the land tenure system on behalf of a series of governing regimes and in support of wider existing social and political structures (that is the elites that exist beyond and above the state). Addressing this particular country's practice of land tenure adds to the study of governmentality in a context of where most people's livelihoods are dependent on agriculture under an authoritarian regime, which is not uncommon in developing countries.

It would be wrong to suggest that these core political issues (popular consent, authoritarian elites, dominance and legitimacy) have not been addressed elsewhere in critical academic discussions of African government. For example, Jean-Francois Bayart (1993), covers similar topics in his well-known Gramsci-inspired account of African government – *The Politics of the Belly*. This text, along with others usually bracketed under the broad label of *neopatrimonialism*, has described a system in which a ruler and/or his staff use state resources for personal benefit and to secure the loyalty of clients as if the sources were his private property (Bach and Gazibo, 2012). In these accounts power gets centralised on a patron to whom all clients in the system owe their position (Thomson, 2004), yet on a national scale the patron is only as powerful as the network they have built up (Chabal and Daloz, 1999).

It is impossible to do justice to this extensive field of critical work on African politics in the space available here, but drawing one point of analytical comparison is worthwhile. For all their value in teasing out the practices of African politics, these texts often seem to rely on fairly traditional conceptions of power relative to the Foucauldian governmentality approach. What is striking when reading these texts through the lens of governmentality is their fairly orthodox conceptions of power as hierarchy and 'thing'. This can be illustrated through neopatrimonial accounts of resource politics. Authority over natural resources, in this literature, is seen as a significant source of power. In African politics, the management of natural resources frequently imply the instrumental use of power (Boas, 2001; Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Neopatrimonialism is fundamentally "an exchange relationship between unequals" (Boas, 2001:700) which could take place at every level of governance. Whilst undertaking this thesis has required me to engage with this literature on African politics and it has informed much of my understanding of political practice, the authoritarian

governmentality approach is selected in preference within the analytical framing of the thesis because it provides a distinctive way of approaching the politics of CBA that puts a relational concept of power at its centre.

The Politics of Scale

One of the key critiques of resilience thinking is its difficulty in drawing scalar boundaries that enable analysis of both socio-ecological systems and structures in which those systems are embedded. Where are the systems boundaries and how are they produced? This section argues that there is a need to understand participation and empowerment in specific local communities without neglecting the politics and wider structures in which these local communities are embedded. This ambition is one of political ecology's long-standing interest in questions of scale.

Political ecology has had a lot to say about how power and scale are related (Bryant and Bailey, 1997). By locating the ecological phenomena of interest in the context of specific political economic systems, political ecologists have opened the possibility of bringing the analysis of nested hierarchies of scale into environmental studies. This move is rooted in an effort to transcend the methodological limitations of the orthodox approaches, likewise resilience thinking, that situate causes of and solutions to environmental crises in local-based problems such as overpopulation, poor land management or inappropriate technology (Paulson et al., 2005). In other words, inspired by neomarxism that offers "a means to link local social oppression and environmental degradation to wider political and economic concerns" (Bryant, 1998:3), political ecologists have worked for the wider political economy framework that analyses the local scale in its wider scalar context (Brown and Purcell, 2005). Hecht and Cockburn

(1990), for instance, examined the causal dynamics of deforestation in eastern Amazonia in terms of national and international factors that encouraged people to clear tropical rainforests for cattle ranching. They revealed that macro-level political economic forces created conditions of high profitability that influence social and economic actors (e.g. ranchers, peasants and transnational companies) involved in the business and their decision-making processes.

In this context, the case of Ethiopia may provide a great insight into how this aid-addicted nation is actively engaged with global environmental discourses through adjusting its policy narratives to the interests of international donor organisations without ever departing from a firm focus on elite self-interest. Chapter Five will demonstrate the ways in which Ethiopian governmentality inscribes how to govern people through the land tenure system necessarily involve the propagation of practices that are rooted in particular global world views on the environment that are prominent at any one time and which are propagated by global institutions concerned with environment and development (Hammond, 2011). This is what the resilience framework often fail to integrate into formal analysis and where the political ecology toolkit provides a cross-level and cross-scale analysis.

Political ecology also recognises that diverse environmental processes interact with socio-political processes in creating different scales of mutual relations (Zimmerer and Bassett, 2003). Scalar theories in human geography have helped develop an argument that space is socially constructed. The differentiation of space is inscribed by power relations and political struggles, and therefore space is not fixed but constantly reconstructed (Zulu, 2009). In this context, the thesis's interest is to address how to apply this argument to interrogating the governance of CBA projects and how this process is

manipulated by actors and institutions in conflicts over rights and resources. This focus is originally built on Blaikie's work (1985) of multi-scale political economic processes that affect local resource use patterns. In his study, however, the configuration of scale was conceptualised in a hierarchical fashion and as a series of geographic terminologies such as local, regional, national and international (Zimmerer and Bassett, 2003).

Key theoretical advances were made later considering scale as 'socially produced' rather than 'ontologically given' (Marston, 2000; Smith, 1995; Swyngedouw, 1997). These studies explored how political ecological processes generate scaled spaces of interaction and incorporated a variety of scalar configurations that portray the relationships of different actors and institutions across time and space (Brown and Purcell, 2005; Zimmerer and Bassett, 2003). Processes of environmental change produce new socio-ecological settings with temporally and spatially distinct characteristics (Brown and Purcell, 2005; Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003). This ongoing process is tied to the social, cultural, political and economic conditions and formal and informal institutions of governance in specific moments of time and space. By extension, Swyngedouw and Heynen (2003) argue that there is nothing inherent in any scale, and there is no particular scale more desirable than others; instead, the priority resides in identifying the process by which particular socio-ecological scales are "disputed, redefined, reconstituted and restructured in terms of their extent, content, relative importance and interrelations" (913).

In this sense, the socio-spatial scales are inherently relational. In this more recent perspective, the continuous restructuring of scales is an integral part of social strategies to secure control over natural resources or to struggle for empowerment (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003). This restructuring is described

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as the 'politics of scales' which actors and institutions attempt to shift the level of implementation processes and decision-making authority to the level which they can influence governance most effectively (Lebel et al., 2008). Adaptation to climate change is, for instance, increasingly observed at different scales of socio-ecological systems, yet these scales are not naturally given but socially constructed and therefore fluid. Conflicts over the appropriate scale for organising adaptation strategies involve different power geometries and often lead to radically altered socio-ecological conditions, in particular when a successful adaptive action for one agency is not classed as successful by another (Adger et al., 2005a). Success in climate change adaptation therefore depends on the scale of implementation and the criteria for evaluation at each scale. In addition, these socio-spatial processes change the importance of specific geographical scales, and these redefinitions in turn alter the geometry of social power by strengthening the control of some whilst disempowering others (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003). For example, the concept of CBA was not initially welcomed by local and regional governments in Ethiopia, compared to top-down and government-led projects, due to the struggle over control of finance. However, once the projects were carried out and local communities held the control, it was observed that the role of the communities becomes reinforced even in other local dialogues. This empirical point illustrates the challenge here by slipping back into apparently fixed scales (national, regional, local government) that seem intuitive and natural because of their familiarity. The politics of scale is as much about the contest to create these scales as it is about a contest between them – it is about the strategic reorganisation of scale.

Political struggles over scale are unavoidable as scale is socially produced and inevitably associated with power relations. Whilst resilience thinking provides a scale-sensitive, policy-relevant framework, the power dynamics and political

economic struggles are better addressed through the lens of political ecology. In this frame of reference, it is evident that these two schools of thought are complementary to each other, particularly in the context of addressing "the mechanisms of scale transformation through social conflict and political struggle" (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003:913). This collaboration will be deployed in Chapter Six to critically analyse the scale of 'community', understanding the processes and consequences of the continuous restructuring of this specific socio-spatial scale in Ethiopia that may strengthen the control of some whilst disempowering others.

The Politics of Representation: (Indigenous) Knowledge and Discourse

A growing focus on the politics of knowledge and discourse has raised fundamental questions about the way in which nature is represented (Watts and Peet, 2004). Essentialist conceptualisations of nature were challenged by a number of first generation political ecologists who insisted that the idea of what nature is has shifted throughout history according to cultural, social, economic and political factors (Escobar, 1999; Hornborg, 2007; Robbins, 2006). As a result, critical debates have emerged between "collecting biophysical data" and "the examination of pertinent environmental discourses" (Paulson et al., 2005:29). Attempting to bridge these counterintuitive projects requires finding a balance between the biophysical aspect of nature and the historical contexts of nature (Escobar, 1999). That is to say, political ecology is required to acknowledge the materiality of nature whilst holding fast to the idea of a discursively constructed representation of nature too (Neumann, 2005). This concept of bridging and balancing physical and social sciences shows a better fit between resilience thinking and political ecology, than just 'politics', since both seek to cross the boundary.

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Discourses are inherently about representations. Poststructural political ecology generally have adopted Foucault's idea that knowledge and power are inseparable (Haugaard, 1997; Sletto, 2011). Foucault argues that any discourse formation is the consequence of power struggles as "it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power" (Foucault, 1980:52 in Haugaard, 1997:66). In particular, political ecology started to acknowledge indigenous knowledge – what 'local' people know about and do to their environments (Watts and Peet, 2004). As a result, knowledge from locals has become better respected alongside the upsurge of community–based development approaches. Yet political ecologists have subsequently identified a few critical issues by problematising the concept of indigenous environmental knowledge (Watts and Peet, 2004). Three points appear to be vital in the context of CBA because they show how indigenous knowledge can actually entrench and even worsen current environmental problems.

First, there is no such thing as purely indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge often exists as a relatively recent invention. It may not be indigenous as such, but instead is hybrid (Rocheleau, 2008). Most knowledge is not just local, but is a complex hybrid derived from all kinds of knowledge from different sources over a long period of time (Rocheleau, 2008). Instead, what matters in political ecology is why indigenous knowledge is difficult to legitimate and how local practice can be institutionalised into development discourses (Watts and Peet, 2004).

Second, indigenous knowledge is not necessarily right or best (Watts and Peet, 2004). Whilst it is true in many cases that local communities know their

own environment better than external scientists, incorporating indigenous knowledge into practice does not guarantee effective projects in the field. This is because, first, as illustrated earlier, knowledge in local communities is formulated in the context of social norms and hierarchies and often misrepresents the needs of individuals and/or certain groups (Kothari, 2001), and second, indigenous knowledge can be simply wrong (Blaikie, 1985).

Last, indigenous knowledge is often unevenly distributed within local communities (Watts and Peet, 2004). This is mainly due to the unequal power relationships between different social groups characterised by such as gender, age, class or ethnicity. Knowledge reflects the political capacity, rather than the legal entitlement, of individuals and groups. This is where political ecologists call for increased concern with social justice and democracy in the analysis of environmental change. When analysing the political context, political ecologists tend to prioritise the rights of people who experience the negative effects of environmental change regardless of whether those people are the custodians of indigenous knowledge or not. The ambition of political ecology is to enhance the democratic content of a society being studied by "identifying the strategies through which a more equitable distribution of social power and a more inclusive mode of environmental production" can be achieved (Swyngedouw et al., 2002:125).

It is not science itself as a form of knowledge that is questioned in political ecology, but "it is the way (ecological) knowledge is selected and validated, the way environmental problems are narrated and structured, and what assumptions and practices become normal and internalised for people" (Peet et al., 2011:40). That is to say, the way climate change is recognised in local communities, depends on knowing how people understand, narrate and explain their society.

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This politics of representation will be demonstrated through the case of discursively constructed knowledge of climate change in the case study communities of Ethiopia in Chapter Six. In this example, a form of knowledge is found neither entirely indigenous, nor quite right, nor just.

In summary, political ecology claims to be an alternative to 'apolitical' ecology (Robbins, 2006). The concept of political ecology is a set of critical tools to analyse environmental conflicts in terms of struggles over "knowledge, power and practice" in wider scalar contexts (Watts, 2000:257). It is concerned with the way ecological knowledge is mobilised in exploring the origins and implications of environmental degradation in the context of uneven power relations. In climate change adaptation, there is a growing body of scholarly work paying attention to the ways in which the politics of decision-making inform community-based approaches. This is mainly due to the necessity of improving our understanding of power relations in society in order to respond flexibly and collectively to climate disturbances in complex socio-ecological systems, that is to say, increasing systems resilience. This section also draws particular attention to questions of authoritarian governmentality, history and consent as a lens through which to think about how relational power operates through environmental interventions, particularly in the field of multi-scale research.

2.3   Conclusion

The chapter sets out to cover three distinct literatures: participatory development, resilience thinking and political ecology. The first of these plays an important role in the history of CBA and remains central to it. The second and third literatures, which both bridge social and physical sciences and seek to cross this boundary, form the basis of the analytical framework of this thesis. The

overall goal is to synthesise resilience thinking and political ecology to produce a conceptual hybrid that strengthens the socio-political dimensions of the former and the policy-relevant dimensions of the latter. Through analysing these literatures, the thesis aims to bring three conceptual innovations to analysis of CBA. First, it understands participation and empowerment in specific local communities without neglecting the politics and wider structures in which these local communities are embedded. Second, it links CBA to the idea of systems resilience by defining communities and their surrounding environment as complex interconnected socio-ecological systems. Third, it weaves political ecology's Foucauldian understandings of relational power and authoritarian governmentality into resilience thinking in order to rethink questions of politics in the analysis of CBA.

The argument of the thesis, based on field experience, is that CBA will have limited long-term success because it is conceptually under-developed and in particular is depoliticised. Given the role in setting scales and knowledge and determining the distribution of rights and resources, CBA is political by definition and does not present a neutral conceptual framework. It is rather a discourse that is "embedded in, and reproductive of, material forces, institutionalised practices and political claims that are closely geared towards the preservation of existing" socio-political structures of a community (Taylor, 2015:19). This chapter therefore draws attention to the socio-political interests, agendas and actions which are always present around communities and brought up the question of 'why' a community-based approach is deemed appropriate in development practice, rather than simply assumes that the community level is where to enhance systems resilience most effectively. In so doing, it demonstrates the heterogeneity of communities and the complexity this brings to implementing standard models of CBA in specific field sites.

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In conclusion, the chapter demonstrates that it is insufficient to involve communities in participatory approaches without a detailed understanding of power relations in society. The analysis of socio-political dynamics in nature-society discourses is the keystone to achieving social justice in climate change adaptation. There is a widely accepted false assumption that if the spaces for decision-making are local and rules for access and distribution fair, all parties will be able to participate and benefit (Cleaver, 2009). This is where to bring the synthesised framework into analysis of CBA. The diversity of social structures and individual agents means that evaluations of CBA projects need to be flexible, context-sensitive and power-conscious.

Chapter Three.   Ethiopian Context

This chapter sets out to provide a summary of the relevant background information on Ethiopia. It begins with a brief description of the country's geography and modern history and then particular attention will be given to the contemporary political debate in Ethiopia in the context of ethnic federalism and neopatrimonialism.

3.1   Geography

At an altitude of $2,000 - 4,500m$, the Ethiopian highlands, the so-called 'Roof of Africa', cover more than half of the country (Henze, 2000). The flat-topped hills of the highlands, known as *amba*, have been historically important places as the site of churches, prisons and battles (Bahru Zewde, 2001). Major rivers originate from different watersheds. The notable ones are the Awash River in the Rift Valley; the Wabi Shebelle River in the Somali region; the Omo River in the south; and the Blue Nile, or *Abbay*, which arises near Lake Tana in the highlands and later flows to Sudan and Egypt (see *Map 1*) (Boudreau, 2010).
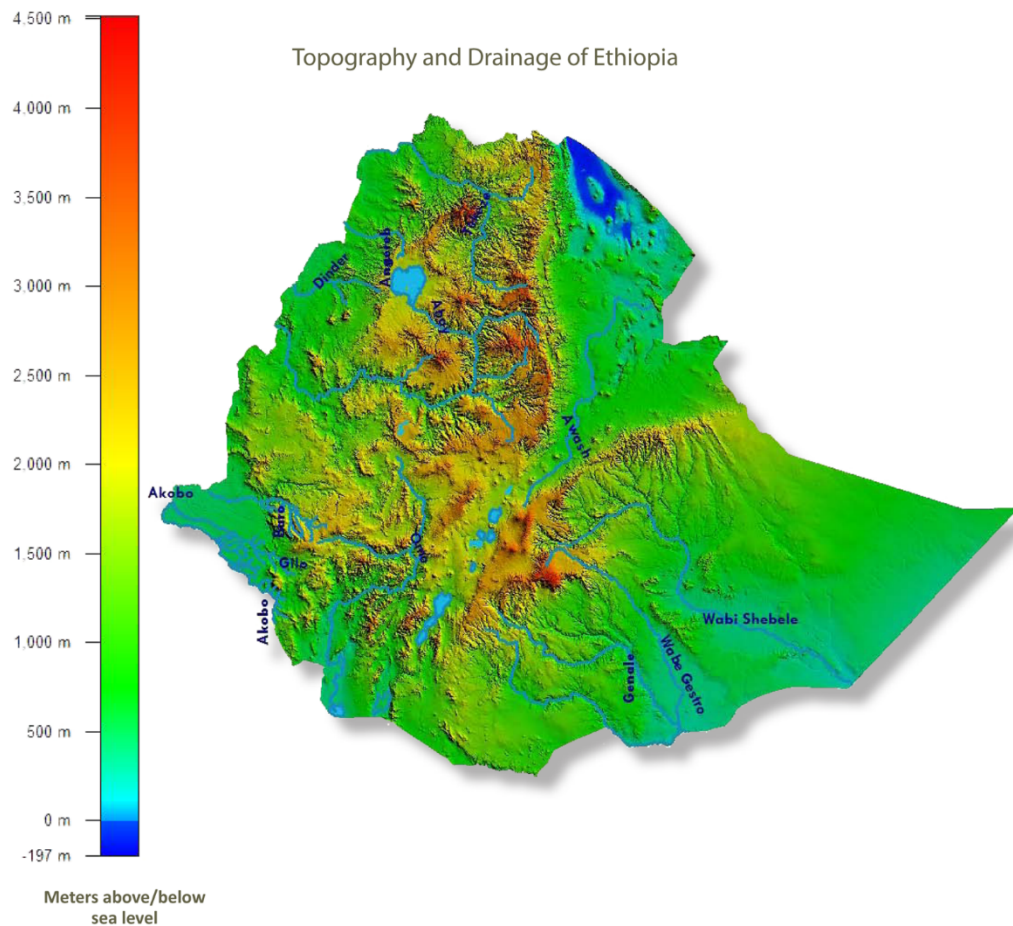
Map 1. Topography and drainage of Ethiopia (source: Boudreau, 2010)

Due to the wide range of altitudes (−197 *m* to 4,550 *m*), topography, habitat, climate, population distribution and livelihood are all closely linked in Ethiopia (see *Map 2*). The highlands accommodate the majority of the country's population who rely on rain-fed small-scale farming. The highlands also include most of the cropping areas with a tropical monsoon climate, which makes the plateaux extraordinarily green. Lower elevations, which are much less densely populated, receive less rainfall. Where rivers and seasonal watercourses permit, people in the lowlands can grow cash crops such as coffee and *khat*, but the major part of the lowland economy depends on herding – pastoralism. Most of the lowest lying areas in the east, northeast and far south of the country receive

very little rainfall and are mainly used for pastoralism under these semi-arid climatic conditions (see *Map* 3) (Boudreau, 2010).
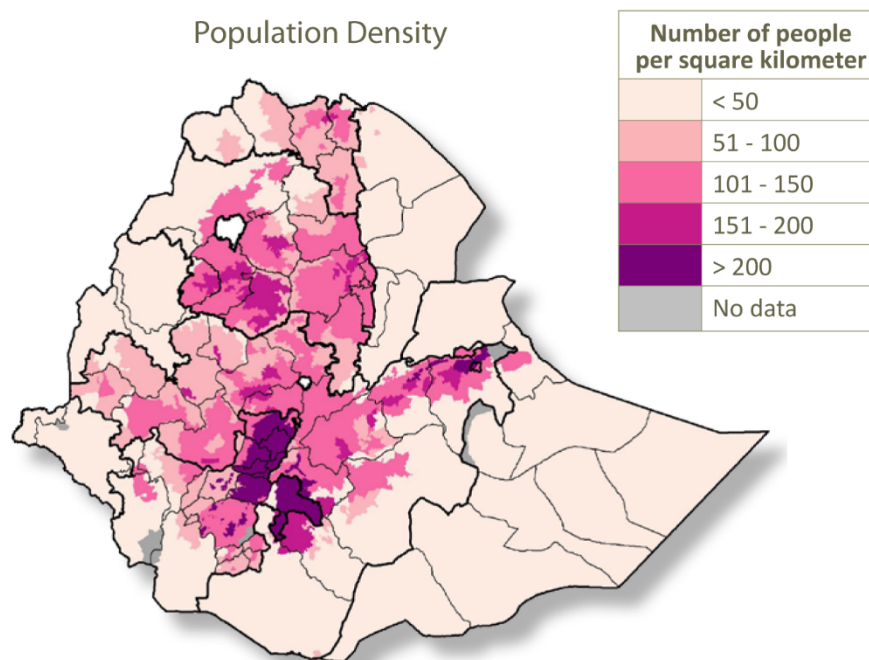
Map 2. Population density of Ethiopia (source: Boudreau, 2010)

Altitude is the most important factor determining rainfall, but spatial variability of rainfall events means that the correlation is not always exact. The season, period and frequency of rain vary by longitude and latitude. For instance, the eastern side of the Rift Valley and the northern Tigray region receive less rainfall than the mid-highlands or even than the lowlands in the Benishangul and Gumuz region (see *Map* 4). Although the rainy season is different by region, it is generally considered that the main rainy season, known as *kremt*, is from June to October, and the short rainy season, known as *belg*, is from March to May. The *belg* rains are often unreliable, but they are a critical factor in agriculture as many kinds of grain are either harvested or planted during this period (Boudreau, 2010).

Livelihood zone type	
	Livestock
	Food crops
	Crop sales
	Cash crops
	No data
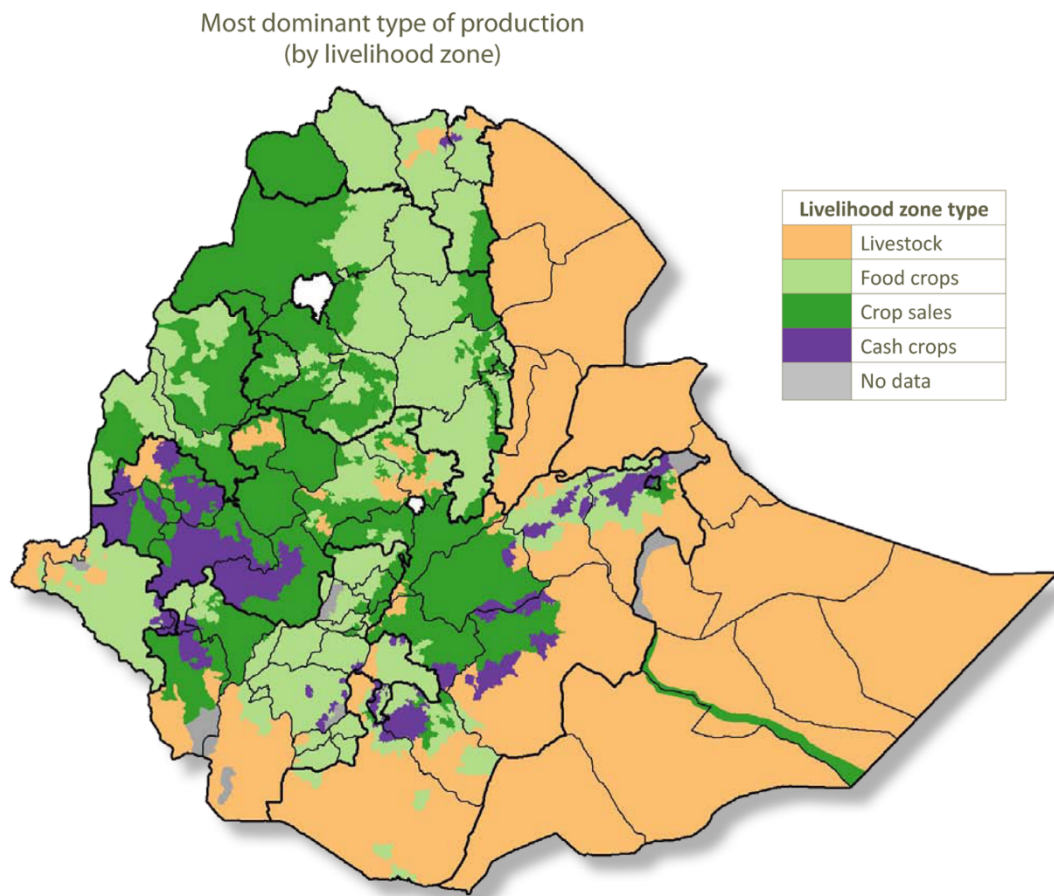
Map 3. Dominant type of livelihoods in Ethiopia (source: Boudreau, 2010)

Another key physical geographical feature is the Great Rift Valley, a vast geological crack cutting through Ethiopia in a south-westerly direction (see *Map 5*). It starts in Syria in the Middle East, goes through the Red Sea and East Africa and then finishes at Mozambique in southern Africa. This is where the hominid ancestors of human beings such as *Australopithecus* lived several million years ago and their skeletons were excavated.[6] The area is still reasonably populated since numerous lakes are found within it. The southern Rift Valley in Ethiopia has been an important cradle for endemic biodiversity and for the local economy

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[6] The 20-year-old female hominid skeleton, named Lucy (*Australopithecus afarensis*), was unearthed in the Danakil region of northern Ethiopia in 1974. She was revealed as a 3.5-million-year-old ancestor of humankind, and it was followed by more palaeontological discoveries in the Great Rift Valley region (Kimbel, Johanson and Rak, 1994).

with businesses such as floriculture and fisheries taking advantage of the conditions.
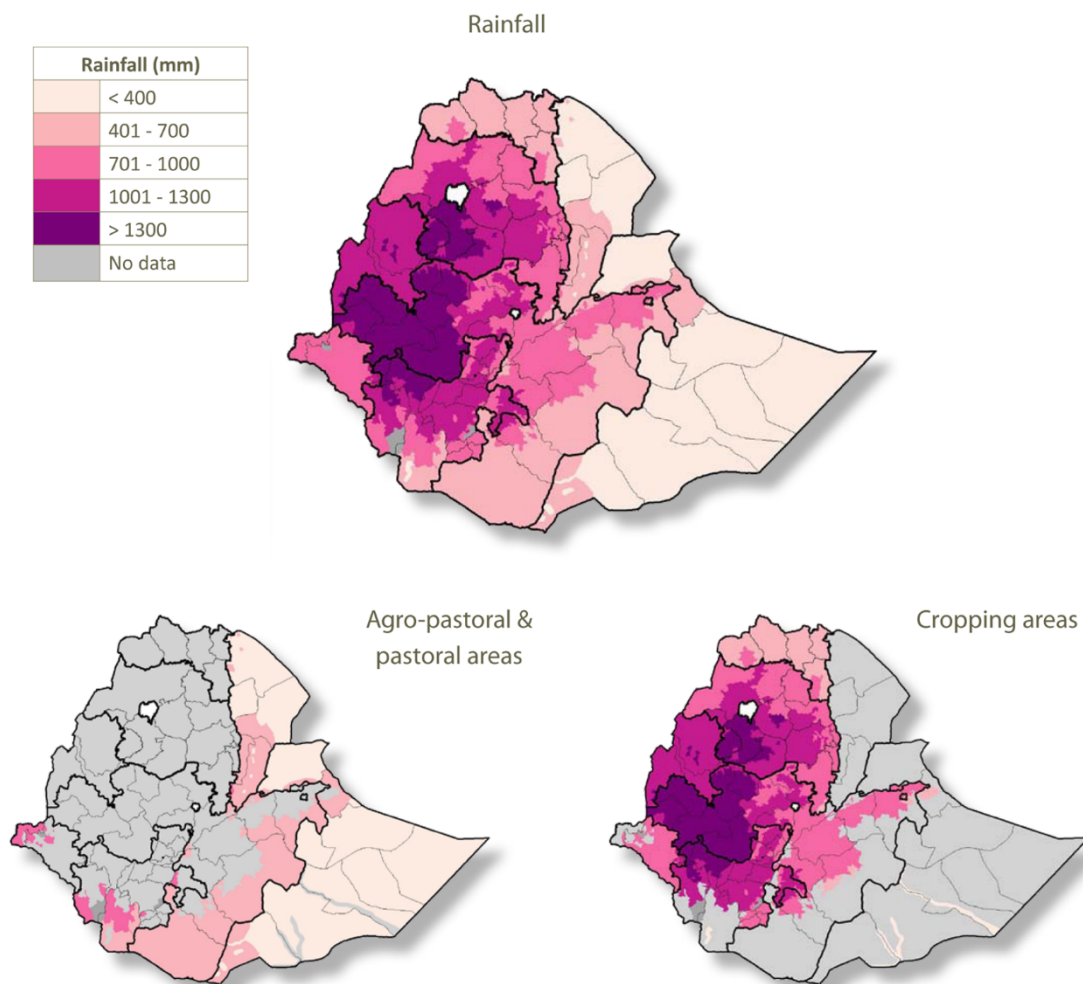
Map 4. Rainfall of Ethiopia (source: Boudreau, 2010)

In conclusion, in relation to the physical geographical stereotype, it is important to recognise that agriculture in Ethiopia is a risky business. This is because, first, it is dependent on rainfall and that rainfall can be unreliable, and second, land is scarce due to the rapid population growth in some parts of the country. It is perverse to pretend that droughts and famines have not happened in the past. However, to think of Ethiopia as perpetually drought-ridden or as devoid of rivers is factually inaccurate. Equally to explain famines purely in

terms of physical geographical conditions (e.g. droughts) is to ignore the

extensive literature that shows how famines are caused by human actions such

as war, insurgency, poverty or malfunctioning markets (Devereux, 1994; de

Waal, 1991; Sen, 1981). Instead, it is important to recognise that over a long

history Ethiopian communities have developed multiple forms of agriculture

(e.g. sedentary cropping, pastoralism and agro-pastoralism), which reflect the

specific local resources of rain, rivers, soil, slopes and people. The result is

significant agricultural diversity and a degree of resilience.

Map 5. Map of the Ethiopian Rift Valley (source: Bahru Zewde, 2001)

3.1.1   Climate Change

A warmer future is projected in Ethiopia according to the CMIP5[7] ensemble climate model simulation (See *Figure 1*) (KNMI, 2017). Based on the RCP 4.5, the average annual temperature in Ethiopia is projected to be beyond 24°C by 2100, compared to 22.3°C in 2016 and 21.4°C in 1900. Here the Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) refers to the latest generation of scenario that provides input to climate models. RCP 4.5 is a scenario developed by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in the United States that outlines a future with relatively ambitious greenhouse gas emissions reductions, stabilising radiative forcing at 4.5 watts per meter squared shortly after 2100 (Thomson et al., 2011). This future is consistent with stringent climate policies, strong reforestation programmes and the commencement of CO_2 decline around 2040.

This climate trend would benefit crops with higher temperature thresholds (e.g. cassava and pigeon pea), but those with cooler optimal thresholds (e.g. teff, maize and potato), mostly major staple foods of a large number of Ethiopians, would be detrimentally affected by higher temperatures (Washington and Pearce, 2012).

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[7] CMIP5 is the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 5 (2010-2014) developed by World Climate Research Programme (WCRP). It is a standard experimental protocol for studying the output of coupled atmosphere-ocean general circulation models that provides climate model diagnosis, validation, documentation and data access (Taylor et al., 2009).
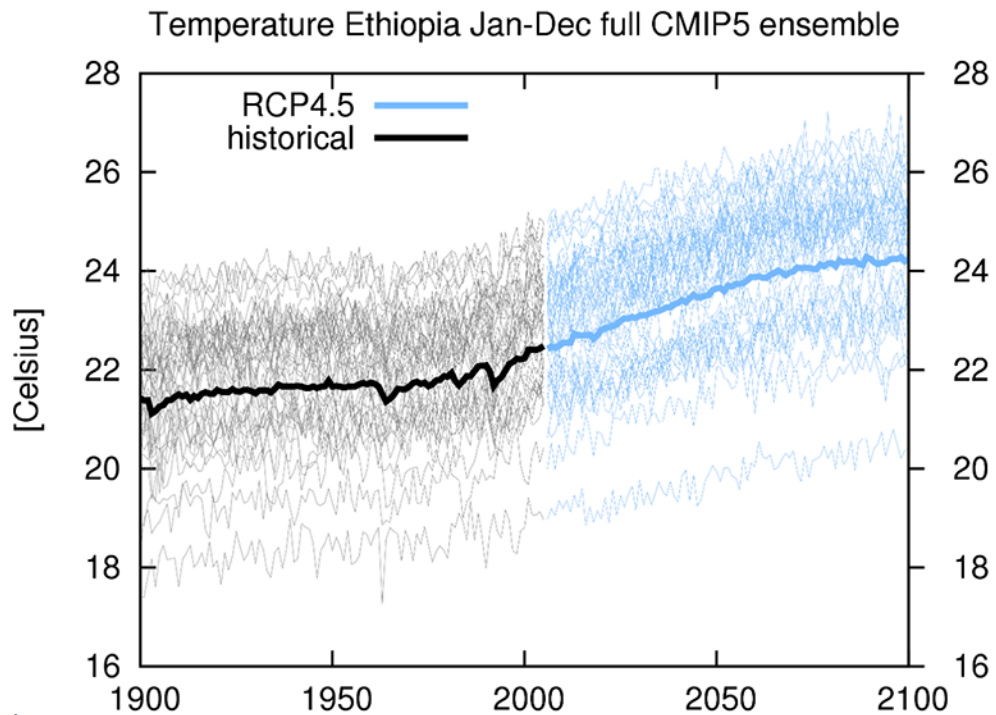
Figure 1. The CMIP5 ensemble climate model simulation Ethiopia[8] (source: KNMI, 2017)

Ethiopia experiences a series of climate-induced droughts that cause stress on crop and livestock productivity and eventually contribute to widespread food insecurity. In particular, there have been serious reductions in March-June rainfall in the north and south in eastern highlands of Ethiopia, where the fieldwork of this thesis was conducted, with declines ranging from -0.4 to -0.6 SPI[9] (See *Figure 2a*), whilst northern Ethiopia has seen recent rainfall increases from 0.2 to 0.6 during June-September (See *Figure 2b*) (Brown et al., 2017). There is generally more uncertainty in the projection of precipitation than of temperature, and considerable regional variations exist. These declines appear to be related to warming in the Indian Ocean combined with a warming dipole in the western equatorial Pacific (Funk et al., 2012).

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[8] Each line shows one scenario. The whiskers are from 5% to 95% and the horizontal line denotes the median.

[9] Standardised Seasonal Precipitation (SPI).

These areas of the highlands are the most productive and populated regions in Ethiopia, and more than 17 million people in these areas are projected to experience declining rainfall if current trends continue (Brown et al., 2017). Crop model simulations indicate that the eastern highlands experienced serious water deficits during *belg* (March to May), when is sowing, flowering and ripening periods of crop growth, between 1982 and 2014 (Brown et al., 2017). Furthermore, changes in the severity and frequency of extreme weather events could have more substantial impacts on crop yields and food production than changes in mean conditions (Washington and Pearce, 2012). Kharin et al. (2007) argue that the impact of climate change is felt most strongly through changes to intensity and frequency of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and heatwaves.
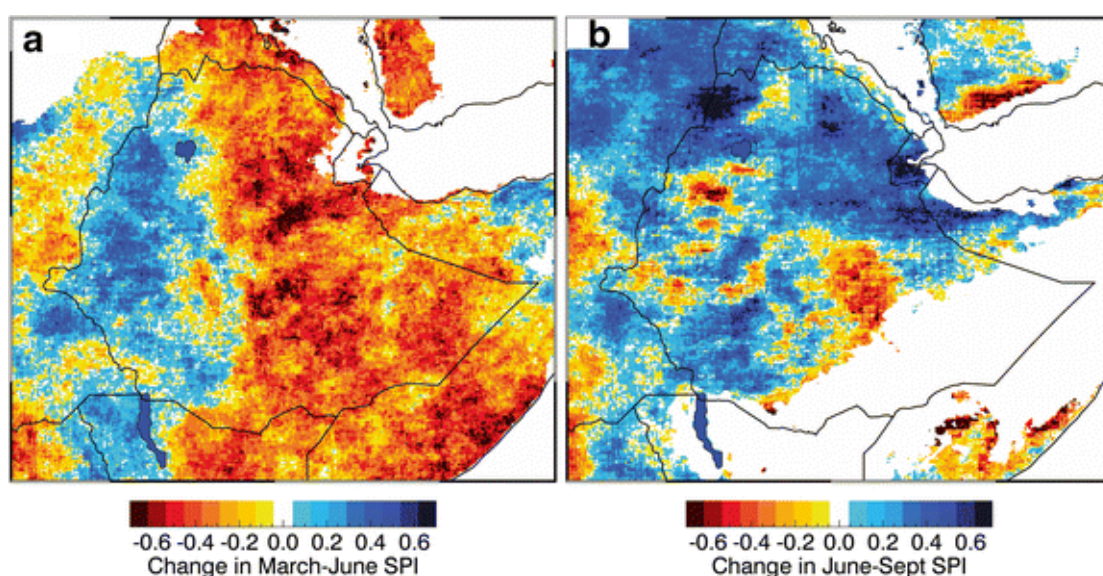
Figure 2. a (March-June) and b (June-September) 1999-2014 changes in SPI in Ethiopia

(source: Brown et al., 2017)

3.2   The Current Debate on Ethiopia

> *"At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again.*
>
> *For it is no historical part of the world,*
>
> *it has no movement or development to exhibit."*
>
> (Hegel, 1956[1827]:99)

A common view of Africa in general is that it is a land without history, yet here too Ethiopia provides a good example of the inaccuracy of this Eurocentric claim. Some people believe that recorded Ethiopian history began when the Queen of Sheba made the biblical visit to Solomon, King of ancient Israel, whilst others regard the emergence of the Aksumite kingdom in the first century AD as its inception (Bahru Zewde, 2001). In either case, Ethiopia is apparently the oldest independent nation and has the longest recorded history in Africa, with the early adoption of Orthodox Christianity, an indigenous alphabet and a sustainable and efficient economy based on plough–based agriculture (Clapham, 1990; Henze, 2000; Pankhurst, 2001; Bahru Zewde, 2001). This extended political narrative has proven to be rich terrain for historians who have done much to illuminate the story of Ethiopia and to categorise it into different characteristic eras. Of course, such work has to be treated critically and the idea that there is a singular account of the history of Ethiopia has in recent years become profoundly political, with the very notion of a single Amharic–speaking Abyssinian state stretching back into the mists of time becoming contested.

Although the Italians occupied Ethiopia from 1936–1941, the country claims never to have been colonised. However, despite this long and autonomous history, Ethiopia's modern chronicles are not so different from other African states, which were formally colonised by the European powers. Like many such

countries, a transfer of power in 1974 (in this case from Emperor Haile Selassie I to the *Derg*, an explicitly Marxist-Leninist inspired regime) became effectively an authoritarian dictatorship in which rule was concentrated on a single figure, Mengistu Haile Mariam, who then retained power over an extended period until the era of second wave democratisation in the early 1990s when a new generation of rulers emerged in Africa, including Meles Zenawi in Ethiopia (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997).

Ethiopian politics and political history in the second half of the 20th century is profoundly marked by the same external forces that determined so much of sub-Saharan African history: the Cold War, uneven terms of global trade, economic dependency, sovereign debt crises, structural adjustment and its subsequent variants (1991–), aid conditionality and dependency and, now, in the 21st century, international concerns about good governance and the construction of civil society as well as geopolitical debates about global security. It is in this context that stunted socio-economic development, civil war and ethnic competition in Ethiopia in the late 20th century has to be understood. As such, understanding the character of the administrative system in Ethiopia can be best interrogated from two particular perspectives: *ethnic federalism* and *neopatrimonialism*.

Ethnic Federalism and Neopatrimonialism

In much of Africa the nation-state is seen as an inappropriate, externally imposed structure, or as "the Black Man's burden" (Davidson, 1992). Not only were the boundaries of nation-states often arbitrary colonial lines (e.g. the borderline between Ethiopia and Somalia), but also the political institutions such as parliaments, elections and bureaucracies were unfamiliar or even 'unnatural'.

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Nation-building policies in the 1960s and 70s often had limited impact, and crucially in many places *ethnic* identity still remains as or more important to many individuals than *national* identity. In this context of ethnic competition within nations, federalism is seen as a potential constitutional compromise that allows different ethnic groups a degree of political autonomy and territorial self-determination. Ethnic federalism then is a means of accommodating the colonial legacy of nation-states in the context of the continuing importance of ethnic identity.
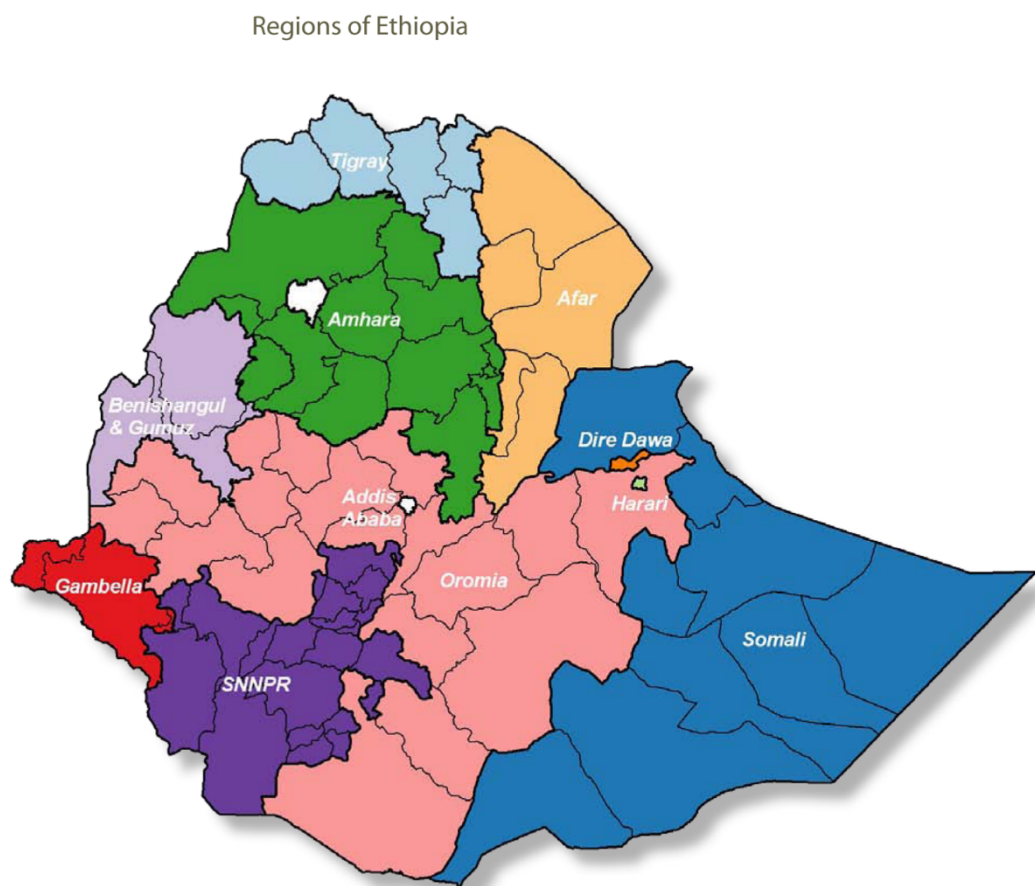
Map 6. Regions of Ethiopia (source: Boudreau, 2010)

During the second wave of democratisation in Africa in the early 1990s, Ethiopia saw significant political and constitutional changes. In 1994, aiming for political decentralisation, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE)

approved a charter assuring the right of self-determination for nations, nationalities and peoples and introduced the new constitution with ethnic federalism (Aalen, 2002). Reflecting different multicultural elements, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia comprises nine states and two city administrations (see *Map 6*). The regional states are given a semi-sovereign status with self-governance and are authorised to have their own constitutions, languages and courts. However, despite the intention to devolve power from the centre to local governments, Ethiopia has failed to make a complete transition and only achieved limited political reform. Instead, the country has effectively reverted to a central authoritarian regime with a one-party monopoly in the parliament.

The result of the most recent federal and regional elections held in May 2015 shows that true democracy had yet to take root in Ethiopia. The ruling party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), obtained 500 seats with a further 47 seats for its affiliate parties, out of a total of 547 seats in the central national parliament (NEBE, 2015). All the 9 regional state councils also went to either the EPRDF or its affiliate parties (NEBE, 2015). That is to say, the two chambers of the Ethiopian political system, the House of People's Representatives and the House of Federation, are fully under the control of the EPRDF. Given that Ethiopia is ethnically and culturally diverse, the fact that all the seats went to the EPRDF and its affiliate parties cannot intuitively be accepted as the outcome of an effective or lively democratic electoral process and debate.

Hagmann (2010:5) argues that, "In Ethiopia, democracy is not about people's rule, but about ruling people". The outcome of the 2015 election was already expected even before Ethiopians went to the polls (Mosley, 2015). Since the

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current regime came to power in 1991, except for the 2005 election, the EPRDF has had an absolute majority in the parliament.[10] Few observers doubted that the ruling EPRDF remains in power as the regime had clamped down on opposition supporters with anti-terrorism laws during the election campaign. Moreover, Ethiopia only invited observers from African Union, not the EU and Carter Center, who were present for the 2010 election. Both the EU and the United States announced that they remain deeply concerned by continued restrictions on media and opposition parties in the country (AFP, 2015).

After toppling the *Derg* in 1991, the political priority of the new Ethiopian government, led by the EPRDF, was initially to establish 'democracy' before being changed to 'development' and then to 'stability' in the wake of the 2005 election. This evolution not only gives an indication of the trajectory of democratisation in Ethiopia, but also shows a certain degree of continuity from its predecessors' strategies to control this vast, ethnically diverse and unstable territory.

Historically, one of the most critical issues in Ethiopia is the struggle between central and regional forces. This was a key theme between the Emperor and the regional lords (or princes) during the imperial era, and became dominant in terms of competition between the central elites and the ethnic-based regional movements shortly after the Marxist-Leninist revolution in 1974 (Bahru Zewde, 2001). The other cleavages in Ethiopian politics are also often interpreted in this light, for example the conflict between the highlanders and the lowlanders, or between Abyssinians[11] and non-Abyssinians.

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[10] Number of the seats of the EPRDF in the Ethiopian Parliament: 483 out of 548 seats in 1995, 481 out of 547 seats in 2000, 327 out of 547 seats in 2005, 499 out of 547 seats in 2010 (African Elections Database, 2011).

[11] Abyssinian, also known as Habesha, originally refers to the people from northern and central Ethiopian highlands including Amhara and Tigray regions (Henze, 2000).

The first modern centralised government in the Abyssinian highlands was established by Emperor Tewodros II in the mid-19th century (see *Figure 3*). He founded a national army and restored the imperial throne from the regional princes. Extensive territorial expansion, especially to the south and east, was achieved later by Emperor Menelik II in the late 19th century. He almost drew the border of the modern Ethiopia by conquering the traditional kingdoms in the south such as the Oromo, Sidama and Gurage. Some of them had never previously been under the authority of the highlanders (Aalen, 2002).
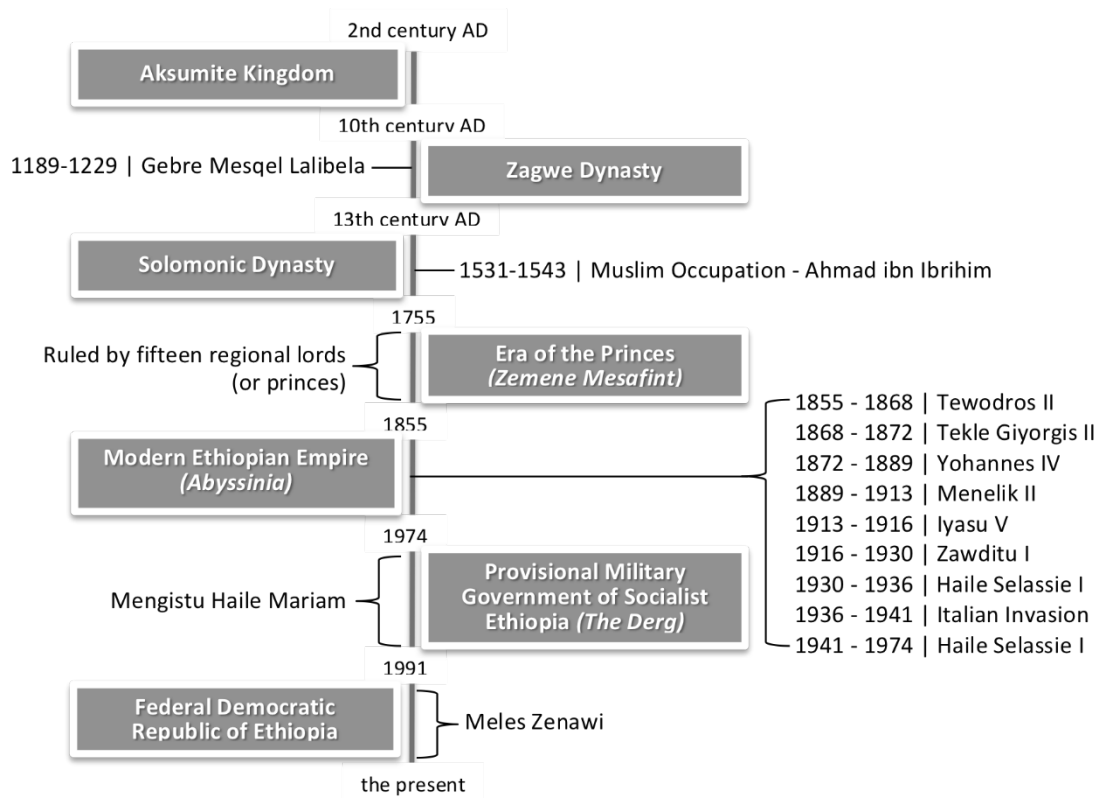
Figure 3. Brief chronology of Ethiopia

The Ethiopian elite has traditionally been dependent on surplus extraction through extracting rents from the agricultural sector in which the majority of the population earn their livelihoods. The expansion, therefore, intrinsically

entailed a spread of the northern taxation system to the newly incorporated areas (Mosley, 2012). The annual tribute was introduced and enforced by soldiers from the north and the local elites appointed by the central government. To facilitate the collection process and to control the new territory, Menelik II even moved the capital from Gondar, the former political centre, to Addis Ababa in 1886 (Aalen, 2002). That is to say, the Abyssinian expansion was accompanied by the exploitation and subjugation of the southerners, which echoed European colonialism elsewhere on the continent. As a result, this Abyssinian 'imperialism' provoked a series of violent resistance struggles and the emergence of ethnic liberation movements in many regions. In the mid 20th century the last Emperor, Haile Selassie I, implemented a modernisation process including the introduction of modern cash crops and a new education system, but despite these achievements he was unable and unwilling to respond appropriately to the new social movements and inter-regional tensions due to the centralised administrative bureaucracy (Marcus, 1994).

Finally, the downfall of the Emperor and his regime was made by the 'creeping coup' in 1974 (Bahru Zewde, 2001). It was organised by two Marxist-Leninist parties, the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (MEISON) and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP),[12] and some breakaway military forces. Thereafter, a committee, called the *Derg*, was formed by different army units which then commanded the imperial government to resign. Mengistu Haile Mariam emerged as the leader of the *Derg* and became an unchallengeable power in the country by purging his political rivals in MEISON and EPRP in a bloodbath, called the Red Terror.[13] Although the committee was later renamed as the

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[12]   Both MEISON and EPRP were mainly organised by exiled students from the United States and Europe.
[13]   The Red Terror was a violent political campaign in Ethiopia from 1977 to 1978, conducted by Mengistu Haile Mariam to gain full control over the country. It was estimated that over half a million people were killed during this time.

Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), the *Derg* remained as the title of the era.

The *Derg* perceived the problems of Ethiopia as being the result of class conflict, rather than the legacies of internal colonialism and struggles between ethnic groups, and so carried out comprehensive land reform, which in effect aimed to nationalise all land (Aalen, 2002). In other words, land reform was used as a means to exert control over regional forces and to squeeze more surpluses from peasants. This plan also included the creation of the Ministry of Public and National Security as well as mass organisations such as women's and peasant's associations, in order to tighten its control over people. In short, Mengistu replaced monarchical absolutism with Marxism-Leninism, but retained the extreme centralisation. During the *Derg*, the regional ethnic-based resistance movements resumed their struggles and defined the government as just another Amhara oppressor, even though its ideology was non-ethnic. From their perspective, the change was perceived as a transformation rather than a revolution (Aalen, 2002; Harbeson, 1988).

During the late imperial era and the *Derg*, Tigray people were relatively marginalised both socially and economically. In the mid-1980s, Meles Zenawi and his Marxist-Leninist party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), reached out beyond their immediate region aiming to build a national multi-ethnic party to oppose the *Derg*. Finally, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) was founded by the TPLF and its allies from the Oromo, Amhara and Eritrean regions. Following the military struggle, they subsequently toppled Mengistu and formed the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in 1991 (Tibetu, 1995).

Despite the historic hostility of the non-Abyssinians to the Abyssinians, the TGE initially comprised of a wide range of ethnic groups, including even the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). However, when the process fully materialised, the new Tigrayan-born highland rulers tried to get the other groups under their control. When they succeeded, the TPLF/EPRDF started to create their own satellite parties in other regions. After all, the resistance movements recommenced from the point forwards. Thousands of people suspected of being the members of such opposition groups were imprisoned, and political party activities were suppressed and restricted. Finally, most of the opposition parties boycotted the election in 1995 and 2000 as the harassment became unbearable during the campaigns (Aalen and Tronvoll, 2008).

Abbink (2006) claims that the current Ethiopian government has remained an authoritarian regime despite the constitutional reforms and apparent desire for decentralisation. Although Ethiopia is formed of regional states, their authority is conferred by the centre through proxy rule. The policy-making process is also dominated by the central government and is designed as a top-down approach, especially where it engages with the development programmes that are supported by the assistance of international donors. Furthermore, one of the most important indicators of 'authoritarian ethnic federalism' (Ayenew, 2002) in Ethiopia is the heavy financial dependency of the regional states on the central government. In reality, the strongest regional state is only able to cover about 20 percent of its spending budget by itself. And this is because the central government has monopolised most of the profit-making revenue sources as well as taxation (Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003). For instance, whereas the regional state governments rely on direct income tax from private farmers and agricultural cooperatives, which accounted for less than 0.6% of Ethiopia's total tax revenue in 2007/08, the federal government collects most of its revenue from

indirect tax, which accounted for more than 70% of the tax income of the country in 2007/08, on foreign and domestic trade (Abdella and Clifford, 2010; Lencho, 2010).

Why has the political system in Ethiopia continually returned to authoritarianism? Abbink (2006) argues that the resurgence of the Ethiopian authoritarian political tradition is a result of the historic patrimonial system that is in place. In other words, the Ethiopian political culture is not yet free from its historical inheritance such as patronage and elite rule at the centre. This heritage restrains the democratisation process and tends to preserve a tradition in which the first priority of rulers is not to relinquish their power (Abbink, 2006). During the imperial era, the patrimonial system was authorised and legitimised by the Ethiopian Orthodox church as the divine omnipotence derived from the Solomonic dynasty. The intellectuals of the church created a social system that justifies exploitation and extraction, and educated the populace to accept these ideas from an early age (Gebru Tareke, 1996). After the revolution in 1974, 'divinity' was replaced by the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. The new doctrine was delivered to the countryside from urban areas by students who championed the need for land reform. That is to say, only the title of patron was changed from emperor to dictator whilst its role and practice remained identical.

This historic commitment to a strongly centralised and hierarchical political culture lends itself to the emergence of neopatrimonialism. The Ethiopian political tradition is based on historic patrimonial systems. The patrimonial system here is a gradual process of scaling up local patron–client linkages that are based upon the extraction of surplus produced from the agricultural sector in return for military protection, emergency relief and a system of justice. Neopatrimonialism in Ethiopia has a complex relationship to postcolonial theory.

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In the Ethiopian context, Abbink (2006) argues that Médard's definition (1996) of neopatrimonialism needs to be expanded to draw more attention to domestic politics as an arena of contrasting aspirations, conflicting imperatives and practices of power. It is a definition that emphasises the link between the features of bureaucratic-legal state structures with personalised forms of domination and clientelistic networks of ethnicity, clan and kinship.

Under the rule of Emperor Haile Selassie I, the ideas of neopatrimonialism were initiated domestically, unlike elsewhere in Africa, where they were imposed by European colonial powers – in the case of the British Empire via the doctrine of indirect rule. Although the evolution of political practice in 20th century Ethiopia was conducted with the help of European advisors, and thus has a few attributes of the European models of state (such as the parliamentary and constitutional systems), it successfully preserved the historic patrimonial features of the regime. The way neopatrimonialism was instilled in Ethiopia was by inscribing a new set of central institutions and practices of power upon the existing structures of society through modernised, European administration systems (Gebru Tareke, 1996).

An early form of neopatrimonial governance in Ethiopia was one in which bureaucratic-legal state structures were governed by traditional patrimonial systems. Emperor Haile Selassie I used state resources to maintain his divine status in the Empire. He did this with total abandon whilst retaining control of the elite by frequently reshuffling his cabinet and overhauling the state agencies, ensuring potential political rivals remained impotent through in-fighting (Clapham, 1969). In return this clientelistic system encouraged subordinates and sub-subordinates in the governments to create their own networks, in which they would act as patrons, whilst the Emperor operated as chief patron. This

arrangement was sustained for two reasons. First, the state finance was at the Emperor's disposal and there was no particular distinction between the country's property and his private wealth. Second, his regime had a strategic alliance with the US which provided financial, military and technical assistance in exchange for political, logistical support in the region's foreign affairs (Markakis and Ayele Nega, 1986). That is to say, the Emperor's efforts gave rise to a distinctive shape of neopatrimonial governance in Ethiopia whilst fully embracing the traditional, divine status of Emperor and the long-established Ethiopian patriarchy.

The 'economics of scarcity' which underlies much of Ethiopian politics is a significant element in the reproduction of neopatrimonialism (Abbink, 2006). The Emperor and elite groups have always managed to preserve their privileged access to resources with legal-rational legitimacy and to reject a shift towards a more equitable societal structure. This practice has been closely tied to material and economic interests in the context of land throughout Ethiopia's modern history. In the imperial era, the landholding regional lords were the power basis of the Empire. The *Derg* regime nationalised all land whilst abolishing the imperial system and pursued a socialist development model, albeit not one which succeeded in achieving political stability and economic growth. The current EPRDF has fundamentally restructured the state whilst keeping the *Derg*'s land policy and bringing the main industries into the fold. It has also achieved a notable degree of national economic growth, but the problems of food insecurity, ethnic tensions and human rights still remain unsolved. This economic foundation of governance in Ethiopia has endured at its core even whilst power has changed hands from the Imperial, to the Marxist-Leninist military, and to the current regime. This trend will be further detailed in Chapter Five.

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As a result, the nature of neopatrimonial governance tends to limit the political institutionalisation of democracy, particularly at the local level. The Emperor's attempt to concentrate and fortify the power around himself and his regime resulted in limited opportunity for local governments to manoeuvre with administrative autonomy. Subsequently, the way power is practised became increasingly less transparent as the dominant elite was not ready to relinquish power. This tendency also rendered the focus of economic activities short-sighted; based on short-term revenue generation for the structure's self-preservation. This was at the expense of long-term development, since it was initially derived from the surplus extraction of the agricultural sector (Abbink, 2006). Moreover, informal relationships between patrons and clients in Ethiopia remain prevalent and manifest themselves in notable levels of corruption, nepotism and patriarchy in which government officials and local leaders offer rent-seeking opportunities to other political elites or supporters in return for their support (Gray and Whitfield, 2014). In this context, the practice is based on the idea theorised by Weber and the prefix 'neo' just "serves to emphasise that we are no longer in a traditional context" (Blundo and Médard, 2002: 10).

Needless to say, neopatrimonialism is not a sufficient framework to fully explain the complex Ethiopian federal political system. There are additional factors to consider such as a rump of the once dominant Marxist–Leninist vanguard party led by the elites, the extent of state responsibility and intervention for the common good, and the role of donor countries in the country's politics and finances. Nevertheless, to a certain extent, those factors are subsumed under the persistence of the practice of neopatrimonial government in Ethiopia, where the politics are regarded as "the privileged domain of power holders" (Abbink, 2006:196). In other words, over the *longue*

durée, the legacy of neopatrimonialism in this landlocked country has been profoundly associated with the relations between the centre and periphery, determining the politics, economies and customs of local communities.

In summary, the mode of political tradition in Ethiopia is marked by a neopatrimonial style of governance. It is a top-down approach based on elite insights into the political economic needs of the regime and the subsequent neglect of ordinary citizens and their views in local communities, by dominant groups. This has endured and evolved in the political arena of each regime with legal-rational legitimacy. Despite the last 25 years of government reform towards ethnic federalism, the Ethiopian state remains authoritarian and neopatrimonial, in a manner reminiscent of previous regimes. To maintain this trend, a practice of personalised governance systems has been continued, incorporating the public and private spheres into an intricate network of personal loyalty. In this sense, local democracy in Ethiopia may be tied up with its patrimonial political tradition, in which ideas of justice and fair decision-making are not commonplace.

CBA is centred on building adaptive capacity that is shaped by 'the political' surrounding local communities. It is thus important to not only analyse CBA with a focus on the role, capacity and aspirations of actors but also to consider a wider range of social institutions which are culturally and historically formulated and built-in at every level of society. The perspectives of ethnic federalism and neopatrimonialism are relevant in understanding socio-political forces in Ethiopia (Chapter Five) and in particular for providing "the heuristic foundation" for the southern case study (Chapter Eight) (Hagmann, 2005: 515). The approach is meaningful due to its engagement with the key features of the co-existence of patrimonial and legal-rational domination in an Ethiopian

socio-cultural context. It engages with the complex, and often contradictory, patron-client relations, particularly in the southern area of Ethiopia which were subjugated during the Imperial-Colonial expansion.

Chapter Four.　Methodology, Research Design and Methods

This chapter details how this research project was initially designed and how data from Ethiopia was collected and analysed. A variety of methods were used to collect data, including 8 months of participant observation, 7 focus group discussions and 73 semi-structured interviews with community leaders, peasant farmers, government officials and personnel from the UNDP's Small Grants Programme (SGP). This was carried out between September 2013 and June 2014. This chapter explains the rationale behind each research activity and the processes by which questions were raised and answers were found. The overarching concern of this thesis is to present an in-depth qualitative account of community-based adaptation (CBA) projects and to situate the projects in their broader socio-political context.

With that in mind, the first section of this chapter presents the overall methodological approach of the thesis. It will be followed by the introduction of the case studies and the fieldwork timetable. The fourth section discusses the specific data acquisition methods including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation and the collection of written materials. Limitations and ethical considerations are reviewed in the last section.

4.1　　Overall Methodological Approach

This thesis adopts a political ecology approach and this is also where the methodology emerged from. As discussed in Chapter Two, political ecology is a tradition rooted in "a combination of critical perspectives and the hard won insights distilled from field work" (Rocheleau, 2008:716). In order to understand the "underlying contexts and processes" (Bassett, 1988:453) of environmental

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problems and conflicts, political ecology research privileges empirical observation of biophysical and socio-economic phenomena (Rocheleau, 2008). Fieldwork and empirical observation is key to this methodology and the extensiveness of that fieldwork is central to its claim to authority and validity. As such political ecology has often used a case study methodology, which has modest claims about its generalisability and its predictive capacity but strong claims about its authority within its own context and for the case study's relationship to other contexts.

The critical aspect of the political ecology approach emerges from the assumption that both society in general and the ideas that emerge from it are managed in the interests of elites and it is the job of research to elucidate that power relationship. Whilst early political ecology focused on how colonial and market capitalism and state policies shaped nature–society relations at various scales, recent studies in political ecology have paid more attention to how a more diverse range of political and discursive processes and power inequalities influence these relations (Young, 2003). In particular, poststructuralist approaches (which have altered our understanding of social forces, local agencies and indigenous knowledge since the 1990s) have destabilised the structural explanations of social struggle that refuse multiple, subjective perceptions (Watts and Peet. 2004). Empirically this way of thinking has placed a focus on research designs that seek to analyse politics and power dynamics through in-depth qualitative case studies, but which also emphasise questions of interpretation based on subjective position (Dodman and Mitlin, 2011; Ensor and Berger, 2009). Whereas early political ecology sought explanations for empirical observations based on an analysis of social relations that felt more deductive having started from a set of theoretical precepts drawn from Marxism, more recent work has explored how the world is interpreted by different groups of

people and how individuals generate subjective meanings to understand the world and their actions – a project that has a more inductive quality. Again, the priority given to empirical case study adds to this sense that this is an inductive research process.

A recurring topic in political ecology is the conflict over common-pool resources such as land, forest and water (access to which are closely associated with climate change). Power relations in such conflicts are complex and often related to a crisis of representation (Peet et al., 2011; Pratt, 2009). Political ecologists work closely alongside research participants since power dynamics occur not only in the realm of formal decision-making process, but also in the context of everyday interactions (Schubert, 2007). Such an ethnographic approach to power and politics reveals how access to and use of natural resources are shaped by these interactions between specific actors in particular places with regard to the processes through which decisions are made (Gezon, 2005). In this sense, qualitative methodologies can be considered to address socio-political structures composed of "competing social constructions, representations and performances" (Limb and Dwyer, 2001:8).

This thesis thus takes a qualitative research approach for data collection, based primarily on interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation and the collection of written materials (e.g. project reports, paperwork and websites). This prioritises an intersubjective and contextual understanding of knowledge and focuses on positionality and power relations (Limb and Dwyer, 2001). This methodology was chosen as the thesis aims to provide detailed descriptions and insights (rather than statistical accounts that test formal hypotheses) about particular places, events and situations and about the ways they are perceived and experienced by different actors and institutions in the

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form of participants' own narratives (Smith, 2001). This approach captures people's subjective perceptions and experiences of the society they live in, which is often missing from quantitative methods. Moreover, qualitative methodologies tend to see "the social world as something that is dynamic and changing" (Limb and Dwyer, 2001:6) which is in line with the way socio-ecological systems are approached by *resilience thinking* which frames the current practice of CBA project.

At the same time, this thesis recognises that political ecology is a field of inquiry encompassing a plurality of methods (Doolittle, 2015). Methodological freedom has been critical to the evolution of the field as a compelling component that appeals to academic scholars working in diverse research settings and cultures. Political ecologists make methodological choices through framing qualitative, quantitative and participatory methods together, illustrating the value of methodological pluralism through case studies (Robbins, 2012). Yet though acquiring statistical data is useful to understand physical environmental change, political ecologists tend to lean towards sources of qualitative data. This is because they inherently "make claims about the claims other actors make about the environment", rather than making claims about the physical condition of the environment (Doolittle, 2015:515).

The research project used two different kinds of qualitative methodologies. One strand is portrayed by cultural and historical studies, focusing on reviewing written materials and literature to address people's association with, and understanding of, land in Ethiopia. This approach was mainly employed in Chapter Five to describe how Ethiopian elites have historically deployed control over land to steer the behaviour of the peasantry and manipulated rural villages to maintain their existing socio-political structures and power relations. The

other strand is aligned with an ethnographic approach of social geography and anthropology, featuring informal interviews, focus group discussions and extended periods of participant observation. Based on the everyday lives of the Ethiopian peasantry, this approach was concerned with various forms of present-day power dynamics around CBA projects and competition over rights and access to resources. It was primarily employed to meet the objectives of Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.

In summary, the research project follows a methodology derived from the political ecology tradition. It sets out to analyse discursively constructed knowledge, the subjective understandings of environmental and livelihoods issues and the changes in power dynamics that shape access to resources. It uses a range of qualitative methods drawing on historical textual materials and ethnographic data.

4.2   Selection of Case Study

The case study approach is a popular strategy in a qualitative research design. It seeks to analyse "concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity ... from people's expressions and activities in their local contexts" (Flick, 2009:21). Whilst providing comprehensive and thorough understanding of a specific locality, the approach is often criticised for its dearth of generalisable findings. Whilst the critique is correct, the value of the approach is not placed in providing a generally applicable theory of CBA governance. It is argued that articulation of local contexts in a project framework produces in-depth information about the politics of governance through accessing everyday practice of project management (Humphries, 2013) and this is what gives it authority and validity as knowledge.

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4.2.1 The Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Ethiopia

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) is the initiative from which the case studies were selected for the thesis. I worked for the programme in Ethiopia from September 2010 to August 2011 as a climate change programme officer. During the period, I reviewed a number of project proposals and participated in the monitoring and evaluation processes of its existing projects. The experience and networks I gained were substantially used during the fieldwork to assist with access and case study selection.

Established in 1992, SGP has been supporting community-led initiatives that aim to combat environmental problems around the world. Through partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), SGP has awarded grants to over 14,500 communities in over 125 countries worldwide (SGP, 2014). As a typical community-based intervention, the programme claims that community ownership of such projects is key to achieving a higher level of sustainable livelihoods and creating a balance between human needs and environmental protection.

SGP provides financial (up to USD 50,000) and technical support directly to local communities during a project period of two years. It aims to assist community-level initiatives addressing environmental concerns whilst enhancing their well-being and livelihoods. SGP's main focal areas are climate change adaptation, conservation of biodiversity, protection of international waters, reduction of the impact of persistent organic pollutants and prevention of land degradation (SGP, 2003). The programme is funded by GEF. It is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on behalf

of the GEF partnership, and is executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Over the last 20 years, SGP has invested more than USD 450 million and leveraged similar levels of co-financing contributed from other partners both in cash and in kind (SGP, 2014). SGP's primary beneficiaries are poor communities in developing countries that are highly dependent on access to natural resources for their livelihoods. The programme thus often confronts challenges in working with communities in order to reconcile environmental priorities with local communities' needs in different ways across the globe, depending on their particular economic, cultural, political, historical and biophysical conditions (SGP, 2003).

In Ethiopia, SGP has supported almost 200 communities with more than USD 3 million since 2005. Co-financing contributions from different development actors such as international development NGOs, private sector actors and local communities have also equalled USD 3 million (SGP Ethiopia, 2014). Common practices of SGP Ethiopia are promoting area closure for conservation, distributing fuel saving stoves, raising fruit seedlings and constructing hillside terraces and check dams (SGP Ethiopia, 2011). Upon receipt of project proposals submitted by local communities, a national steering committee (NSC) of SGP Ethiopia approves projects and guides the programme implementation. The NSC consists of voluntary representatives from NGOs/CBOs, government agencies, academic researchers, the private sector and the UNDP Ethiopia office (SGP Ethiopia, 2011). At the country level, the programme is managed by a national coordinator, who is given strategic directions from the central programme management team in New York and is responsible for ensuring the country's projects follow these directions (SGP, 2014). SGP Ethiopia has one national coordinator and one project administrator. They are in charge of administrative matters and visit the project sites regularly (two to three times during a project

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period of two years with each visit lasting between two to four hours) for monitoring and evaluation. SGP Ethiopia has also developed its own country programme strategy (CPS), which provide guidelines for partnerships, geographic locations and expected outcomes.

However, there were some unresolved matters revealed during my time working for SGP Ethiopia. First, it is not common for the projects to be fully autonomous. In theory, SGP encourages the projects to be independently carried out. However, due to the regulations of Ethiopia's national development policy, the projects still need to be approved by local government officials. At the same time, in order to secure general development assistance from local governments, local communities prefer to keep good working relationships with them. Second, it is unclear whether the project leaders represent the whole community or particular groups of people in the community. Despite the claims made in the programme that the majority of community members participate in the projects, the actual administrative and implementation processes are often managed by a small number of people. During the monitoring and evaluation processes, it was frequently found that many community members do not have a clear understanding of the concept of community-based development.

I carried out the fieldwork in two of the SGP's project sites in Ethiopia, one completed and one in progress, after initially visiting three sites. This provides an opportunity to compare and contrast two case studies through in-depth ethnographic research. Contacts for three sites were gained through the SGP Ethiopia office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. To avoid any conflict of interest, I independently contacted all three sites and made it clear that I was conducting research solely for academic reasons. I again emphasised that I was working

independently of SGP Ethiopia before and during the interviews and focus group discussions.[14]

4.2.2   Case Studies of SGP Ethiopia

I conducted research into the implementation processes and outcomes of the CBA projects in two rural villages of Ethiopia, but working at multiple local scales. The research spanned the *gott*, *kebelle* and *woreda*[15] levels.

- Case Study 1: *Kebelle* A in, *Woreda* X in East Gojjam zone, Amhara region (project completed)
- Case Study 2: *Kebelle* B in, *Woreda* Y in Sidama zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNP) region (project in progress).
- Case Study 3: *Kebelle* C in, *Woreda* Z in North Gondar zone, Amhara region (project in preparation).

At these lower administrative levels, the thesis tries to preserve the anonymity of participants by not using names of *kebelle* or *woreda*. In-depth research was carried out for the first two case studies to compare and contrast northern and southern Ethiopia (See *Map* 7). In addition, I also visited one other rural village and conducted interviews and focus groups discussions. This was included in the final research, but did not feature as a whole case study (See below).

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[14]   See more details of positionality in Section 4.5.2.
[15]   *Kebelle* (village) is the lowest administrative unit in Ethiopia and is geographically defined under the jurisdiction of a local official. *Woreda* (district) is composed of neighbouring *kebelles* and have independent legal entities. *Gott* (termed *Kantas* in SNNP region) is a sub-*kebelle* structure with an average household of 30 to 60 in Amhara and SNNP regions. See more details in Chapter Six.

This section of the chapter focuses on the geographic and demographic aspects of the research sites whilst the political, social, historical and cultural aspects are discussed in Chapter Three and Five.
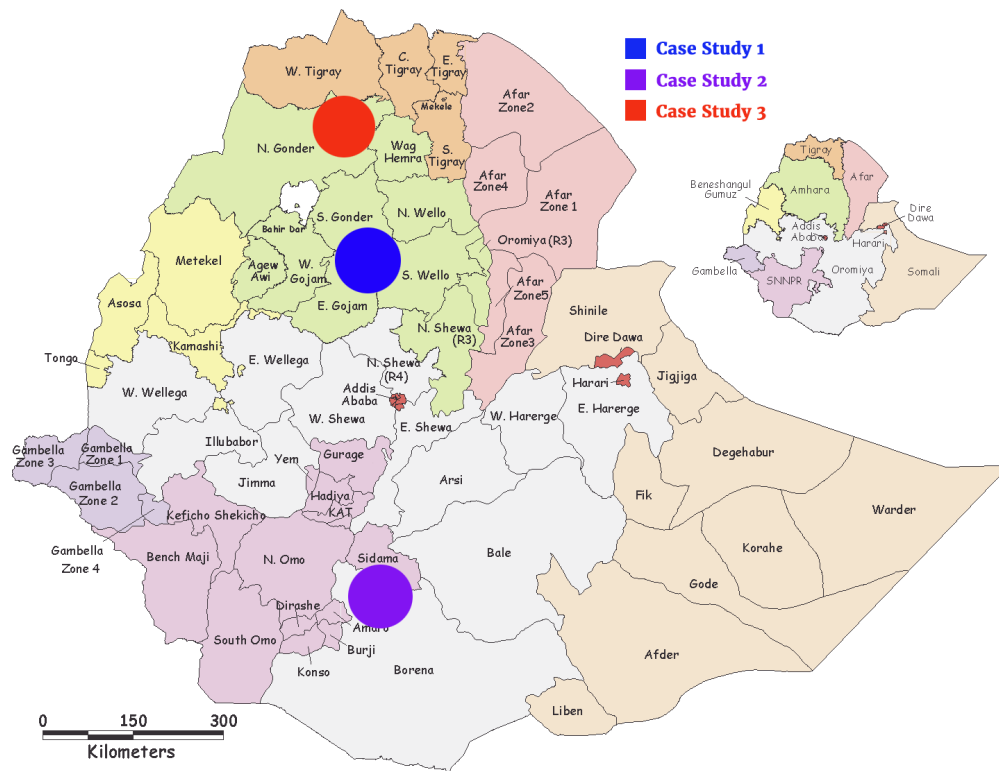
Map 7. Map of Ethiopia with the project sites (source: SGP Ethiopia, 2011)

Case Study 1: Amhara region is located in the north-western part of the Ethiopian highlands. The region is the homeland of the Amhara people and has long been recognised for its ecological significance as it has a large inland body of water, Lake Tana, which is the headwater of *Abbay* ('the Blue Nile' in Amharic) (CSA, 2014). According to the 2007 census, the largest ethnic group in the region is the Amhara (91.47%) and more than 80% of the region's population are Orthodox Christians (CSA, 2010). The region is comprised of 11 administrative zones (See *Map 8*). The research was conducted around the watersheds of Choke Mountain within the administrative zone of East Gojjam. *Kebelle* A in *Woreda* X of

East Gojjam zone was selected as a case study for northern Ethiopia whilst the watersheds are shared by six *woredas* of the zone.

The watersheds of Choke Mountain are located at an altitude of 2,800 and 4,400 metres above sea level. The mountain was formed by volcanic activity approximately 30 million years ago (Saha and Shimelis Gebriye Setegn, 2015). More than 80% of the watersheds are considered as *Dega*[16] ('highland' in Amharic) and have a tropical highland monsoon climate with *Kiremt* ('the main rainy season' in Amharic) between July and October. The distribution of precipitation around the watersheds is far from uniform; a range of annual precipitation shows a wide variability from 600 to 2,000 *mm* in relation to topography (Demeku Mesfin, 2013). The annual temperature also ranges from -2 to 10°C accordingly (CSA, 2010). The watersheds are characterised by steep and mountainous terrain and consist of grayish-black soil, known as Vertisols[17] (Dubale, 2001). Though potentially fertile, these are not straightforward soils to use for agriculture.

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[16] The highlands are above 1,500 metres above sea level and characterised by a chain of mountains and plateaus.

[17] Vertisols, also known as 'black cotton soils', is a type of soil which contains high clay contents with rich minerals. However, it waterlogs during the rainy seasons and cracks during the dry seasons, which make the traditional oxen-drawn plowing difficult (ISRIC, 2016). It thus requires proper drainage systems such as terracing or damming. This type of soil is commonly found in the central Ethiopian highlands such as Shewa, Gojjam and Wello (Dubale, 2001).
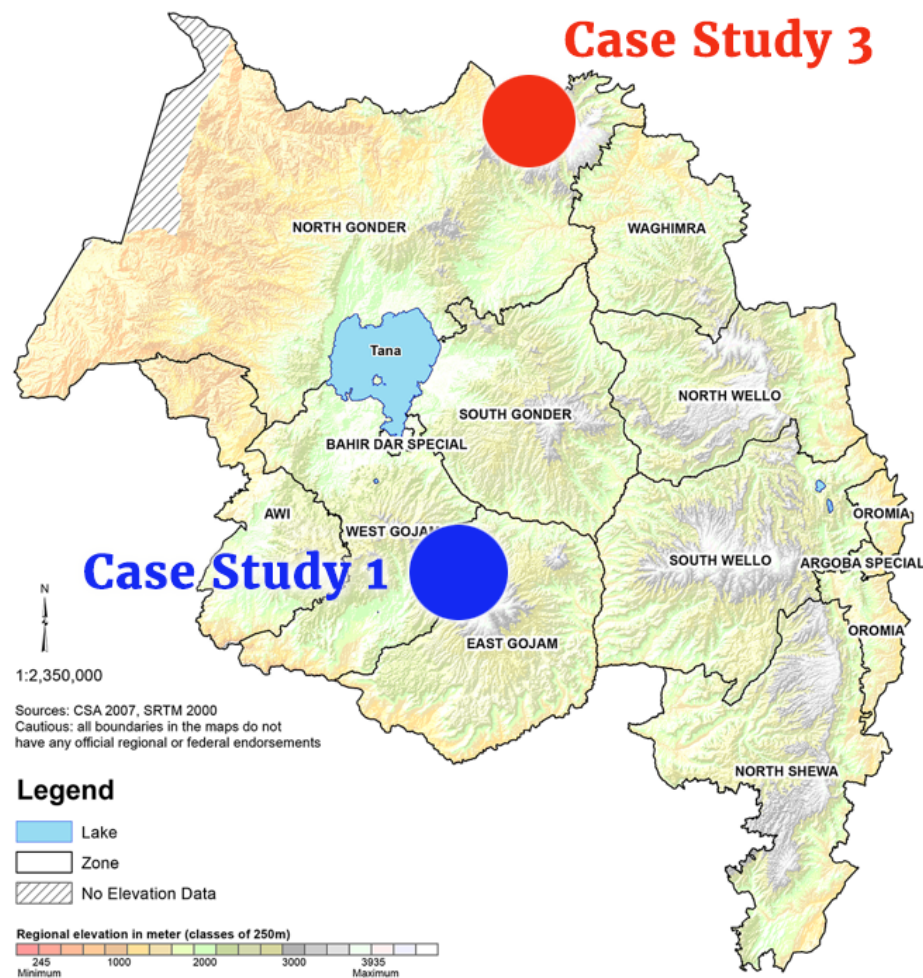
Map 8. Elevation of Amhara region (Case study 1 and 3) (source: CSA, 2014)

Kebelle A is located in a rural area of the region and has a recorded population of 7,253 (CSA, 2007). According to the 2005 census, 68.4% of women and 91.7% of men are engaged in agriculture, accounting for about two-thirds of the region's GDP (CSA, 2006). The major agricultural products produced in the region are teff, barley, wheat, sorghum, potato and beans. Logging is also one of important livelihood activities, and the popular types of tree are fast-growing evergreen species such as highland bamboo and eucalyptus. The region however has the lower GDP per capita[18] than the country's, and more than 90% of its rural population still earn less than USD 1 per day (USAID, 2006).

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[18] According to the 2003/2004 census, the annual GDP per capita of Amhara region was USD 88 whilst Ethiopia's was USD 112.7 (USAID, 2006).

Case Study 2: Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNP) region is located in the south-western part of Ethiopia. The region is the homeland of 45 indigenous ethnic groups and has been recognised for cash crop farming as it produces almost half of the Ethiopia's *khat*, tea and coffee (CSA, 2010). According to the 2007 census, the largest ethnic group in the region is the Sidama (19.38%) followed by the Welayta (10.59%), and more than half of the region's population are Protestants whilst both Orthodox Christians and Muslims account for less than 20% each (CSA, 2010). The region is comprised of 14 administrative zones (Awasa Special, Bench Maji, Dawro, Gamo Gofa, Gedeo, Gurage, Hadiya, Keffa, Kembata Tembaro, Sheka, Sidama, Silti, South Omo and Wolayita) and 8 special *woredas* (Alaba, Amaro, Basketo, Burji, Dirashe, Konso, Konta and Yem). The research was conducted around *kebelle* B in *woreda* Y of Sidama zone for a case study in southern Ethiopia.

Sidama zone is located at an altitude of 1,500 and 2,500 metres above sea level. Almost 60% of the zone is considered as *Kolla* ('lowland'– below 1830 metres in elevation – in Amharic) or *Woina dega* ('midland' – between 1830 and 2440 metres in elevation – in Amharic) (USAID, 2006). *Belg* ('the short rainy season' in Amharic), also known as *Gu* in the lowlands of Ethiopia, is between February and April, followed by *Kiremt*, the main rainy season, between June and September. The zone has a variety of tropical climate conditions depending on topographic gradients; annual precipitation varies from 800 to 2,000 *mm* with a range of 18 to 30°C in annual temperature (CSA, 2010).
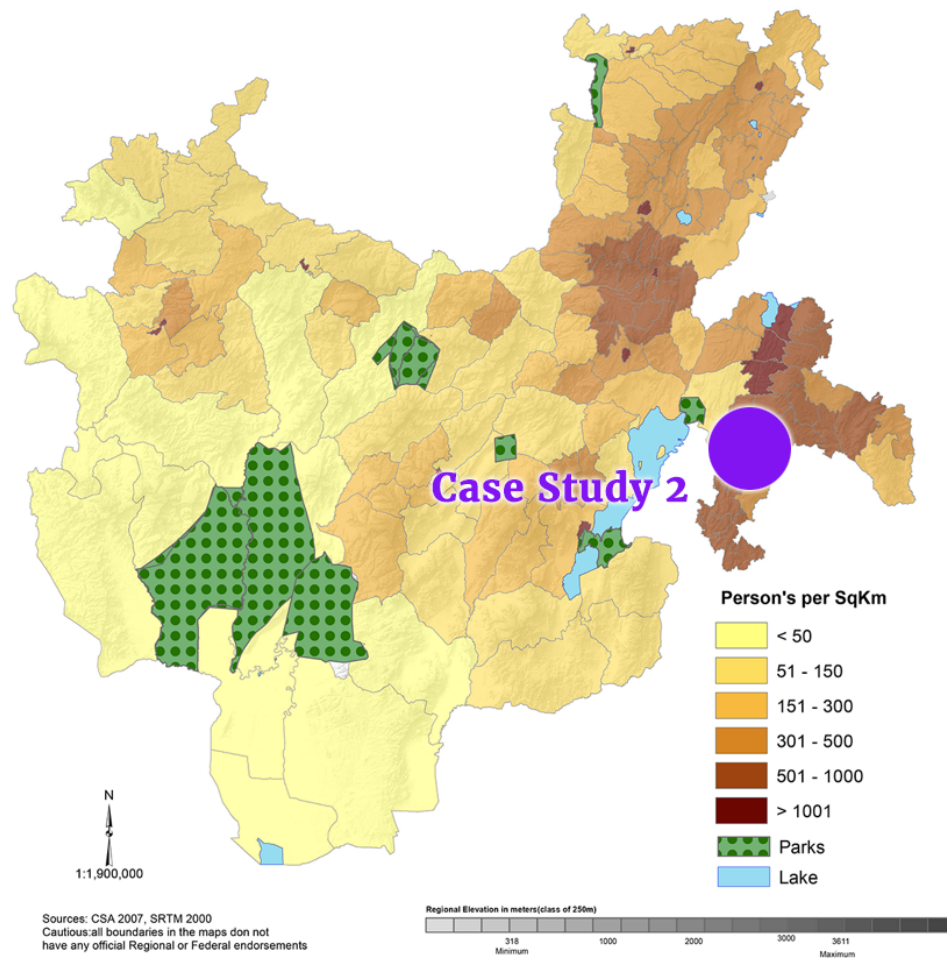
Map 9. Population density of SNNP region (Case study 2) (source: CSA, 2014)

Kebelle B is located in a rural area of the region and has a recorded population of 155,265 (CSA, 2010). The area is relatively densely populated compared to other parts of the region (See *Map 9*). According to the 2007 census, almost 90% of people are Sidama, and about 85% of the population are Protestants in the region (CSA, 2010). In 2008/2009, 73% of the region's GDP and 90% of the region's employment were based on agriculture, producing *enset* (false banana), wheat, barley, oil seeds, maize, sugar cane and coffee (SIEP, 2011). In particular, more than 40% of the country's coffee is produced in the Sidama zone.

Case Study 3: Between the two periods of in-depth research, I conducted a short period of research around the watersheds of Simien Mountains in North

Gondar zone, Amhara region, to explore the possibility of using the village for a third piece of in-depth research. *Kebelle* C in *woreda* Z of the zone was in preparation for the CBA project funded by SGP. The socio-ecological environment of the area is similar to the first research site. However, I decided not to conduct in-depth research for this village. This was because the research site did not have any accommodation available for visitors. Public transport was unreliable and accessing the village on foot generally takes six to eight hours. It would also have meant spending less time at the other sites. However, it has been included here partially for completeness and partially because it has added to my overall understanding of the context.

First, I organised four focus group discussions in *Kebelle* C with women at various age groups. Although all discussions quickly turned into a collection of complaints that there are difficulties in collecting firewood as their villages are within the boundary of Simien Mountains National Park, it turned out be an opportunity to understand women's roles in livelihoods and dangers they are exposed on an everyday basis. This in part shaped my views on the women's empowerment and participation in meetings discussed in Chapter Seven. Second, four interviews with community leaders helped understand the behaviour of people in 'aid-addicted' villages. They mostly came up with, often short, ready-made answers and explicitly asked for compensation in cash. This experience provided me a chance to rethink about the role of development aid in relation to community-based approaches.

The villages were selected by SGP because they fulfilled the standard discursive account of environmental problems in rural Ethiopia, which focuses on deforestation and subsequent soil erosion. In this account, the main cause of deforestation is the intensive logging carried out by local people in order to both

feed their cattle and expand farmland after the grain and potato harvests were substantially reduced following inadequate rainfall over the last decade. In addition, in southern Ethiopia, this dominant discourse additionally draws attention to the decline of arable land per capita due to population increases, which was also making the situation worse. The starting point for this thesis is not that the 'facts' of this discourse are 'untrue', but that they are narrow in the geographical limits they draw around these causal explanations and that such a narrowing is not coincidental, but reflects elite interests in the way ideas are produced.

4.3   Fieldwork Timetable

First, I began with semi-structured interviews with the national coordinator of SGP Ethiopia and the project administrator in Addis Ababa (whom I worked with between 2010 and 2011 before starting the PhD study). These interviews were also used as occasions for collating relevant project reports for the case studies. An initial four-month period of research was then spent in *Kebelle* A in northern Ethiopia between September and December 2013, which implemented the CBA project between July 2010 and June 2012. It was followed by a one-month period of research in *Kebelle* C, which started its CBA project in July 2014. The last three months of research was spent in *Kebelle* B in Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNP) region between April and June 2014. The project was ongoing at the time of visit, and was expected to be completed by December 2014. *Table 1* shows the overview of data collection.

	Interviews	Focus Group Discussions	Participant Observation
Case Study 1 *Kebelle* A in *Woreda* X (Project completed) September – December 2013	42 interviews (30 males and 12 females) (29 adults and 13 young adults)	2 focus group discussions (6 and 17 participants)	Daily visit to the village, Road construction sites, *Kebelle* and CBO offices, Church services
Case Study 2 *Kebelle* B in *Woreda* Y (Project in progress) April – June 2014	21 interviews (11 males and 10 females) (13 adults and 8 young adults)	1 focus group discussion (13 participants)	Daily visit to the village, *Kebelle* and CBO offices, Church services
Case Study 3 *Kebelle* C in *Woreda* Z (Project in preparation) February 2014	4 interviews (3 males and 1 female) (4 adults)	4 focus group discussions (6, 10, 10 and 4 participants)	
Others	SGP Ethiopia national coordinator, SGP Ethiopia project administrator, and 4 NGO workers (3 in Ethiopia and 1 in Tanzania)		
Total	67 local interviews (44 males and 23 females) (46 adults and 21 young adults), 6 key informants (SGP coordinators and NGO workers)	7 focus group discussions	

Table 1: Data collection overview (Adults: age 30+ / Young adults: age 29-)

4.4   Research Methods

Multiple methods were employed during the fieldwork in Ethiopia: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and the collection of project documents, mostly written in Amharic, along with participant observation. I was greatly assisted in this by two research assistants, Yared Gebremedhin (in Amhara region) and Tesfaye Teshome (in Sidama zone), who worked as

interpreters and also helped me to translate documents into English. When the dialogue was in Amharic or English I generally led the process. When the language used was Sidamo or the dialogue in Amharic was advanced, the assistant intervened. We worked closely throughout the period of primary fieldwork and in the process of transcribing and translating the recorded interviews and discussions. In particular, the translation process required triangulation. I cross-checked the translated words and sentences between the two assistants and every so often consulted two professors[19] at Addis Ababa University for linguistic queries that were not clearly answered.

4.4.1   Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were used to investigate themes of study at the village level at the beginning of each research period. The discussions proved to be an appropriate method to explore local people's livelihood problems and shared knowledge of socio-ecological systems around the villages (Bloor et al., 2002; Hoggart et al., 2002). The method was employed to provide a social space to examine the articulation of generally assumed norms and values (Bloor et al., 2002). Focus group discussions followed a semi-structured format with a pre-prepared list of topics of interest. In particular, the method was used as an opportunity to ask about commonly shared understandings of biophysical environmental change of the village such as soil erosion and deforestation. The discussion allowed any ideas to be discussed as they emerged but used the list of topics to keep the discussion relevant to the research. The participants could discuss freely among themselves and my role was to facilitate and induce a wide range of people to express different opinions.

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[19] Prof Shiferaw Bekele, Department of History and Prof Dereje Feyissa Dori, the College of Law and Governance.

Figure 4. A focus group discussion (Case study 1) in northern Ethiopia

Focus group (see *Figure 4*) discussions were also used to address intra-group heterogeneity and homogeneity not only in terms of knowledge (e.g. understandings of climate change), but also in the context of inter-group power relations (e.g. Men and women, adults and young adults). The notions of comparison I employed were 'who comes', 'who speaks' and 'who gets attention'. I also asked all participants to introduce themselves, before starting the discussion, with their name, age, *gott*, and position, if any.

Focus group discussions were mostly held in a public space such as the *kebelle* and CBO office. It was a deliberate decision as people live scattered over the hills and the location of the offices are usually located at the geographic centre of the *kebelle*. As a result, the local government officers and leaders were around, which was unavoidable. The male participants in *Kebelle* A in northern Ethiopia were more open and vocal than those in *Kebelle* B in southern Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, women and young adults were more engaged in the discussions in the south than the north. In all locations, however, the participants would not criticise the government, the CBA project or CBOs during the discussions. This issue of speech will be further discussed in Chapter Six.

The participants were mostly recruited through the CBOs and the discussions were held before the CBO's regular meetings. It was inevitable due to difficulties in calling people living scattered over the hills and are mostly busy in the daytime, but practical as the discussions turned out to be a good opportunity for me to observe the internal dynamics of the CBO not only during the discussions but also during the CBO meetings where invited. A consent form was not used as most participants were illiterate, but I introduced the purpose of the research project verbally in detail, spending a half an hour at least with answering all questions the participants came up with.

4.4.2   Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews were the primary source of data. The method has proven to be well-suited to political ecology approaches as it is based on dialogic encounters between researcher and interviewee (Dove, 2005). The process of dialogue does not gain validity from replicability, generalisability and uniformity, but facilitates intellectually challenging forms of data collection through the way in which it situates individual cases in a broad social context (Burawoy, 1998). The method was employed to address interviewees' thought, knowledge of that surrounding environment, aspirations in livelihoods and participation in the CBA projects. Dialogue was central to the co-production of information between researcher and interviewee, which seeks to understand the links among the

specificity of individual cases, the broader levels of social structure and the embedded power dynamics.

A wide range of participants were interviewed so as to account for the multiplicity of the CBA projects and the complexity of livelihoods in rural Ethiopia. This allowed the research to cover a variety of topics and to compile diverse accounts of socio-political structures of the villages, providing insights into the understanding of social forces, local agencies and indigenous knowledge (Watts and Peet, 2004). First, for peasant farmers, both stratified and snowball sampling strategies were employed. I recruited the interviewees through the process of living in and near the villages where I conducted the research. I aimed to randomly find one interview in the morning and one in the afternoon whilst wandering around the villages with a research assistant. Meanwhile, I sought to have interviews with women, young adults, the landless and non-members of CBO. One important criterion was to have at least one interviewee from each *gott* in the *kebelle* to make sure all *gotts* were equally represented. This goal was physically challenging since a number of *gotts* were located far apart from each other, requiring us to hike over the hills for two to three hours each way. At a later stage, a snowball technique was used to interview more women and young adults. My aims were to recruit from social groups that are less well represented at the *kebelle* level. Such attempts were made through those who had already been interviewed so that I could ask them to introduce their wives and friends. However, this did not yield good results. If they missed the specific appointment made there was no easy opportunity to see them again. Second, for key informants, community leaders and government officials, purposive sampling was employed. I actively contacted them and arranged an interview with a specific time and place. They were generally pleased to participate in the interviews and interested in the research.

I also actively participated in village social events, whenever invited, such as meetings, church services, communal works, funerals and celebrations. In particular, the road construction site was a place to recruit a diverse range of interviewees and had a few members from every *gott*. I usually waited for the break time and asked each group of people if there is anyone who would participate in an interview. Despite being 10 to 20 metres away from the work site and out of hearing range of the others, some interviewees looked uncomfortable and avoided politically sensitive questions such issues of land redistribution and corruption.

Most interviewees preferred their houses or yards as an interview site. However, interviews were also carried out at the road construction sites, the *kebelle* offices, hillocks, or just on the roadside on some occasions. One of the challenges I faced in doing the interviews outside was to keep other people away. In particular, interviewees' family members and neighbouring children were often curious about the process and wanted to sit close to us. For example, when

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asked "Shall we ask him to go away?", a female farmer answers, "No, he is my husband and he wants to join us" (Interview DG-15).

Interviews were an appropriate research method as they provided opportunities to ask participants probing questions about particular topics and areas of concern and to expand on their lines of thought and reasoning (Smith, 2001). Through this method, I gained in-depth understandings of different events around the local villages and of the ways in which interviewees made sense of, and narrated, them. In the context of CBA, the method was an important tool enabling me to capture the ways community members talk about their own experiences of the SGP. Overall I conducted 73 semi-structured interviews with community leaders, peasant farmers, government officials and SGP management personnel (See Appendix 1 for the list of interviewees and Appendix 2 for the interview schedule used during the field research).

All interviews were semi-structured, using a topic-guide made with themes of interest that arose from focus group discussions. Attention was paid to ensure that the interviews remained semi-structured, allowing new ideas and subjects to be considered as they emerged. Through practice and reflection, I also improved my interview skills to avoid asking overly complex questions and to phase in and out topics in accordance with levels of knowledge and the moods of interviewees (Smith, 1995). For instance, when asked "Please tell us how you participated in the project?", one female farmer answered, "I participated in everything with my husband. He knows better than me. Please ask him" (Interview DG-03). Then, I changed the topic, "By the way, I saw that you have an energy saving stove. Are you happy with it?" Meanwhile, Amharic speakers frequently use '*injah*' or '*ahlahwekoom*' (both 'I don't know' in Amharic) as the filler of choice before speaking. This was disregarded. For instance, when asked

'Why wouldn't you go to the *kebelle* meeting without your husband?", she answers, "I don't know. It is our culture" (DG-03).

4.4.3   Participant Observation

Interviews were supplemented by participant observation during the fieldwork. Participant observation is the process of describing the events, behaviours and artefacts of people in social settings through observation and participation (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). The strength of participant observation is that a researcher becomes the instrument for data collection and analysis through his/her own experience.

> *<Research Diary 2>*
>
> *There is a tendency for young adults to have interviews inside their house whereas elders and those who have social and political positions preferred public spaces such as kebelle offices and road construction sites. After the interviews, we have been almost always invited for coffee or lunch depending on time of day if the interview took place nearby their houses... Most of young adults seemed to ask us to come into the house for coffee in a natural manner before the interview started whereas elders and leaders did so afterwards. They all in general looked more secure and freely spoke their opinions at home though... Women hardly invited us to their home unless there were their husbands or male family members. However, a number of women seemed confident and candidly expressed their views as long as there is no other men close by. The female interviewees at the road construction sites looked uncomfortable, daunted and hurried up the interviews. [2 Oct 2013]*

During the fieldwork, participant observation was first employed to prepare for the research, to build rapport with local people and to situate the data

collected through interviews and focus group discussions (Emerson et al., 1995). In other words, it provided the foundational context for the development of sampling and interview guidelines in the fieldwork sites (Bernard, 2006). Then, second, participant observation was used to draw out the general geometry of power dynamics around the villages through observing and participating in its everyday activities. This is because socio-political relations between individuals, groups and communities are often obscure until researchers spend time in building informal relationships with local people (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Through the process I identified socially marginalised individuals and groups who tend to be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Various social, cultural and historical components that determine inclusion and exclusion of community and vulnerability of specific groups were also interrogated.

During the fieldwork, I made regular visits to the project sites, CBO offices, government (*kebelle* and *woreda*) offices and community centres. I also participated in the monthly *kebelle* meetings, weekly *gott* meetings and various social events of the villages (e.g. church services, communal road construction work, funerals, celebrations, etc.) whenever invited. In particular, through keeping a research diary, I recorded my observations of, first, people's feelings and behaviour when talking about land issues, and second, people's behaviour when government officers and community leaders are around compared to when they are alone or with close family and friends.

4.4.4   Collection of Written Materials

Documents for further understanding of SGP Ethiopia, CBA projects and underlying policies were collected during the fieldwork. They are from Addis Ababa University, the Forum for Environment Ethiopia, Forum for Social Studies

Ethiopia, local government offices of *kebelles*, *woredas* and zones, local CBO offices and the SGP Ethiopia office in Addis Ababa. These documents were used to help design the research process, to formulate the interview questions and to understand the social, biophysical and political backgrounds of the research sites. In particular, the documents collected from the local CBO offices were used to draw a picture of the process of the projects and the context in which the projects are emerged.

4.4.5   Data Analysis

After the field research, I developed a coding frame to enable data entry and coded all data systematically. Once all data had been coded, I created a database in NVivo qualitative data analysis software. During the process, the coding frame was continuously refined, starting from the themes emerged in the course of data collection, and updated in the NVivo software accordingly. Throughout the data analysis, I used descriptive statistics so that the research could be understood by a wider audience and focused on the analysis of how power and politics in a community shape its adaptive capacity to climate change through CBA projects.

4.5   Limitations and Ethical Considerations

4.5.1   Language

One of the practical challenges for the research was that my Amharic was only fluent enough to carry out the first half of an interview. Amharic is an official and widely spoken language of Ethiopia but there are more than 80 other local languages in the country. The village in southern Ethiopia in which I

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carried out fieldwork included residents who speak Sidamo as their mother tongue. Even so most of the people in the village were able to speak Amharic fluently. I spent the first four weeks of the fieldwork refreshing and improving my Amharic in Addis Ababa having learnt the language with a personal tutor during my employment in Ethiopia in 2011 and at the language centre at SOAS in 2012. The two research assistants mentioned in the previous section acted as interpreters when the dialogue in interviews and focus group discussions became too advanced for me, particularly in the second half of the interview which includes questions about social hierarchies and power dynamics of the villages which to capture fully required linguistic clarity and subtlety.

Learning to speak Amharic was a critical component of the research. First, it made the recruitment of research participants less challenging as they found that they could directly communicate with me, not through a Habesha[20] from the capital city (i.e. research assistants). Second, it was helpful on occasion in creating a pleasant and comfortable environment for interviews, reducing the level of artificiality. I also discovered that it created opportunities for some participants to feel as if they are teaching the researcher the language. Last, being able to conduct interviews in one language reduced the time taken to cover issues which is significant given most participants were busy working in the daytime.

4.5.2   Positionality

Qualitative research approaches involve social encounters which take place within the influence of social processes and relationships (Berg, 2009). Hence

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[20]   The Habesha people, also known as Abyssinians, are a population inhabiting in the Ethiopian and Eritrean Highlands.

the information collected from interviews and focus group discussions should be considered as an artefact of discourse, social norms and values, aspirations of participants, and their perception of the research's intentions (Briggs, 1986). Conversely speaking, there is no such thing as value neutral, or politically neutral research (Hammersley, 1995). The situation of data collection takes place in the context of dialogue were both researcher and participant have vested interests, agendas and subjective understandings of those agendas (Kitchin and Tate, 2000).

The positionality and subjectivity of participants was also acknowledged. Leaders of local communities who have direct stakes in the CBA project were likely to narrate its process and activities in positive terms. The awareness of this fact helped the research to include counter-narratives and explore the subjective and socially-embedded perspectives of actors involved in, if not influenced by, the project. The views presented by participants were not taken as facts of the project, but rather collated as an account of their dispositions and participation. Including other voices with different opinions, such as from women and young adults, was critical in balancing out vested interests.

The positionality of myself as a researcher also needs to be accounted for. Just as those who participated in the research are influenced by social, cultural and historical contexts, my approach (to the research), roles (in the research) and relationships (with participants) were also affected by my cultural background, socio-economic status, race, gender and age (Howard, 1994). This particularly placed constraints on me in relation to my race (e.g. repeatedly being told that I was the first 'foreigner' visiting *Kebelle* A since the Second World War) (Belachew Gebrewold, 2009), and my status as an outsider and non-native Amharic speaker. However, as time went by, these conditions encouraged

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participants to feel as if they are bona fide informants and to create opportunities for them to get matters 'off their chest'. They accepted my status as an outsider, academic researcher in search of knowledge, which would only be used "to improve the current concepts of the project for other villages in Ethiopia" (Interview DG–39).

In addition, my previous work experience with SGP Ethiopia was another issue to consider. Having a connection with the villages through the SGP Ethiopia office where I previously worked opened many doors for me and granted me access, which for others might not have so easily been gained. However, being in this position meant participants including local government officers could tailor their answers and behaviour in order not to disappoint SGP Ethiopia and its national coordinator in the belief that I would report back to him. In order to prevent this, only the officers at the zonal level of government were informed of my previous employment with SGP Ethiopia, and it was made clear to them by the SGP national coordinator that the research is for academic purposes only. Below the zonal levels, I was introduced as an academic researcher from University College London and, more recognisably, Addis Ababa University, where I was attached as a visiting researcher. I also carefully chose those zones which I never visited during my time working for SGP Ethiopia.

4.5.3   Sensitive Issues

In discussing sensitive issues, the research approach was cautious and attentive. I tried to create a space for participants to disclose hidden or detailed accounts of what happened in the villages and the CBA projects, in particular I tried to draw out their opinions on issues of power dynamics and corruption. In most cases interviews thus took place in the houses or yards of interviewees

(whilst feeding fleas my kimchi-flavoured blood), to help them feel comfortable and secure. I was careful not to press interviewees to provide more information than they were happy to give and changed the subject if they appeared uncomfortable with a particular line of questioning.

4.5.4   Ethics

The most basic ethical principle observed during the fieldwork was that any people participating in the research should be treated just as a researcher would like others to treat him (CAAG, 2009). This project was undertaken in accordance with the UCL Research Ethics Committee guidelines and advice following an application made to them and subsequent revisions to the plan made at their request. Academic research in the past has been criticised for the exploitation of participants (Chambers, 1997). I tried to address this issue by instilling an aspect of reciprocity into the research. I thus compensated participants for their time with a portrait photograph of them, rather than cash, that I took after the interview exploiting my photography skills and printing photos in the towns nearby. For most of them, it was the first time to have a printed photograph of themselves and was welcomed.

As is common practice, all interviewees were informed of the nature of the research and the end uses of the information given. They also gave verbal formal consent to participate and were given the opportunity to decline to take part. All interviews and focus group discussions were recorded on a digital recorder. In all cases, verbal permission was obtained for the recording, and the recorder was used openly. A consent form was not used as many people in rural Ethiopia are illiterate, and the use of forms is both uncommon and closely associated with government bureaucracy. Using a written form could have intimidated many

participants, and it was more culturally sensitive to obtain consent through an explanation and discussion before the interview.

All participants were granted anonymity to ensure that they cannot be identified. In line with UK data protection law all data was treated with sensitivity and confidentiality, stored securely and never shared with any third parties. The names of participants were removed wherever this is not critical to the narrative or context.

<Research Diary 3>

164, 165, 166, 167… 168. One sunny mid-morning at the end of 2013, the research assistant and I were counting a number of flea bites on my body on the top of the hill in the Ethiopian highlands. I was half-naked and felt I had lost five kilograms at least over the last two months. Three ladies, probably in their 40s and 50s, were passing by and talking to me, "Oh, Jin-ho, bettam yqrta. Egziabher yibarkih ['Oh, Jin-ho, so sorry, may God bless you' in Amharic]", whilst I was shaking off fleas from my clothes. However, I felt generally much healthier than at the outset of the fieldwork apart from these terrible itchy bites… The reason I have so many fleabites is that many interviews took place at the interviewee's house. In northern Ethiopia, farmers traditionally house their livestock at night throughout a year to protect them from erratic weather conditions, wild predators and theft. It is thus quite normal to have a flea infestation at the homestead. But we could not figure out why I was particularly targeted by them apart from being 'yawch mgb' ('foreign food' in Amharic). [17 Dec 2013]

The thesis now moves on to the empirical chapters. The four empirical chapters that follow address four different factors that affect the adaptive capacity of the case study communities. They provide different ways of thinking about politics in a community that contribute to an overall explanation of

why projects succeed or fail in delivering the goals of CBA, that is, improving adaptive capacity. Chapter Five argues that the political legacies of Ethiopian history are an important factor affecting adaptive capacity because they produce a specific form of political culture (authoritarian governmentality). Chapter Six argues that questions of scale and indigenous knowledge are an important factor because they shape the character of what constitutes a 'community' in 21st century Ethiopia. Chapter Seven focuses on the internal differentiation of the case study communities and the way different groups make decisions and allocate resources as a means of determining the goal of increasing adaptive capacity. Finally, Chapter Eight draws attention to the invisible politics of community leadership that is founded upon the historical neopatrimonial relationship that shapes the process through which adaptive capacity is built.

Chapter Five.   Governmentality, Land and the Political Legacies of History

The thesis argues that there are profound problems with the application of Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) in 21st century Ethiopia. The chapter focuses on one of these problems that CBA easily makes assumptions about a broad level of equality in a society. This chapter argues that a considerable number of rural communities in Ethiopia have never been internally equal or democratic but instead have consistently been strongly hierarchical and internally divided in terms of rights and resources. In particular, it argues that over a period of two millennia (including periods of Imperial-Colonial expansion, Marxism–Leninism and neoliberalism) peasant farmers have not merely tolerated this inequality, because they have no choice, but have given their consent and support to strongly hierarchical structures, which have often connected villages to a distant central government. The belief that such inequality is both right and unchanging is a legacy of history and it is this history that the chapter seeks to spell out in order to show why it is so hard to apply some of the assumptions of CBA to some communities in Ethiopia.

Politics and history matter in determining power dynamics of locality. Local power dynamics are shaped by "historical legacies of state formation and patterns of state-society relations" (Menocal, 2015:1). This chapter will show that how the central elites of Ethiopia have deployed control over land to shape the behaviour of the people, particularly the peasantry. It argues that although this manipulation of land was an intentional plan by the elites to serve their own interest, it was also a strategy to receive people's willing consent, a strategy based on cultural understanding. For this reason, the chapter analyses the long history of land tenure and related land issues in Ethiopia - partly through the

lens of authoritarian governmentality discussed in Chapter Two. This analysis demonstrates how ideas from Imperial and two post-revolution regimes have all tried to devise the voluntary participation of the peasantry in land management that best suit the elite ruling class.

The Ethiopian government has historically used natural resource management as a tool to control its citizens. In particular, this approach has been prevalent in the land tenure system without being substantially challenged by the citizens. This chapter provides an outline of the ways the land tenure system in Ethiopia has been established, promoted and maintained whilst drawing a comparison between northern and southern Ethiopia. In so doing, it shows that the land tenure system in Ethiopia have not significantly changed despite the successive changes of land policy and political ideologies. Rather, the system has been strictly controlled by government so as to undermine people's land security with the net effect of increasing inequality of the society. This approach has reinforced the existing structures of the society to such an extent that those bottom-up development practices have become incompatible, particular at the 'community' level.

The chapter considers how the land tenure system has been a central organising feature of Ethiopian governmentality in line with contemporary discourses of progress over the past two hundred years. It argues that how governmentality functions in a country where most of the population depend on agriculture for their livelihoods should be analysed through land tenure and related land issues. Through this discussion, we will have a better understanding of how elites steer the behaviour of the peasantry. This practical understanding of how power works in Ethiopia helps explain the rationales behind the introduction of CBA in the country before the thesis proceeds to the case studies.

This chapter is largely based on secondary literature, but it also builds on the field experience and my observations of the significance of land tenure as key to government in Ethiopia. It gathers together a range of Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian sources, synthesising the views of the authors. In that sense, the distinctive features of the analysis lie in the combination of the concept of (authoritarian) governmentality and land management through an analysis of the historic (neo)patrimonial systems of Ethiopia as well as narrative accounts of relevant events.

What we consider here as modern Ethiopia is more-or-less a product of the past two hundred years. The analysis shows the extent to which regimes' desire to stay in power has influenced domestic land policies and draws attention to the consistencies between models of land management over the years. Such models provide the basis of long-established governmental views about the relationship between government and citizens in Ethiopia and about ways of the government to shape its environment in the quest for 'development'. Borrowing from the works of governmentality of Foucault and his adherents, this chapter argues that the land tenure system and related policies in Ethiopia have been established, promoted and maintained as a form of governmentality whilst its citizens have, out of their own volition, acquiesced to such a process. The effectiveness of this authoritarian governmentality has been enhanced by the administrative structures of the society that insulate the neopatrimonial systems and reinforce the patterns of political and economic control of its territory.

5.1   History of Land Tenure and Related Land Issues in Ethiopia

After the nearly two-millennia-long absolute monarchy, the *Derg* regime, in its very first year, announced the nationalisation of all banks and major industries. The following year, 1975, the regime implemented radical land reform: all land and natural resources were nationalised; people cultivating the land were only given usufruct rights; holding more than 40 *timad* (4 *timad* is approximately 1 hectare) was outlawed; state farms were established; agricultural production quotas were imposed; and leasing, borrowing and mortgaging land were prohibited (Clapham, 1990; Pausewang, 1990). To a certain extent, the reform was successful in eliminating large holdings, absentee landlordism and landlessness through redistributing land within peasant communities (Hoben, 1995). In most agricultural areas, however, it did not solve the fundamental problem of land shortage. Despite banning large private farms, the average size of holdings continued to dwindle in order to accommodate new claimants and often ended up being less than 4 *timad* (Interview DG-24; 27; 28). As one farmer explains, "Previously I had big land, but the government took the land and redistributed for everyone. Now I have 4 *timad* of land, ploughing 3 *timad* and grazing 1 *timad...* I have four sons and two daughters. I don't know how to split the land when they get married" (DG-27). Moreover, the question of land ownership prevented farmers from investing in land as the nationalisation frequently expropriated land for the regime's initiatives: the Ministry of Education forcibly evicted approximately 80,000 households for school buildings (in order to then disseminate the regime's propaganda via school curricula); the Ministry of Coffee and Tea forcibly evicted over 15,000 households for state farms (to increase the country's revenue); and 29,000 households for the state farms' water supply (Dessalegn Rahmato, 2009).

In the nearly half century that has followed, land management has been a focus of extensive government policy in Ethiopia despite the regime change. This section considers how the land tenure system has been a central organising feature of Ethiopian governmentality.

5.1.1   Pre-Revolution Era

"Power and authority in traditional Ethiopia was in part based on myth and custom, and in part on land and access to land"
(Keller, 1988:46)

In 1622, the Portuguese missionary Manuel de Almeida was appointed as an ambassador to the Ethiopian Empire. During his term of office, Almeida travelled extensively within the Empire and built a number of churches and monasteries including those on the small islands of Lake Tana. In addition, he left a few penetrating insights into Ethiopian society, in particular in his assessment of the power base of the Ethiopian kings. Almeida wrote, "What chiefly makes this King great is that he is lord in solidum of all lands, …so that he can chop, change, and take… the lands any man has and bestow them on another…". Whilst arguing for the tenure insecurity that this system might cause by saying, "One plows, another sows, and a third reaps", the Portuguese missionary confessed that "it [the tenure system] made all people, great and small, so dependent upon him (the king), …some from fear that the lands he has given them may be taken away, others in the hope of getting those they have not" (Beckingham and Huntingford, 1954:88-89 in Teferi Abate, 2015:3). Even though the condition could be over-exaggerated and did not reflect the household and community levels, Almeida's observations about power, fear, land and centralised control remain broadly recognisable in present-day Ethiopia.

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As one of the oldest states in Africa that continues into the present, the imperial system of Ethiopia stretches back nearly two millennia, lasting until its overthrow by the *Derg* in 1974. During the imperial era, a rigorous hierarchy was built in Ethiopian society by the country's feudal system placing those with authority at the top and those without at the bottom. This hierarchy was augmented through "an ingrained public acceptance of the inequalities" (Hammond, 2011:418).

This manifestation was only possible because, first, there was a belief in northern Ethiopia that authority is a good thing (Levine, 1965). According to Amhara mythology, the king, the church and the nobility were considered as critical in ensuring the good life of its subjects (Keller, 1988). In other words, the tradition regarded authority and faith as indispensable for the well-being of society and worthy of constant obedience. Authority figures, from an Emperor to a peasant household head, were obeyed, respected and praised for their power and achievements through various codes of etiquette (Hoben, 1972). In return, the king was responsible for providing security (protection from criminality and enemies) and keeping the social order, the church for the spiritual welfare, and the nobility for the fertility of the land.

Second, there was no automatically hereditary political position. Unlike their European counterparts, there was no differentiation between farmers and regional lords in breed or blood, rather it was often claimed that they were all descendent kinships from a common ancestor (Hoben, 1972). Yet none of what individuals achieved, including the prerogative to land, social status and honourable title, were considered as inheritable to the next generation. Children of a late authority needed to compete with other individuals although there was a

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certain level of benefit from their initial 'class' position. Thus, whilst in practice the sons of the elite were themselves often also elites, the political idea emphasised that this was not necessary or inevitable. This custom was partly based on the relatively low degree of distinction of backgrounds between regional lords, authorities and farmers, and partly from the patron-client relationship in northern Ethiopia that works as a shifting contract. From the subordinate's view, the stability of the relationship depended on securing their self-interest (such as economic benefit or personal security). In this context, the primary concern of authorities at each level of the patrimonial hierarchy was to keep themselves in power continuously. This was somewhat better achieved through loyalty to superiors, public speaking skills or prowess in battle, rather than accumulating wealth through extensive commercial farming or lucrative agricultural trade (Henze, 2000). This trend implied the preference of political benefits to economic gains even in land administration.

The political legacy in northern Ethiopia of not only acquiescence to strong leaders on the basis of a belief in the benefits of authority but also a commitment to the idea of accessing authority by merit rather than by hereditary transfers of authority is important in understanding: 1) the politics of local leadership and their underlying contexts and 2) the dynamics of the land tenure system under the two post-revolution regimes. This legacy has continually directed the ways both government officials, community leaders and peasants behave and approach land within the complex multi-directional relations. This peasant behaviour in the context of the local leadership will be further discussed in Chapter Eight through the lens of neopatrimonialism that coexists with legal-rational legitimacy. What we consider in this Chapter is that, whilst both post-Derg regimes have kept the policy of state ownership of land and exercised centrally controlled land allocation, rural peasants have continued to consider

their land holdings not as permanent property, but as temporary allocation that can be reduced, if not confiscated, by government at a moment's notice.

What the Ethiopian Empire achieved in the modern era, on top of the patrimonial hierarchy built on its feudal system, was the centralisation of authority in the person of the Emperor through the establishment of a bureaucracy, particularly in the newly incorporated areas in southern Ethiopia (Keller, 1988). The Emperors, particularly Tewodros II (1855–1868), Menelik II (1889–1913) and Haile Selassie I (1930–1974), found the need to engage in political and economic policies that could bolster such efforts. They subsequently attempted to achieve rigorous control and regulation of natural resources, including land resources, through imposing economic policies such as labour conscription and taxation whilst maintaining political control over different ethnic groups in the new territories (Bahru Zewde, 2001). The Emperors were aware that expanding their reservoir of natural resources (primarily fertile land suitable for farming) is the best way to reinforce their authority over the core territory.

Land is a key element in the northern Ethiopian definition of authority. The Emperors reined in potential enemies and reinforced their sovereignty through controlling the distribution of lands, the key tool in a set of "extremely valued forms of political patronage" (Keller, 1988:51). In the pre-revolution era, rights to land in Ethiopia were basically of two types: *rist* and *gult. Rist* tenure was the ownership of kinship land of usufruct rights, based on the hereditary system through both fathers and mothers (Gebru Tareke, 1996). Individuals were not able to own land but could use it by claiming usufruct rights wherever they could prove their birthright on the land. This practice sometimes caused peasants to claim the rights to widely dispersed plots of land (Gebru Tareke, 1996). In

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theory, such land could not be sold, except by a few politically influential individuals, but leases on land could be sold to other land users. Claims to (and subsequent redistribution of) land were regularly adjudicated on by representatives of a kinship or clan group, depending on the number of family members (Hoben, 1972). These rights did not usually refer to a specific parcel of land so much as the right to land in a community more generally and so sometimes they caused competition over access to land when securing the possession of individually ploughed but communally operated land. Although *rist* rights were generally hereditary, there were some conditions that meant a peasant could lose them. According to *Fetha Nagast*,[21] the Emperor possessed the ultimate right to all lands in his territory including collection of tribute and confiscation of *rist* land. The confiscation however was seldom practised except for a case of treason, heresy or tax resistance. These principles later provided the successive regimes with a pretext for extorting *rist* land, causing ambiguity in land ownership.

Superimposed on *rist* tenure was *gult* – the prerogative to collect tributes from *rist*-holders (Pausewang, 1983). *Gult* involves a right to both land (or the fruits of land) and labour, but was vested in the Empire at the centre of politics. The right of the Emperor to demand tribute from all lands was key to his authority and consequently determined the evolution of land tenure system in Ethiopia. In the early years of the Empire, it was not only the king of kings who could practise *gult*, but any self-appointed kings or regional lords, who demonstrated the capacity to govern a specific area or region, could enter into a patron-client relationship with a group of kinship communities by claiming his *gult* from their land (Henze, 2000). As power and authority got centralised and

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[21] *Fetha Nagast*: The Law of Kings (1968), compiled by Ethiopia's 225th and last Emperor Haile Selassie I. According to the book, the Empire was particularly concerned with land, trees and water and prepared the legal provision for the environment as early as the 13th century in detail.

more systematically ordered, the Emperor became able to practise the supreme *gult* with hierarchical layers of *gult* beneath him. Peasants paid the tribute in kind (such as army service or manual labour in the regional lord's land) and in return received military protection, emergency relief and a system of justice (Bahru Zewde, 2001). The peasant communities had a certain degree of autonomy from the central state in terms of their choices over cultivation and decision-making process, and this relationship is thought to have given the Amhara and Tigray regions a particular character in land tenure system, compared to southern Ethiopia, where had much less autonomy. The significance of this difference will be further compared between the two case study communities through a degree of local democracy in Chapter Seven.

Gult rights were not necessarily hereditary. It was more like a temporary grant and contingent on satisfactory service loyally delivered to the Emperor. This system was effectively used as a carrot-and-stick instrument in the process of centralising the Empire. As James Scott (2009:41) argues, taxation systems are "the foundation of early state-making". In the Abyssinian centre, these *gult*-holders were members of royal family, aristocrats and clergy of Orthodox churches whereas they were soldiers and local rulers in the southern periphery (Pausewang, 1990). In return for this right to collect tribute, they had a number of obligations to the Empire such as land administration, security maintenance and military service as well as tribute in kind. *Gult* rights were the principal means by which the Emperor supported state officials, since there was no salary, he waived his own *gult* rights over them. By the early 20th century, the *gult* system became payable in cash and was eventually transformed into a taxation system (Pausewang, 1990).

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The Abyssinian rulers, as discussed in Chapter Three, were dependent on surplus extraction of the agricultural sector, particularly in the south. This trend had become intense in the 19th century during the time of Emperor Tewodros II who founded a national army and restored the imperial throne from the regional lords. Emperor Menelik II subsequently extensively expanded its territory to the southern periphery adding to the political dependence on an agricultural surplus. The expansion was mainly driven by political and economic purposes such as a spread of farming levies and grasp of control over the lucrative agricultural trade (Bahru Zewde, 2001). In other words, the Empire subsumed other polities and nobilities in order to impose the *gult* system and thereby surrendered the *gult* rights to them so as to collect tribute from their peasant communities. The most desired *gult* land was therefore the most fertile and that which was already intensively farmed. Although the degree of autonomy given to these newly incorporated areas varied depending on whether they fiercely resisted (e.g. Kafa, Borana, Shewa and Harar) or voluntarily capitulated (e.g. Jimma, Gambella, Benishangul and Gojjam), the northern tribute system was enforced alike to all of them by the northern soldiers (Bahru Zewde, 2001). In return, the *neftegna* ('rifleman' in Amharic) was bestowed with grants of land, serfs and arms from the Emperor, so that he could build authority to exact the levy from the local populations, the *gabbar* ('peasant' in Amharic). These empowered settlers, as a new emerging class, replaced the regional lords and started playing a role of intermediary between the central state and local peasant communities and created their own social and political dynamics with them in the appointed areas (Bahru Zewde, 2001; Hammond, 2011). In other words, what had constituted features of local hierarchy in southern Ethiopia came to an end as the northern system began to overlay it, in particular reinforcing the new bureaucratic reality.

This process of encroachment by the north was an incomplete process, and this observation is still relevant to ideas behind Ethiopian natural resource management today. The expansion of Abyssinian territory never led to complete incorporation of the newly conquered areas into the Empire. Rather, the areas were only valued for their labourers and natural resources (Clapham, 2002). The colonised people were not recognised as its citizens but were kept at arm's length and treated as inferior to the Abyssinian rulers (Hammond, 2011). In other words, Ethiopian colonialism penetrated into peripheral areas with an effort to graft the values and customs of the north on to the subjected people whilst denying their rights at the same time. Ever since then, this trend has been a keystone of Ethiopian governmentality in natural resource management in southern Ethiopia.

Managing a colony in which a distinction is perpetually retained between a small number of colonists and a large number of the colonised is an old imperial problem. In the absence of effective colonial administration, the *neftegnas*, mostly adherents of Orthodox Christianity and Semitic-speaking (Amharic or Tigrinya languages), were a minority in numbers in those newly incorporated areas (Gebru Tareke, 1996). They were in need of local allies, a safe pair of hands, whilst most southern *gabbars*, either Muslims or practitioners of indigenous religions speaking Cushitic (Oromo, Somali or Sidama) languages, were treated as peripheral – and were banned from having rights to land. For that reason, a local elite, *balabbat* ('one who has a father' in Amharic), was appointed as a local administrator by the *neftegna* and remained closely attached to the Empire during the imperial era, minimising, though not completely, the '*neftegna-gabbar*' dichotomy (Hammond, 2011). Hence, these *balabbats*, who previously served as landlords under the rule of the regional lords, had become able to continue their role under the new authority. *Balabbats* were given a

certain portion of land for their own use and the right to collect tribute from *gabbars*. These local notables often appeared to be actively engaged in business with the Abyssinians through accepting Orthodox Christianity and discarding their original ties to local communities despite the fact that demonstrating their loyalty to the Empire required a specific set of cultural credentials such as learning Amharic language and changing their names to Amharic (therefore Christian) style (Gebru Tareke, 1996). This trend was encouraged by the use of political and economic incentives such as dispensation from slavery and grant of land property rights. By subsuming the indigenous polities, the Empire attempted to construct a broader social structure that reinforce the existing top-down hierarchy in force throughout its territory. The '*neftegna-balabbat*' alliance was an early form of 'local bureaucrat-community leader' relationship that still remains critical in understanding: 1) the subordination of individuals and groups at the community level and 2) the multi-faceted and multi-layered nature of Ethiopian governmentality (Hammond, 2011), particularly in southern Ethiopia, which will be exemplified in detail in Chapter Eight.

Under the rule of Emperor Haile Selassie I, the land tenure policies became more sophisticated so as to centralise state power by further weakening regional forces. He differentiated land tenure system from region to region by reflecting assessment of spatial variations in economic potential and security conditions (Marcus, 1987). Whilst keeping the system in the north as it had been, in the south he delegated the tasks of land administration and tax collection duties to *neftegnas* and left the consequential judiciary and civilian administration with *balabbats*. Over his long reign, Haile Selassie I strengthened his power over the territory by systematically exploiting the alliance between *neftegna* and *balabbat* in the newly incorporated areas (Marcus, 1994). This trend later led to bitter factionalism among *balabbats* (local elite groups) in the areas as some sought to

keep their land and power by obeying the Emperor's order whilst some did not. The rivalry in return reinforced the power of the Emperor to play a superior role in pitting local rival elites against each other by reversing his own decisions. This playing of subservient elites against each other is one of the features of Abyssinian imperialism similar to their European counterparts and is still found in some parts of the south, particularly at the village level. These ongoing multi-directional political dynamics will be further illustrated through the case of the changing leadership in the southern case study community in Chapter Eight.

In addition, the Orthodox church traditionally held special rights to land and labour attached to the land. There were two types of land owned by the Church: land held directly by the Church or its high-ranking individual clerics in rights of permanent possession (even inviolable by the Emperor), and indirectly through peasants responsible for paying tribute to the Church (Keller, 1988). Although, in theory, the Church could possess one-third of land in the Empire, it was estimated that less than 5 per cent of total land mass was held by the Church by the time of the land reform in 1975, compared to the Emperor who owned almost the half of total land mass (Cohen and Weintraub, 1975). In particular, the largest arable land holdings of the Church were found in the south because the Church was encouraged by the Empire to have a role in the spiritual consolidation of the newly incorporated areas by evangelising the conquered peoples.

In summary, a key to the Abyssinian definition of authority was the sophisticated domain of land tenure. First, during the imperial era, a rigorous hierarchy was built in the society by the country's feudal system that controls land as a valued form of political patronage. This hierarchy was augmented by a public acceptance of the inequalities that places those with authority at the top

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and those without at the bottom. Second, the political legacy of not only acquiescence to leaders on the basis of a belief in merits of authority but also a commitment to the idea of accessing authority by merit rather than by hereditary transfers of authority is important in understanding the dynamics of the land tenure system under the two post-revolution regimes. Whilst those regimes have kept the policy of state ownership of land and exercised centrally controlled land allocation, rural peasants have continued to consider their land holdings not as permanent property, but as temporary allocation that can be reduced, if not confiscated, by government at a moment's notice. Third, the peasant communities in northern Ethiopia had a certain degree of autonomy from the central state in the land tenure system compared to the colonised south which had much less autonomy. The '*neftegna-balabbat*' alliance was an early form of 'local bureaucrat-community leader' relationship that still remains critical in understanding the multi-faceted nature of Ethiopian governmentality at the local level, particularly in southern Ethiopia.

5.1.2   The Military Regime (*Derg*) (1974-1991)

The 'Provisional Military Administrative Council', known as the *Derg*, ruled Ethiopia for only 17 years. That was significantly shorter than the two millennia of imperial rule, but during this time the *Derg* made profound changes in the Ethiopian land management system through promoting *Agrarian Socialism*. This new ideology, based on a combination of Soviet-style socialism and Chinese agrarian reform, involved radical land reform, the establishment of Peasant Associations (PA) and Producer Cooperatives (PC), the expansion of state farms, and the villagisation and resettlement programme. The seeds of the regime's downfall were sown by its policies on land tenure and local administration, which reproduced state-peasant relations and eventually led to the nearly

complete alienation of the peasantry from the regime. This section focuses on the radical land reform and related local institutional changes as well as the relevant events during the *Derg*, in order to reveal how the regime conducted its population in rural areas through land management. Whilst there were a series of famine and regional insurgencies as the consequence of contradictions in state policy, the politicisation of land tenure system, particularly at the local level, has been relatively less considered as a cause of the regime's downfall.

Radical Land Reform

The most significant agrarian change of the *Derg* was a radical land reform law, named 'Proclamation to Provide for the Public Ownership of Rural Lands' (No. 31/1975). This proclamation was prepared to provide the legal basis for redistribution of usufruct rights to land to rural peasants by declaring all lands to be the property of the state. According to the proclamation, it was not allowed to transfer usufruct rights to land by sale, mortgage or lease, and granting the rights was strictly limited to close family members upon the death of the rights holder. Under the banner of 'Land to the Tiller', the bill was modelled on the agrarian reforms implemented in several Asian states in the 1970s such as India, China, Pakistan and Vietnam. In particular, the land reform was designed based on the experience of China (Pausewang, 1983). As the first uniform tenure system in Ethiopian history, the reform initially aimed to overcome the exploitative imperial tenure system and to provide an egalitarian access to land, based on agrarian socialism for all regions of the country. A chance of success was substantially high at the time of implementation since the political conditions in rural areas were unusually volatile, and the landed aristocrats were in no position to resist (Dessalegn Rahmato, 1993).

By conventional standards, the land redistribution programme was quite successful in the early years in reducing landholding inequalities among peasant farmers. All traditional land-owning elites and their landlords (as well as the emergent capitalist farmers) were effectively eliminated, and the marginalised rural peasants benefitted by acquiring land from the redistribution (Wibke Crewett et al., 2008). The scale of land reform was however less dramatic than its original models in Asia in terms of the proportion of land and of the population that were affected. This was largely because there were not enough government or party members in rural villages with sufficient discipline and experience to promote government propaganda (Dessalegn Rahmato, 1993).

The outcome of the reform, however, should not be measured just by the amount of land redistributed. The redistribution generally involved land taken from landlords who held in excess of 40 *timad* whilst most peasant farmers retained their proprietary rights to land that they had been farming (Clapham, 1990). The significance of the reform rather resided in the abolition of the traditional land-based patron-client relationship including the termination of tributary and landlordism. In other words, the peasants were freed from the previous feudal obligations and enabled to claim their rights to the fruits of their land and labours. Moreover, the reform removed the roots of ethnic discontent and conflict that had (latently) resided in the peasantry (especially in the south) during the imperial era. Overall, these changes encouraged the peasants to boost their productivity in farming and subsequently improved their livelihoods, at least in the period of 1975-78 (Pausewang, 1990).

In addition, the reform replaced the Empire's rural land administration at the local level with a new lowest residence-based administrative unit, named *kebelle* ('local/neighbourhood' in Amharic) (Teferi Abate, 2015). *Kebelle* later became

commonly used by government and by international organisations as the scale of 'community'. We return to this scalar context later in Chapter Six when we compare the difference in scale of community between government and citizens in the context of CBA. The political ecology framework recognises that there is nothing inherently natural about scale, but that these dimensions are social products that emerge through the choices made by human actors.

In its early years, the reform created a whole new political environment. Peasant farmers organised collective action for local autonomy rather than competed each other for access to powerful patrons. In particular, one of the significant consequences was the improved collaboration among kin and families that used to competed for access to land in the imperial tenure system. The reform eliminated the ownership of kinship land (*rist*), which previously caused considerable familial discord and sometimes even homicide. Whilst repairing those broken relationships, a number of kinship-based associations called *Ab-Woled* ('children from same father' in Amharic) burgeoned in the late 1970s (Teferi Abate, 1994). This trend continued into the 1980s, expanding ethnic-based ties and eventually becoming one element of the regional ethnic-based resistance movements against the *Derg*'s policies such as forced conscription into the army, villagisation, resettlement programmes and unpaid work campaigns (Teferi Abate, 1994).

In short, the *Derg* continued to carry out the land reform despite the regime soon realising that, from its perspective, too much autonomy was being given to rural peasant communities. The reform organised the *kebelle* system as a central feature of land management throughout the country and used the system as a tool to implement relevant local institutional changes and land policies. The management of land became a focus of extensive government policy and

eventually served multiple objectives of the regime such as promoting

government propaganda, with a strong sense of déjà vu in what happened

through land tenure system in the Abyssinian Empire.

Related Institutional Changes and Events

The *Derg* also brought about major institutional changes whilst promoting

agrarian socialism including the establishment of formal Peasant Associations

(PA), Producer Cooperatives (PC) and state farms, and the villagisation and

resettlement programme. First, PAs were set up at the *kebelle* level and played a

central role in implementing the land reform measures as well as local

development programmes. PA's were *kebelle*-scale governments. A PA made up

of 3,200 *timad* land-units replaced the primary elements of the imperial land

bureaucracy at the village level including *rist* and *gult* (Dessalegn Rahmato,

2009).

In the first few years, PAs had a certain degree of institutional autonomy.

They consisted of male household heads in the *kebelle* and they freely elected and

removed their leaders. A remnant of this practice was still observed during my

fieldwork and this will be further described through the case of local elections in

the case study communities in Chapter Eight. Soon, however, the regime adapted

the Soviet-style socialism and gradually subjected PAs to a system of state

control (Clapham, 2002). In violation of the initial objectives such as local

democracy, PAs turned into 'the central tower' in rural villages as an extension

of state power (Pausewang, 1983). In other words, PAs replaced the functions of

neftegna and *balabbat* with a system of state control, but in a more rigorously

authoritarian way. The leadership of PAs was often faced with the situation of

not being able to defend the interests of peasants and became more like a

messenger for the government. The peasantry became regarded not as an active agent of the revolution but as a passive beneficiary of socialist ideas from above. Such a political intervention in rural areas was the manifestation of the growing authoritarian character of the *Derg* against a series of violent resistance struggles in northern Ethiopia and the emerging ethnic liberation movements in many other regions (Dessalegn Rahmato, 1993).

The establishment of PAs redefined the alliance between *neftegna* and *balabbat*. At first, those *neftegnas* who served under the imperial regime were stripped their land and authority after being accused of exploiting peasants as powerful landlords (Watson, 2006). Afterwards, about 50,000 students, who were school teachers or university students in the major cities, were forced to go to rural areas to set up PAs and run the state farms. PAs came to prominence in every *kebelle* and had committee members elected by peasant members with responsibility for administering the area, implementing the land reform and managing communal activities such as *zemecha* ('development through cooperation' in Amharic). The *zemecha* involved teaching local populations the benefits of socialism through the Amharic literacy programme. This activity had dual objectives: first, filling the administrative vacuum in rural areas caused by the removal of *neftegna*; and second, scattering the intellectuals from the cities where they were seen as a threat to the regime (Clapham, 1990). During the period, the national army was also notably expanded with the support from the Soviet Union, particularly grown through the wars against Somalia in 1977–1978 and the insurgency movements in the 1980s. During these periods, taxes were rapidly increased under the banner of 'Everything to the Warfront', and forced conscription of young men became commonplace (Clapham, 1990).

Second, the regime introduced peasant agricultural collectives, known as Producer Cooperatives (PC), and state farms, using PAs as their foundation. Believing that small farms are inefficient and that collective holdings promote the most productive use of land and labour, PCs and state farms were established throughout the country. The regime propagated the idea that this was the best way not only to solve the country's major problem (food self-sufficiency) but also to supply a reliable marketable surplus of cash crops such as coffee, sugar, cotton and tobacco (Dessalegn Rahmato, 1993). Land and relevant resources including livestock were taken from rural peasants, pooled, and then, transferred to the new farm sites. A number of incentives such as interest-free credit and priority access to fertiliser and improved seed were offered to attract peasant farmers. More than half of annual government expenditure and two-thirds of material resources were committed to agriculture in Ethiopia (Cohen and Isaksson, 1987). Modelled on the Chinese income-based work point system, PCs and state farms covered almost 20 per cent of the country's arable land by the end of the 1980s (Cohen and Isaksson, 1987). This frenetic expansion was, however, poorly planned; it involved forced evictions of peasants and severely damaged the environment. The labourers were badly organised, recruitment was seldom based on ability and performance and often resulted in delays and low output. The peasants who shifted to these group farming systems of their own accord were those who were convinced that "it is the least worst option that they comply with it" (Hammond, 2011:430). Changing to the new system did provide some food security as the schemes were the beneficiary of uncontrolled government generosity. In the end, the schemes were abandoned and served as one of the main factors in causing the outbreak of the great famine by contributing less than 5 per cent of total agricultural production to the country (Cohen and Isaksson, 1987).

Third, the villagisation and resettlement programme is another example that shows how the *Derg* regime manipulated the peasantry. The programme initially aimed to restructure land-use patterns and social services so as to improve agricultural productivity by moving people to new villages (George, 2013). However, having been started in the late 19th century by the imperial regime for the overcrowded population in the highlands, it became politicised under the *Derg*. The programme was used as a calculated attempt to break the insurgency movements by depriving them of their popular base of support, strengthening the domestic security against the rebel groups and enhancing political control over rural areas. It focused on relocating people from the cool and dry highlands of Shewa, Tigray and Wello, where the insurgency movements were fierce, to the hot and wet lowlands of Gojjam, Keffa and Wollega (Hammond, 2011; Pankhurst, 1992). Under the plan of promoting food security, the programme was offered as 'the least worst option' for peasant farmers in those areas in the absence of any other feasible options (Hammond, 2011). As a result, almost 600,000 people were relocated in the 1980s (Clay and Holcomb, 1986). Due to the limited consultation, harsh environmental conditions and lack of adequate facilities, more than 5 per cent of the resettlers died from starvation and tropical diseases, and almost 15 per cent fled from the new settlements (Gebru Tareke, 2013; Horne and Bader, 2012).

Lastly, the great famine (1984–85) marked a critical moment in the story of the Ethiopian land management system. The argument here is that the system played a key role both in causing the famine and shaping the response to it. Land management schemes such as the establishment of PAs, PCs and state farms, and the villagisation and resettlement programme, were a central strategy deployed by the government in the famine affected areas before, during and after the catastrophe. Whilst the famine was fuelled by a series of droughts in the

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early 1980s, the insurgency movements raged in northern Ethiopia. They were led by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), and all sought to overthrow the *Derg* (de Waal, 1991). The regime manipulated the politics of famine and land management in order to dominate the war – by increasing surplus extraction, expanding state farms through draconian collectivisation and transplanting people from the highlands to the lowlands (de Waal, 1991). Moreover, state-led agricultural programmes such as PCs and state farms refused to relieve their peasant members of their allocated obligations during the famine, and they often had to sell the emergency relief supplies to buy food grain from the markets at excessive prices to bear to the obligations (Dessalegn Rahmato, 1993). These kinds of manipulation played a critical role in the regime's counterinsurgency measures and were of use to the government's strategy to secure compliance of its citizens.

All these programmes described above were justified by the country's perennial concern: food self-sufficiency. These programmes were developed on the basis of environmental rehabilitation discourse, which was highly popular worldwide in the 1970s and 80s, with a strong reference to the neomalthusian narratives (Keeley and Scoones, 2000). The discourse argued that this fast-growing unenlightened population would result in widespread deforestation and subsequent soil erosion and lead to starvation via famines, if no appropriate measures were put in place. In Ethiopia, this trend was substantiated in two powerful reports that have been highly influential ever since in the policy debate on environmental deterioration – the Soil Conservation Research Project (SCRP) by Hans Hurni (1981) and the Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study (EHRS) by the FAO (1986). These reports have been extensively quoted in national policies and state-led programmes through the Ethiopian National Conservation Strategy

(NCS) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MoANR, 2003). As a result, the environmental rehabilitation discourse was effectively substantiated through such programmes, involving international donor agencies in this practice of authoritarian governmentality.

The environmental rehabilitation discourse also offered a particular policy space for international donor agencies to justify providing aid to this Marxist-military regime (Hoben, 1995). There was a massive pressure on intergovernmental organisations to do something about 'the environment' in the 1980s. The World Food Programme (WFP), for instance, took this opportunity in the aftermath of the great famine to link relief to addressing this 'environmental' crisis, providing a politically acceptable solution for Ethiopia. This idea, the Food-for-Work (FFW) programme, was to use food aid resources to pay for public work such as grazing-land rehabilitation activities (Humphrey, 1999). This programme later turned out to be one of the largest food aid programmes in human history (Humphrey, 1999). After all, it was a win-win solution to this deeply politicised food crisis both for the *Derg* and the WFP in the name of the sustainable food production.

In summary, the *Derg* made profound changes in the Ethiopian land management system through promoting 'agrarian socialism' so as to conduct the conduct of its population in rural areas. At first, the radical land reform nationalised all land and replaced the Empire's land administration at the local level with a new lowest residence-based administrative unit, named *kebelle*. The reform organised the *kebelle* system as a central feature of land management throughout the country and used the system as a tool for implementing relevant local institutional changes and land policies such as the establishment of Peasant Associations (PA) and Producer Cooperatives (PC), the expansion of state farms,

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and the villagisation and resettlement programme. All these programmes were justified by the governments socialist ideology and drew on examples from China and elsewhere. Later, however, the country's perennial concern, food self-sufficiency, re-emerged and the international community negotiated a way into supporting agriculture in Ethiopia based on the environmental rehabilitation discourse despite the ideological and political obstacles to such collaborations. The *Derg* effectively abolished the traditional land-based patron-client relationship and reproduced the alliance between *neftegna* and *balabbat*. In particular, the land reform replaced the imperial landlords with the state and established the institutions that provide more efficient ways of implementing their strategies, that is, a better chance of practising (authoritarian) governmentality. By politicising land, peasants became increasingly dependent on the state and its directives and subsequently more manipulatable even though these experiences led many people to despise the *Derg* and its state controlled administration. The management of land was a focus of extensive government policy and eventually served multiple objectives of the regime such as promoting government propaganda, with a strong sense of similarity to what happened in the Abyssinian Empire.

5.1.3 The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (1991–)

> "The real issue behind the debate on federalism… is the perennial concern with access to land"
> (Markakis, 2011:356)

This section reviews the recent changes of land administration under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) regime. Its current approach is, whilst holding the state's right to land, to promote the

decentralisation of land management on the basis of ethic federalism, discussed in Chapter Three. The section argues that the current land tenure system in Ethiopia has not been significantly changed at its core despite the change of regime, and the chapter ultimately demonstrates, through the lens of governmentality, how ideas from Imperial and two post-revolution governments have sought to ensure the participation of the peasantry in land management in a way that best suits the elites.

After the fall of the *Derg* in 1991, a transformation of land tenure system towards privatisation was widely expected in Ethiopia by both national and international observers (Teferi Abate, 2015). These expectations were derived from the land redistribution led by the EPRDF in northern Ethiopia during the insurgency movement. This redistribution mainly aimed to resolve the tensions between the generations and genders. The strategy was, however, shaped by wartime conditions, so that the process was in favour of young adults and women whose support was crucial in the protracted war. It later brought about further support from landless young adults for the EPRDF during the early post-war years (Teferi Abate, 2015).

Nevertheless, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) soon disappointed the observers and peasant farmers by announcing the continuation of the *Derg*'s land tenure policy. The new constitution of Ethiopia, which came into force in 1995, confirmed that "the right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the State and in the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia" (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1995:14). This aims to centralise power at the federal state whereas general land administration is vested in regional and local governments according to the

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country's policy on ethnic federalism. At least, the leasing, borrowing and mortgaging of land has become permitted in response to calls for more secure land holding for peasants, and the full rights to immovable property built on land have been also conferred on Ethiopian nationals (Teferi Abate, 2015). Still, the private ownership including buying and selling of land is prohibited on the pretext of the possible concentration of land in the hands of a few and the subsequent dispossession of the poor who are entirely dependent on land for their livelihoods.

The fall of the *Derg* was not the arrival of a new political ideology in land tenure system but was rather a socialist to postsocialist transition (Watson, 2006). This is because, first, Mengistu Haile Mariam, the supreme leader of the *Derg*, announced the end of socialism in Ethiopia and brought in many reforms including land privatisation in his very last year, 1990, due to the combined pressure of the decline of the Soviet Union outside and the insurgency of groups inside (Clapham, 1992). Clapham (1992:115) says that this radical change was made "virtually overnight". Second, the political identity of the TPLF, the predominant group in the EPRDF, still involves a strong commitment to Marxism–Leninism. At the same time, the EPRDF has become distinctively pragmatic through incorporating many features of global neoliberalism and expanding its collaboration with western governments and intergovernmental organisations and gradually discarded the ideology of Marxism–Leninism. More than two decades later, however, there are a few areas where old socialist ideas are still persistent, and most notably, one of them is land.

The EPRDF regime has justified the continuation of socialist land tenure system by promoting the programme of agrarian transformation (Lavers, 2012). Based on the green revolution discourse, this state–led development programme

pursues modernisation of small-scale farming through the ideas of neoliberalism and the developmental state that had been judged to be successful in East Asia. Food self-sufficiency has long been a policy concern in Ethiopia. The growth of yields through the supply of new crop varieties, expansion of irrigation and promotion of inorganic fertilisers has become a major goal of the programme in rural areas of Ethiopia in support of international donor agencies (Lavers, 2012). The EPRDF has promoted the idea that a necessary precondition for success is that land has to be owned by the state.

One of the well-known examples of the approach is the Sasakawa-Global 2000 (SG-2000) programme. SG-2000 is a Japanese-funded NGO that promotes a package of off-the-shelf modern agricultural technologies tested in South-East Asia. The NGO views the technologies as promising for entrepreneurial smallholder farmers such as high planting density of single crops, fertiliser micro-dosing and herbicide use (McMichael, 2010; Sasakawa Africa Association, 2014; SG-2000 Ethiopia, 2015). Established in 1993, the SG-2000 programme has been extensively implemented throughout the country since the then Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, was accompanied to a demonstration site by Norman Borlaug and Jimmy Carter in 1994 to observe its great potential (although the success that year was largely owed to good weather conditions in Ethiopia) (Harrison, 2002). As a result, the number of peasant farmers who participated in the programme dramatically increased from 32,046 in 1995 to over 4 million in 2001 (Keeley and Scoones, 2003). The SG-2000 programme has a strong ideological bent towards business-oriented agriculture involving money loan services for the purchase of these technologies and is closely associated with a number of multinational agricultural companies such as Cargill, Monsanto and K+S KALI GmbH (McMichael, 2010). The programme eventually caused great

economic distress for a number of those peasant farmers who borrowed money from local governments but were not able to pay back (McMichael, 2010).

The salient point here is that the whole process is in another shape of authoritarian governmentality. From technology transfers to distribution of hybrid seeds and fertilisers, the process is designed, implemented and managed by the central government (Howard et al., 1998). At the same time, the peasant farmers who participated in the programme of their own accord were those who were convinced by the green revolution discourse for fear of facing another famine in the absence of any other feasible options (Lavers 2012). In fact, most of the programme's practices, such as the promotion of higher maize planting density, are against the traditional farming system in Ethiopia that intercrops as a livelihood strategy. Under the banner of food security, the agrarian transformation programme was offered as a plausible option that peasant farmers have easy access to.

More importantly, the memory of coercive regime is pertinent to the behaviour of peasants and so the current practices of CBA. The understanding of the subordination of peasant farmers and complex multi-layered structures in which this peasantry is embedded with levels of government will be further demonstrated through the case of the changing leadership in the southern case study community in Chapter Eight. Korten (1972) argues that the relationship between superiors and inferiors is extremely inflexible in Ethiopia. The long history of acquiescence has meant that it is habituated and has come to be perceived as a 'cultural commitment'. All Ethiopians have experienced at least one coercive government; either the imperial regime of Haile Selassie I, the Marxist–military rule of the *Derg* and/or the current ruling EPRDF government. Under the rule of Haile Selassie I, most rural peasants experienced a series of

commercial agricultural reforms (Pausewang, 1990). One of the prominent legacies of the *Derg* was that peasant farmers were forced to adapt to its autocratic administrative structures (Pausewang, 1994). Moreover, the capacity of the state to intervene in every part of its territory has been greatly enhanced through the neoliberal agrarian transformation programme under the EPRDF government.

The question of land ownership was again a major issue during the national election campaign in 2005. State ownership of land was heavily criticised by the opposition party candidates even though the government reaffirmed the policy direction. During the campaign period, despite the political sensitivity, the parliament passed the revised 'Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation' that includes sections on the 'Expropriation of Landholdings for Public Purposes and Payment of Compensation' (Abbink, 2006). This Proclamation grants the power to federal and regional governments to expropriate landholdings for public purpose where appropriate to a development project without agreement of its settlers (FDRE Proclamation No. 455/2005). It shows the continuing importance of the state ownership for the EPRDF government as a central organising feature of its governmentality through which to steer the conduct of rural peasant communities. Moreover, the post-election violence in 2005 has even driven the government to strengthen its control over the land tenure system further (Dessalegn Rahmato, 2009).

At the same time, the regional governments made a few changes in their land policy in response to calls for more secure land-holding rights for peasants. The Amhara region, for instance, has launched a land certification programme that aims to strengthen the usufruct rights of households by allowing for semi-permanent rent and extended inheritance rights beyond the core family

members (Deininger and Jin, 2006). The programme was designed to address growing tensions caused by the dilemma of increasing population pressure and a lack of land resources. By issuing a certificate outlining the rights over land use, the programme seeks to add to security for individual households. The programme keeps the records of land 'ownership' at the *kebelle* office and provides peasants with incentives for land investment plans such as terracing and irrigation (Deininger and Jin, 2006). There was some evidence of success found in the evaluations of the early stages of the scheme such as increased investment, security, productivity and land market activity (Sosina Bezu and Holden, 2014).

Yet Amhara's land certification scheme also had some unanticipated and negative consequences, which I explain in terms of historical political legacies of patronage. The process of issuing the certificate has greatly increased the power of local bureaucrats in land management. In particular, they often wield the power in the process of transferring the usufruct right to lessees in land rental markets (Teferi Abate, 2015). Moreover, the officers themselves often turn out to be the lessees or in a joint application with others. It was also commonplace for peasants to approach influential government officers 'by the back door' with an application for land certificates and investment in order to streamline the process (Teferi Abate, 2015).

In summary, this section reviews the recent changes of land administration under the EPRDF regime. Its current approach is, whilst holding the state's right to land, to promote the decentralisation of land management on the basis of ethic federalism. The section argues that the current land tenure system has not been significantly changed at its core despite the change of regime. The EPRDF government has justified the continuation of the *Derg*'s land tenure system by

promoting the programme of agrarian transformation under the banner of food security. Based on the green revolution discourse, this programme pursues modernisation of small-scale farming through the ideas of neoliberalism and the developmental state. The whole process is in another shape of authoritarian governmentality whilst the peasant farmers who voluntarily participated in the programme were those who were convinced by the green revolution discourse for fear of facing another famine. Moreover, the memory of coercive regime is pertinent to the behaviour of peasants and so the current practices of CBA in Ethiopia in addition to its bureaucratic culture based on the hierarchical patron-client relationship.

5.2   Conclusion

This chapter sets out how three successive Ethiopian regimes have deployed control over land to steer the behaviour of the Ethiopian people, particularly the peasantry, over the past two hundred years. First, during the imperial era, this was done through a rigorous hierarchy built within the country's feudal system that controlled land as a valued form of political patronage. This hierarchy was secured by a public acceptance of the inequalities, a political legacy of believing the benefits of order and stability and the culturally committed idea that authority was by merit. Second, the *Derg* introduced the radical land reform based on agrarian socialism and replaced the Empire's land administration at the local level with a new, lowest administrative unit, named *kebelle*. They nationalised all land and organised the *kebelle* system as a central feature of land management for implementing relevant institutional changes and land policies, initially based on the socialist ideology and later on the environmental rehabilitation discourse. Third, the current approach of the EPRDF government is to simultaneously promote the decentralisation of land management on the basis

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of ethic federalism and hold onto the state's right to land. Based on the green revolution discourse, this approach pursues modernisation of small-scale farming through the ideas of neoliberalism and the developmental state. Such federal decentralisation has enabled some sub-national schemes such as land registrations in Amhara to emerge.

The argument of the thesis is that there are profound problems with the application of Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) in 21st century Ethiopia. The chapter focuses on one of these problems, namely that CBA makes assumptions about a broad level of equality in a society. The chapter argues that a considerable number of rural communities in Ethiopia have never been internally equal or fully democratic but instead have consistently been hierarchical and internally divided in terms of rights and resources. In particular, it argues that peasant farmers have given their consent and support to strongly hierarchical structures, which have often connected villages to a distant central government. The belief that such inequality is both right and unchanging is a legacy of history. The belief that such inequality is incorrigible and unchallengeable is a legacy of history, and it is this history that the chapter seeks to spell out in order to show why it is so hard to apply some of the assumptions of CBA to communities in Ethiopia. Local governments and their officers are still ruling with supreme authority, often found unchallengeable in Ethiopia. A leader of a One-to-Five network, for instance, pronounces, "For me God and the government are comparable and their decisions must be accepted. The complaint is not right" (Interview DR-10). Another farmer echoes, "Everything is good if it comes through the government... If the government brings something, we accept it. It is impossible to reject" (DR-11). This submissive conformity will be further exemplified throughout the rest of the empirical chapters that follow.

In conclusion, the chapter demonstrates a historical outline of the ways in which land tenure system in Ethiopia has been established, promoted and maintained – partly through the lens of (authoritarian) governmentality. In so doing, it shows how ideas from Imperial and two post-revolution regimes have all sought to ensure the voluntary participation of the peasantry in land management that best suit the elites. Whilst those regimes have kept the policy of state ownership of land, rural peasants have continued to accept that their land holdings were not permanent property, but temporary allocations that can be reduced, if not confiscated, by government at a moment's notice. In other words, by politicising land, peasants became increasingly dependent on the state and its directives, and subsequently more manipulatable, for fear of facing another famine. The memory of coercive power is still pertinent to the current practices of CBA in Ethiopia. This approach has reinforced the existing structures of the society to such an extent that bottom-up development practices have become incompatible, particularly at the community level.

Chapter Six.   The Politics of CBA: Competing Scales and Knowledge

A social, cultural and historical milieu frames the practice of Community-Based Adaptation (CBA). In answering research question 1b), 'To what extent do socio-political dynamics within and around a community shape the local accounts of adaptive capacity and with what consequences?', this chapter focuses on the political accounts of adaptive capacity which emerged during the time the CBA project was implemented in two villages of Ethiopia. These accounts demonstrate that the project implementation and outcomes are deeply influenced by the socio-political structures and institutions of community in which they are residing. As a consequence, decision-making processes in the project reflect a combination of agricultural developmental goals and also local socio-political concerns. The approach adopted here not only presents a new political account of CBA but also offers an original perspective on the structure called 'a community' in development practice. Just as Foucault attempted to produce a relational account and explanation of power, this analysis provides a socio-political account of community and engages with individual community members as structurally-embedded and reflexive actors operating within a network across which power is dispersed.

The chapter examines the effects of the CBA project (which has been framed by the existing notion of community) on community members. Those who are participating in the decision-making processes are not regarded as a component of a single-voiced community; rather they are engaged as complex social actors. Chapter Two discussed how power relations embedded in everyday human interactions shape the environment and how the methodological approaches of applied anthropology for collecting, analysing and using data are employed by

political ecologists. Chapter Five also demonstrated how Ethiopian elites have historically deployed control over land to steer the behaviour of the Ethiopian peasantry and manipulated local communities to remain strongly hierarchical and internally divided in terms of rights and resources. Hence, in order to apply the principles of CBA to Ethiopia, it is not sufficient to solely rely on the ideas of *resilience thinking*, but it is also necessary to think about this narrative politically.

With this in mind, this chapter demonstrates 'what kinds of politics' emerged during the time the CBA project was implemented in the context of adaptive capacity. The first analysis the chapter brings to the thesis is how the scalar configurations of CBA are imposed, contested and reinforced by actors and institutions within and outside the structures of community in Ethiopia. It draws attention to the politics of scale, which illustrates some of the conflicting values and contrasting aspirations of different actors and institutions. The next contribution is to analyse the politics of indigenous knowledge that is how such knowledge is produced and regulated within and outside the structures of community. It calls for increased concern with the democratic content of community development through identifying strategies for a more equitable mode of knowledge management. In so doing, the chapter adds political perspectives to the application of CBA and demonstrates how actors and institutions of community shape the building of adaptive capacity through CBA projects in 21st century Ethiopia. However, beforehand, it would be worthwhile to review the terms of reference of the two CBA projects researched in this thesis to address how the object in question is defined, developed and verified.

Activities and Organisation of the Two CBA Projects

The projects funded by the Small Grants Programme (SGP) are community-based – that is, they are, in theory at least, designed, proposed and implemented by local populations. The governance system of the projects is centred on a newly established institution: Community-Based Organisation (CBO). CBOs reside outside the bureaucratic matrix of government but remain within the existing governance structures of the community along with a set of other nested institutions (e.g. women's leagues, One-to-Five networks and youth associations) which are based on the traditional Ethiopian authority systems. Anyone, in theory, can join a local CBO as long as they pay the 40 *birr* (approximately USD 2) registration fee. As members of the CBO, they are entitled to participate in and benefit from projects the CBO implements.

In principle, projects are independently governed by the CBO. The CBO has a leader, secretary and treasurer elected by the community. They all need to agree if the CBO withdraws money from its bank account. The larger governance system is composed of other members of the CBO who engage each other formally and informally. A degree of democracy is required by the SGP that allows for intra-community debates before making any decisions. The CBO is responsible for decisions about the project on an everyday basis and generally holds a meeting once or twice a month during the project period. It is also accountable to the *kebelle* and *woreda* offices and the SGP office in Addis Ababa.

The two SGP projects studied in this thesis focused on climate change adaptation, one of SGP's main focal areas. The projects aimed to improve the adaptive capacity of the local communities through awareness raising, training and practice of conservation techniques. The main activities of the projects

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chosen and carried out by the communities were area closure, raising fruit tree seedlings and construction of hillside terraces. They also distributed farming equipment, fuel saving stoves and beehives to promote the diversification of livelihoods. In particular, due to the combination of inadequate rainfall and human livelihood activities that caused severe land degradation, the area closure was prioritised for the restoration of land productivity. This activity closes off a certain area of land and its natural resources from human and cattle interference during the project period (two years) in order to prevent soil erosion from intense rainfall events. Area closure, however, was controversial among peasant farmers due to its varying degree of effect on their livelihoods. This will be extensively discussed throughout the empirical chapters.

In-depth research was conducted in the two SGP project sites. Case study 1 (project completed) covers the CBA project implemented in 'Kebelle A' between July 2010 and June 2012. The project was performed by 'CBO DG' and awarded grants of USD 24,987 in total from the SGP. 'CBO DG' has 502 members (out of a kebelle population of 7,253). The monitoring and evaluation report of SGP Ethiopia (2012) assesses the project as "generally successful" (2), "efficiently managed" (5) and "successfully reforested" (6). Case study 2 (project in progress) covers the project implemented in 'Kebelle B' between January 2013 and December 2014. It was carried out by 'CBO DR' and awarded grants of USD 46,900 in total. 'CBO DR' has 210 members (out of a kebelle population of 155,265). The report of SGP Ethiopia (2013) describes the project as "effectively organized" (2). The geographic and demographic aspects of the research sites are described in Chapter Four.

At these lower administrative levels, the anonymity of participants is respected by not using names of CBO, kebelle or woreda. Data collected from case

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study 1 is quoted as (DG-00), case study 2 as (DR-00) and others (SGP personnel and NGO workers) as (AA-00).

6.1 My Community, Their Community: Difference in Scale of Community between Government and Citizens

We belong to multiple communities defined by place, institution and activity. Understanding community is a topical text questioning specific aspects of society such as ethnicity, age, class, gender, religion, education, governance, accountability and even family among multiple and contradictory constituencies and alliances (Heller, 1989; Li, 2004). The ability of socio-ecological systems to adapt to disturbance (adaptive capacity) is specific not only to the spatial scale at which climate changes occur but also to the institutional scale because the scale at which adaptive capacity is analysed has implications for building resilience (Cash et al., 2006). Yet, according to resilience thinking, there is no particular scale more desirable than others; instead, a particular circumstance produces a new socio-political setting with spatially distinct characteristics which are tied to the cultural, historical and economic conditions of socio-ecological systems in specific moments of time. In this context, the scale of community is 'socially-produced' rather than 'ontologically-given'. Swyngedouw and Heynen (2003:913) argue, there is nothing inherent in any scale and this scalar arrangement is associated with norms, regulations and governance systems of locality and continuously "disputed, redefined, reconstituted and restructured in terms of their extent, consent, relative importance and interrelations". This fluidity of scale is an integral part of the social strategy of competing over rights and seeking to gain differential access to resources and is therefore best addressed through the lens of political ecology. If a particular social group

cannot control events at one scale, they may try to rescale their activities to assert their authority through different relations, networks and institutions.

The introduction of CBA is part of the master plan of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia. The plan aims to devolve power away from central, regional governments towards the *woreda*, and *kebelle* levels. In particular, in the context of local development, this devolution process is marked by the advisory role afforded to external actors, no involvement of government and the daily management responsibilities placed in the hands of individuals elected within a local community. In this sense, the governance system of CBA is centred on locally established institutions, CBOs.

The story of decentralisation in Ethiopia is typical of countries in transition. There is a gap between the constitutional provisions and the practice of these provisions. The Ethiopian Constitution promotes ethnic federalism throughout the country whilst the ruling party controls the local municipalities. Moreover, the promotion of national unity through ethnic diversity often causes gaps between the decentralisation of power and authority (Mehret Ayenew, 2002). It means that the national policies are generally respected, but its principles are frequently compromised by the working practices of the policies at the local level. This has been the case with CBA, which aims to enhance the importance of community in climate change adaptation through promoting local values and aspirations.

This particular circumstance has created a significant degree of difference in the understanding of the scale of 'community' by government and local populations and subsequently affected the adaptive capacity of socio–ecological systems. This differentiation is inscribed by power relations and political

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struggles in the multi-layered structures of adaptive governance. The imposition of certain geographical scales in turn alters the geometry of social power by strengthening the control of some whilst disempowering others (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003). Success in climate change adaptation depends on the scale of implementation. It is, however, surprising how little political ecological discussion there is on this issue of *integrity*, not only within recipient communities, but also within researcher and practitioner groups of CBA (Interview AA-05; 06).

6.1.1 Where CBA Comes: A View of Government

Decentralisation in Ethiopia ultimately aims to modernise the legal, fiscal and administrative systems of local governments and to deliver public services to citizens more effectively. Ethiopia is a federal republic with five administrative (federal to *kebelle*) and one local (*gott*) tiers of government (see *Figure 5*). Down to the zonal level, cabinets are appointed by upper government officers, but from the *woreda* level downwards representative councils are directly elected by the local population (USAID, 2006). The process of decentralisation is mainly focused on the delegation of major administrative departments from zonal to *woreda* governments, especially in urbanising rural hinterlands (Yilmaz and Venugopal, 2008). In particular, the four most populous regions (Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP and Tigray) have been prioritised over the others, receiving more resources from the federal government to support this transition of responsibilities.

The Ethiopian governance systems at regional, zonal, *woreda* and *kebelle* levels follow a form of the tripartite structure by which one (elected) head of administration, a council executive committee and government bureaus are

regulated by a higher level of government office (Yilmaz and Venugopal, 2008). For instance, at the *woreda* level, whilst the elected head has out-and-out power as a chairperson, the council committee is comprised of three representatives from each of the 10-20 *kebelle*, as well as bureau chiefs. One of the main constitutional power and duties of *woreda* is to draw up and execute budgets for both the *woreda* itself and *kebelles* within it, on the basis of the local taxes and levies collected (Interview DG-38).
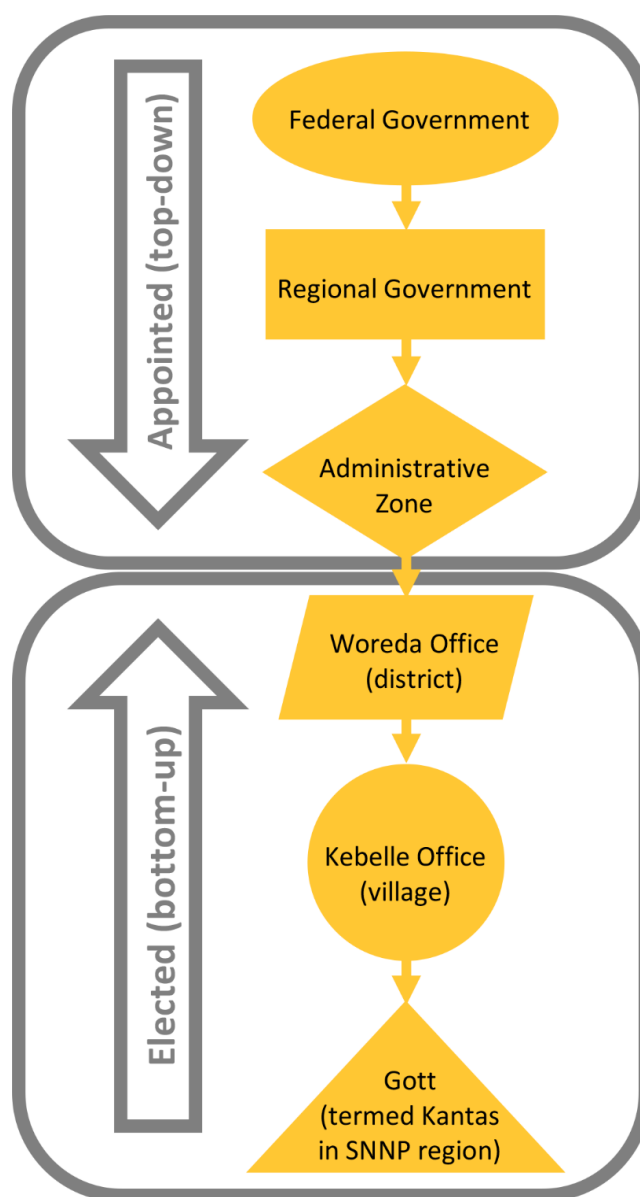
Figure 5. Governance structures of Ethiopia

Meanwhile, most *kebelle* offices do not enjoy the same institutional capacity as regional, zonal and *woreda* administrations, although this is the level which most ordinary Ethiopian citizens have contact with the administration on an everyday basis (Interview DG-23; 32; 33; DR-03). First of all, this is because the *kebelle* is not a budgetary unit. Regional, zonal and *woreda* level governments receive block grants from the level of government above. This is to address the vertical imbalance in revenue versus expenditure between the federal and regional administrations and this is the most important source of income for them (World Bank, 2008). The grant is distributed based on population, development and poverty indicators as well as regional tax efforts (USAID, 2006). Revenue collection is still centralised, whereas expenditures are decentralised, which gives the federal government superior financial leverage over regional and local spending. Hence any development plans at the *kebelle* level requiring budgets need to be approved by the *woreda* office even though the *kebelle* office is accountable for the preparation of development plans, ensuring the tax collection, organising local labour and managing administrative tasks (Interview DG-16; 38). It means that the *kebelle* office, which is the first administrative tier of governmental structure that ordinary citizens interact with, is heavily reliant on higher levels of government (particularly, the *woreda* office) and has limited opportunity to manoeuvre with administrative autonomy.

In many cases, the *kebelle*'s budgets are just enough to cover the salaries of its officers and operational costs rather than public service delivery. As an officer of *Kebelle* A notes, "This *kebelle* really needs electricity and roads to markets. We have been asking the *woreda* office for a long time. I came to this village three years ago... My predecessor told me that he was also asking the *woreda* a number of times... Sometimes I pay out of my own pocket for stationery in the office. I

also do farming and animal husbandry" (Interview DG-16). An officer of *Woreda* X agrees this situation when he explains, "We have 17 *kebelles* and they all have similar problems. As a *woreda* in rural hinterlands, we have very limited budgets... Eventually we will try to deliver what they ask but it takes time" (DG-38). The national coordinator of SGP also explains,

> "*That is why we have decided to implement the [CBA] projects at the kebelle level. After discussing with EPA [Environment Protection Authority of Ethiopia] and MoANR [Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources], also following the previous projects implemented by UNDP [United Nations Development Programme], we agreed that the kebelle has government officers who take responsibility and assist us, but suffers from the lack of financial resources*" (Interview AA-01).

At the same time, the *kebelle*, with an average population of 4,000, has rather complex governance structures itself which operate as two parallel systems of organisation. The first system is made up of locally organised institutions that are generally designed for social, cultural and religious activities such as *senbete*, *idir* and *mahaber*.[22] The other system is that of the state government, which is made up of an elected head of the *kebelle* council, a council committee, a social court with three judges (who are often local priests), one administrative officer and one police officer appointed by the *woreda* (Poluha, 2003). The committee members are representatives of *gotts*, head teachers, militias, local priests and leaders of state-initiated associations (e.g. women's leagues, One-to-Five networks and youth associations). These two systems are intricately interwoven so that local governance structures are seldom independent from any historic

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[22] *Sebete* is a religious association organised for religious affairs; *Idir* is a burial network for mutual support during times of funerals; *Mahaber* is an economic welfare network working for community development (Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003).

cultural, social, economic and political institutions, particularly those organised by the state and the ruling party.

This overlap between community-led and state-led structures at this scale frequently causes confusion in local people's perception about any messages, people or even development projects coming from 'outside'. It means that most people in rural areas regard whatever comes from outside as *yebalal akal* ('orders from above' in Amharic) (Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003). A leader of a women's league shows that she thinks that the CBA project was implemented by the state when she says, "If there is another project coming, I would like to ask our government for a medical centre and electricity" (Interview DR-07). A leader of a *gott* also confuses the state with the political party when he says, "We meet regularly on every Sunday and discuss our problems... If the party does not become a leader, show the way and become a light, I do not think of organising people alone and solve the problems... If the government helps, nothing will be difficult" (DG-22). This is partially because whenever the national coordinator of SGP or any other external figures visited the villages they were accompanied by the *woreda* and *kebelle* officers. Some interviewees even thought that I was from the federal government and I needed to reconfirm several times that this research is an independent academic study.

The concept of *kebelle* was initially designed by the *Derg* regime so as to organise every household in rural villages throughout the country into its administrative systems. Its aim was to effectively implement the rural development and land reform programmes and to ensure that taxes and other dues are properly collected (Young, 1997). The *kebelle* system was however quickly transformed into a highly effective apparatus of control and repression by the regime and started working as the extended arm of central government;

instilling the socialist ideas and implementing its political orders in the rural peasantry as well as keeping any grassroots and potential 'anti-revolutionary' activities under surveillance. Even after the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power the system remained at the lowest level of government, which consolidates and extends the influence of the ruling party throughout the country. That is to say, the main objective of *kebelle*, from the government's view, is focused on keeping rural villages under surveillance and disseminating government propaganda rather than on delivering government services to local populations (Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003). Ethiopian citizens are well aware of this security apparatus and how their relations with it may mediate access to resources – land rights, improved seeds, fertilisers, infrastructures, health services, and so on.

Below the *kebelle* level, the governance structures vary depending on the region. In particular, there is no formal sub-*kebelle* structure in the Oromia and Afar regions whereas the *kebelle* is sub-divided into *gotts* (called *kantas* in SNNPR) in other regions including Amhara and SNNP regions where this research took place. In a *gott*, with an average of 30 to 60 households, there is generally one elected leader with two deputies appointed by the leader (Interview DG-20). They represent the interests of the *gott* at the *kebelle* meetings and are mostly males, though in theory women can be deputies (DG-02). There are also membership-based groups of One-to-Five networks, women's leagues and youth associations at the *gott* level for various kinds of political and economic activities. These groups are often perceived as an extension of state structures, though in theory they have to adopt an independent stance towards government and are meant to work for community development only (DG-27; DR-04). For instance, the One-to-Five network which was initiated to practise 'developmental activities' has underpinned the massive expansion of the EPRDF

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in rural Ethiopia since 2005. The party now has approximately 7 million members throughout the country (Mosley, 2015). The idea is that the 'one' is a model farmer and each model farmer – a party member who is trained and educated by the EPRDF – brings five neighbouring peasants in his wake, which as a result will entrench EPRDF control in places which the capacity of government to reach is limited (Lefort, 2015).

The system of *gott* was initially modelled on a set of quasi-governmental structures designed by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF). During the war against the *Derg*, the system was built by the TPLF to gain the support of organised rural communities in the Tigray region (Young, 1997). That is to say, it is in the shape of a kinship-based group or close neighbourhood, which works together whilst being a tactical socio-political measure to control peasant communities (Tronvoll and Hagmann, 2012). A farmer describes his *gott* by saying, "My brother lives over there with his wife and three children… We often work on bamboo trees together" (Interview DG-32). Another female farmer also explains, "We women gather and discuss issues… I don't talk to women from other *gotts*" (DG-18).

In summary, decentralisation in Ethiopia is focused on the delegation of major administrative departments from zonal to *woreda* governments, urbanising rural hinterlands. Meanwhile, most *kebelle* offices do not enjoy the same financial capacity as the *woreda* although this is the level which most ordinary Ethiopian citizens have contact with the administration on an everyday basis. At the same time, the *kebelle* has rather complex governance structures itself that locally organised institutions and that of the state government are intricately interwoven. The *kebelle* system was initially designed by the *Derg* to implement the land reform programmes, but quickly transformed into an

apparatus of security. Under the EPRDF regime, the system has remained and is now perceived as the scale of 'community', whilst sharing its security function with the *gott*, as having government officers appointed by upper government officers. The pattern of social interaction in Ethiopia, including a strictly hierarchical stratification of governance, stretches up from very local levels and constrains citizens in a rigid system of collective sanctions to obey the 'orders from above'. Having externally funded CBA projects, in this context, may create an opportunity to build administrative independence at the *kebelle* level and to a certain extent allow intra-community debates which are often followed by a degree of local democracy. At the same time, having the projects at the *kebelle* level demonstrates the intention of the Ethiopian government to keep local communities under surveillance, whilst filling the financial gap in local development, without any discussions about whether this is a community with local communities themselves.

6.1.2   Where CBA Comes: A View of Citizens

The ability to identify what sort of assistance is needed and recognise who might provide it are key components of subsistence farming. The Ethiopian peasantry particularly needs these abilities in order to survive in a country where the government lacks the capacity to provide basic services to its own people. The country's previous agrarian crises were the consequence of contradictions in state policy; the politicisation of agriculture and agricultural change; and the redefinition of state-peasant relations, all of which were imposed from outside of the peasantry (Clapham, 1990; Dessalegn Rahmato, 1993). What has not received much consideration is how these local peasant communities have been organised, particularly at which scale (in aspects of social life, family security

and kinship identity) they build resilience against the potential threats to their livelihoods.

In Ethiopia, there is still an open-ended definition of community despite the widespread popularity of CBA and a number of government initiatives and policies of devolution. Through the promotion of decentralisation, the ethos and logics of community are entrenched in the way peasants are organised and villages are controlled by the state depending on the region. This spills over into the members' identities and definitions of their community. They envisage it as a group of people who share "the same livelihoods and environment" (Interview DG-39), "the sorrow and happiness" (DR-01) or "benefits and other good things together" (DR-03). For instance, in Amharic, which remains the language of the Ethiopian state at the federal and some regional levels, *mahibereseb* is the word used for 'community'. It is originated from the word of 'society' and 'association', *mahiber*, and the word of 'socialism', *mahiberesebawinet*, which were both introduced during the *Derg* regime.[23] This polysemy is also found in *Swahili*,[24] *jamil* refers to both community and society. In Tanzania, for example, society generally springs to mind first when it comes to rural peasants and community requires further description and clarification in most cases (Interview AA-04). It is also the case in Ethiopia that most rural peasants, particularly in northern Ethiopia, do not understand the word *mahibereseb* instantly but do understand *mahiber* without any clarification. This confusion rather unexpectedly provided opportunities to discuss "where and how, between whom, between what points, according to what processes, and with what effects" the concept of community is conceived, instead of just asking

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[23] Informal talk with Prof Dereje Feyissa Dori, the College of Law and Governance on 5 June 2015.
[24] A Bantu language of the Great Lake's region and East Africa including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

interviewees' perception of 'what community is' (Foucault, 2009[1977]:2), just as Foucault addressed government, so we could think about community.

Community easily becomes a problematic category in a country where the top-down hierarchy is firmly in place. This is because a homogenising discourse, which regards community as an undifferentiated mass, can be comfortably imposed. Moreover, the word 'community' is frequently used as a shorthand or magic bullet depending on what kind of agenda international donor agencies follow.[25] This research is thus based on an ethnographic description of community from a view of the Ethiopian rural peasantry. In particular, adaptation within systems resilience is specific not only to the spatial scale at which changes occur, but also to the institutional scale because the scale at which adaptive capacity is analysed has implications for building resilience of socio-ecological systems.

The personal definition of community is influenced by socio-political milieu and individual motivation (Heller, 1989). Eating with friends and family is, for instance, an important part of Ethiopian life (Howard, 2009). A man who has no private land and so needs to regularly go to cities such as Debre Marcos or Addis Ababa for manual labour says, "Community? I do not have much education... For me, as a member of the Amhara ethnic group, community means a group that eats and drinks together... They are my supporters" (Interview DG-04). He then adds, "Addis Ababa is a big city. People are from everywhere... I don't know them... I often eat alone there... Leaving my pregnant wife and children behind" (DG-04). He felt alienated in Addis Ababa, which is a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups as the country's capital and has a population of more than 8

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[25] Informal talk with Prof Dereje Feyissa Dori, the College of Law and Governance on 5 June 2015.

million. Ethiopia is also a religious country. According to the 2007 National Census, more than 99.9% of the population has a religion. A local deacon describes, "The livelihoods of community is like this… We live in a scattered manner over the hills. Then our community is an institution which is a collection of people. We live together through social lives. We, brothers, follow Orthodox Christianity" (DG-28). One farmer also echoes, "The definition of community is being good in a church… We, neighbours, gather together and worship God together and mourn together" (DR-18).

Community is also relational because it is communal. It concerns the quality of human relationships and the social ties which draw people together and bind them over time. An officer of Kebelle A defines community as "their organisational status such as women's leagues and youth associations… We can also link it with their education and health condition" (Interview DG-16). This perspective focuses on networks of individuals who interact within formal and informal institutions (Gusfield, 1978). A former leader of a women's league explains, "Before young people came and put me aside because I am old, I was the leader of women's league… The community is a group of people that gather together like a women's league… That is my community" (DG-15). She then adds, "The women's league is now more active than during my time. It is good to be together. Women should participate in the meetings and speak in public without being shy" (DG-15). This is community as collective political power, referring to a group of people who share similar political interests, as a potential lever for social change (Heller, 1989).

This relationship between power and community reminds us that community can be also used as a tool of exclusion as well as inclusion. It means, being in an alien community whilst living in the same village is sufficient enough to create

conflicts in the political sphere by drawing a distinction between 'the friend' and 'the enemy' (Schmitt, 1932). However, this incongruity of community is often brushed over in the development industry. One member of a youth association explains, "The youth groups in our *kebelle* are disadvantaged and we are subjected to various economic problems. We have little land and are unemployed. There are some of my friends who have already migrated to Wollega[26] in search of jobs" (Interview DG-31). Another member echoes this view, "We young adults don't have many animals. Other community members have numerous animals" (DG-04). In contrast, a leader of CBO DG complains, "There are some youngsters who disturb things here… The community agreed the idea of area closure and no one opposed except those youngsters" (DG-42). These issues of young adults and area closure will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Meanwhile, it is important to compare the definition of community in people's perception to the official structures of government administration to see how different they are. A leader of CBO DG describes community as, "a group of people who have a similar culture and similar living conditions. To live together in sorrow and happiness is also characteristics of community. My community members communicate with me through *idir* and the like in the *kebelle*" (Interview DG-02). In contrast, a treasurer of CBO DG explains, "A community is a group of people who accept our ideas and work with a common understanding such as One-to-Five network. A community means people who work together with common understanding in a *gott*" (DG-01). He then argues, "Of course, we talk with people from other *gotts* and share best practices, for example in irrigation, construction of latrines and the like. We get connected through the *idir* and the like and we have good relationship… also through the

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[26]   Wollega is a neighbouring zone of East Gojjam and is located in the western part of Ethiopia.

watershed project.[27] But my brothers and friends are from this *gott*" (DG-01).
Here *idir* is the network organised at the *kebelle* level and One-to-Five network
at the *gott* level. These two narratives show that there is a difference in
perceptions of the scale of community even between the leaders of CBO DG.

In northern Ethiopia, most research participants considered the scale of
community as either *gott* or *kebelle* in their perception (see *Table 2*). This is
because the north is historically a kinship-based society, as discussed in Chapter
Five, which used to share the corporate ownership of land (*rist* tenure) and be
part of the same *gult*. At the same time, the concepts of *kebelle* and *gott* have been
imposed by the *Derg* and the TPLF (later the EPRDF) respectively over the last 40
years. In particular, there was a tendency for those who have social and political
positions in the *gott* or *kebelle* (e.g. leaders, priests and militias) to choose *kebelle*
as the scale of community, and for ordinary citizens to choose *gott*. The reason is
that those with the positions generally have a greater chance of having contact
with *kebelle* officers and people from other *gotts* and to discuss issues at the
kebelle meetings. Put differently, their choices are dependent on the physical and
geographical proximity to the *kebelle* office. For instance, I found that a number
of *gotts* are sparsely scattered over the hills in *kebelle A*. The *kebelle* office is
seldom used by some inhabitants as it is two to three hours away by foot.

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[27] This is the name of CBA project local people call.

	Kebelle A in northern Ethiopia	Kebelle B in southern Ethiopia	Total
Family	0	0 (7*)	0 (7*)
Gott	19	3 (4*)	22 (4*)
Kebelle	17	10	27
Woreda	0	0	0
Zone	0	0	0
Region	1	1	2
Country	3	1 (22*)	4 (22*)

Table 2. Administrative scale of community in local people's perception / Unit:

persons (The data was collected during focus group discussions)*

In contrast, fewer interviewees regarded *gott* as the scale of community in southern Ethiopia. The south is historically a clan-based, if not ethnic-based, society. After being subsumed by the Abyssinian Empire, *neftegnas* were appointed as supreme administrator in the region until the *Derg* replaced them with Peasant Associations. Moreover, there were more state farms in the south than the north as its land is more fertile and the climate makes it preferable for agriculture. Meanwhile, during the focus group discussions, the majority of participants chose the country as the scale of community and a few opted for family and *gott*. Attendees at these discussions included *kebelle* officers, and leaders of CBOs and militias and this might have had an influence on their decision. This shows how the socio-political milieu of the south has been shaped by the state and has in return featured people's ethos and behaviour in public.

In summary, the individual definition of community is significantly dependent on the person's socio-political milieu, which is formulated by culture, history and geography. The government's definition of community is based on

its strategy for ruling the country and controlling local communities. In a literal sense, there is a degree of consensus around the *kebelle* as the scale of community between government and citizens – i.e. the scale of socio-ecological systems – even if the administrative purpose of the *kebelle* is different. The perception of community, however, cannot be reconciled unless one imposes its will upon the other. Ethiopian citizens are well aware of this security role of *kebelle* and how their relations with it may mediate access to resources. In this research, the definition of community is taken to be idiosyncratic and to imply an individual conceptual schema which shapes people's social life and livelihoods and eventually socio-ecological systems. It is used as a basis against the homogenising discourse of community against which the government's understandings and visions are compared. That is to say, the research sets out to determine if peasant farmers envisage, describe and articulate a shape and type of community that they consider they belong to. Hence, the ways in which the farmers understand the concept of community and what communities they think they are part of were explored during the interviews and focus group discussions, so that the sense of community which shapes their behaviours in public and boundaries of socio-ecological systems could be also analysed. Yet, the thesis argues, there are forms of bureaucracy and hierarchy existing in the Ethiopian society, which in many ways undermine or challenge the principles of CBA. It is therefore important to regard the peasants as shaped by milieu, livelihoods and individual motivation whilst maintaining a focus on their capacity to challenge these structures.

6.2   Knowledge: What We Know and What We Do to Our Environments

Adaptive governance of CBA refers to a system that organises climate change adaptation by drawing on indigenous knowledge and experience for the

development of common understanding and policies of community. In the context of CBA, communities are the main actor that defines their resilience and thresholds with their local knowledge and needs and tend to experience the current and next regimes of complex socio-ecological systems most (Nelson et al., 2007). The governance system is composed of multiple actors of CBO who engage each other through formal and informal arrangements of community. The management of CBA is responsible for decisions about climate change adaptation on an everyday basis, but is also accountable to the *kebelle* and *woreda* agricultural offices and the SGP office in Addis Ababa. This nested quality of governance provides opportunities for this research to capture the dynamics of institutional linkages and how indigenous knowledge is produced and regulated within and outside the structures of community.

The hierarchical nature of the Ethiopian society creates distinctive mechanisms for the production and distribution of knowledge. These mechanisms define the socio-political arena of knowledge at different local levels, from a household/family to village/community. As discussed in Chapter Two, where power is structured by formal institutions such as state, social relationships often appear to be in the form of domination – the unequal balance of power in which the subordinated actors have an insignificant chance of exercising their will (Hannigan, 2006; Lemke, 2002).

In the Ethiopian peasantry, discipline is usually practised under the administrative supervision of government, which is empowered by the scientific forms of discourse as well as the ultimate authority of state. This practice runs through social networks of local community and becomes firmly embedded in people's perception and behaviour as if it was 'orders from above'. This condition was labelled as 'authoritarian governmentality' in Chapter Two and

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Five and is similar to James Scott's cases of planning disaster (1999). The control over knowledge demarcates not only the participation of actors in the discussion but also the issues that are subject to debate (Davidson and Frickel, 2004). Moreover, Ethiopian citizens often readily accept the fact that the government is the most important source of knowledge (Vaughan and Tronvol, 2003). These all create little room for manoeuvre with regards to the perspective of indigenous knowledge and public debate, which are both emphasised as core principles in CBA.

Meanwhile, the upsurge of the community-based approaches in the development industry has inspired political ecologists to identify a few fundamental questions by problematising the concept of indigenous knowledge. Among them three points appear to be vital in the context of CBA (discussed in Chapter Two). First, there is no such thing as purely indigenous knowledge (Rocheleau, 2008). Second, indigenous knowledge is not necessarily right or best (Kothari, 2001; Watts and Peet, 2004). Last, knowledge is frequently disguised and unequally circulated within a community (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). Political ecologists thus believe that knowledge reflects the political ability, rather than the legal entitlement, of individuals and groups and they call instead for increased concern with social justice in the analysis of environmental change. The ambition of political ecology in this context is to enhance the democratic content of community through identifying strategies for a more equitable mode of knowledge management as a specific component of systems resilience (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). In resilience thinking, adaptation refers not only to adaptability, but also to transformability, and these two aspects interrelate across multiple scales, based on past experiences and accumulated knowledge (Folke et al., 2010).

6.2.1 Discursively Constructed Knowledge of Climate Change

Most Ethiopian peasants believe that climate change is happening. Their perception of climate change however varies depending on where they live, what modes of livelihood they pursue and what role they play in that mode. Strauss and Orlove (2003) argue that the weather is so ingrained in our everyday practices of livelihood that we often forget how this force profoundly shapes our milieu. This section sets out to demonstrate that the way the Ethiopian peasant farmers discuss climate change concerns not only their knowledge of it but also the contexts in which they interpret that understanding (Strauss and Orlove, 2003).

In northern Ethiopia, almost 90% of interviewees thought that the weather is slowly but gradually getting warmer. A cattle farmer explains, "It was very cold in the past, but we are seeing flies nowadays. We are also planting crops like bean, sorghum and *teff*[28] which could not be produced here before" (Interview DG-03). Another farmer echoes, "Getting warmer for sure. In the previous years, we even could not sit here at this time of day" (DG-07). For precipitation, more than 80% of interviewees feel that they had more rain both this and last year than the previous years, but it did not come at the right times. A female farmer describes, "We want rain in March and April but last winter [June and July] we had lots of rain and I could not dry manure"[29] (DG-30). Another farmer also explains, "The last two winters it was very difficult to bring my livestock home" (DG-03), whilst a local deacon adds, "I do not know the conditions before my birth, but the rain has increased with my age. In the previous years the rivers

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[28] *Teff* is an annual grass, native to Ethiopia and Eritrea. It is high in dietary fibre, iron, protein and calcium. *Teff* is an important food grain in Ethiopia and is used to make traditional Ethiopian bread, *injera.*
[29] Manure is used for household fuel and fertilising land and is mostly prepared by women in Ethiopia.

were passable but nowadays there is too much rain and the rivers become full and impassable. The channels of the rivers are broken, trees fall down and the torrential rain washes away the soil" (DG-28). Another farmer adds, "Not only the rain… the problem is that it comes with hailstones in winter. It destroys our crops" (DG-34).

In contrast, in southern Ethiopia, almost all interviewees thought that the weather is getting cooler, which they believe is good for farming. A farmer describes, "Our area used to be characterised as desert… Now the temperature is better" (Interview DR-03). A treasurer of CBO DR agrees by saying, "We used to have malaria epidemics and food insecurity… The weather became suitable and cooler compared to 10 years ago" (DR-04). Regarding precipitation, almost 70% of interviewees found that rain does not come at the right times but the climate is improving. A farmer explains, "I do not think we have good rain now, not suitable for farming… We expect good rain from March…After September the weather should be dry" (DR-11). He then adds, "The rain this year is better than last year… It is related with the gift of God and the efforts of the government… No one can prevent something occurs through God and the government" (DR-11). A female farmer adds, "This year the rain came in April but stopped before the maize completed its growth… Some crops were devastated by scorching sun… Last year the rain came during the dry season which is not appropriate" (DR-15).

Forms of explicitly indigenous knowledge become more apparent when a community considers the ways in which management practices adapt to its environment. Most research participants believe that climate change happens because of their livelihood activities such as logging, cattle feeding and charcoal production. This idea is not entirely untrue in terms of the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and the local temperature change they may experience

"in the shade of trees" (Interview DR-03). However, these activities are not the major causes of global warming according to the generally accepted international body of scientific knowledge. An officer of Kebelle A describes this as "the understanding of the community itself" (DG-16). This perception has been built up through various processes of socialisation such as sharing stories with other community members, learning at school and acquiring knowledge handed down from their parents. A leader of a women's league explains, for instance, "We gather and discuss about our forest... Where we can collect fuel wood and where we should not and the like" (DR-14). A former chairperson of *Kebelle* A adds, "This is my opinion... I am at fifth grade and learnt about the impacts of deforestation at school" (DG-39). A local priest also describes, "This is my opinion based on the information given by my father and grandfather... I stress the importance of forest when I preach the sermon" (DG-23).

As a response, a certain proportion of community forest in the two villages was closed by the CBA project. After a series of meetings held by the CBO under the supervision of the government officers, the project selected the forest in Choke mountain for the northern village and in the lowlands for the southern village of Ethiopia. Most young adults objected this area closure activity during the meetings though their opinion was not considered. A young adult, for instance, describes, "During the meetings, we complained, calling for opening the enclosed area... We did not agree from the very beginning. They did the area closure on their own... We also all know warm weather is good for farming... People who get benefits out of the enclosed area are those who have enough private lands" (Interview DG-12). He then adds, "We, the youth, will eventually need to migrate from this village" (DG-12). How the area closure, as a core activity of CBA, was enforced in the villages will be further discussed in the following chapters.

Figure 6. Green beans destroyed by frost

Indeed, in northern Ethiopia, most farmers believe that the warmer weather is better for farming. A farmer describes, "When the weather conditions were cold, we produced cabbage, barley and potato with low productivity. They got damaged by cold wind (See *Figure 6*)... Nowadays they grow even faster" (DG–19). A female farmer agrees, "I prefer this warm weather. It is good for agricultural production... Good for maize... When it is cold, the rain comes with hailstones and destroys our crops" (DG–30). At the same time, they believe that this climate change is caused by deforestation they carried out. A former chairperson of *Kebelle* A explains, "Climate change... It is because of population pressure, deforestation of indigenous trees and over-cultivation of communal land" (DG–07). A local deacon adds, "What I heard from my forefathers... It is because of deforestation and degradation of natural resources. In the earlier years, Choke Mountain was covered by forest and the weather was very cold" (DG–28).

Meanwhile, the *woreda* and *kebelle* officers are aware of the local people's understanding of climate change but are concerned about other negative consequences of deforestation for local environments (e.g. flooding and subsequent soil erosion during the rainy season). They are concerned that local people may continue deforesting to get a warmer climate for farming though no research participant ever expressed that motivation. In response, they organised a series of public education seminars on deforestation, particularly for Choke Mountain where local people use communal land for pasture and fuel wood collection. In addition, visiting researchers from Debre Marcos and Addis Ababa universities delivered 'the orders from above'. A local deacon explains, "The agricultural experts from government taught us…Following the messages, I planted trees to protect the soil… This is our forest" (Interview DG-28). A secretary of CBO DG adds, "I heard from the experts at the *woreda* and *kebelle* offices… The importance of the forest… I also attended the training in Debre Zeyit with my government"[30] (DG-41).

As a result, local farmers become aware of the consequences of deforestation but are constrained from pursuing the modes of livelihood that have been dominant throughout the generations. In particular, a group of young adults in northern Ethiopia were against the idea of preventing them from using some parts of Choke Mountain since they do not have enough private land and pasture for their cattle. A former leader of a women's league explains,

> *"The major problem is the shortage of land. Whilst the population is*
>
> *increasing, there is not enough land, especially for our children… We used to*

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bring our cattle and graze them on our Choke… Young people nowadays go to

Debre Zeyit, Mojo, Nazreth and Addis Ababa for casual work… I understand the

problem of deforestation. There is no solution other than using compost and

improved seeds. We also need to construct terracing so as to conserve the land"

(Interview DG-15).

Figure 7. A girl collecting firewood from Choke Mountain in northern Ethiopia

A 15-years-old girl also describes the situation, "The Choke forest is important, we learnt this at school… So we need to go further to collect firewood nowadays. We need to follow what the government says. But I hate to go far away for firewood. It is hard and scary (See *Figure* 7)" (DG-25). A young farmer appeals,

"Last year one person died because of the flood around Waber. It is because of the

lack of trees on Choke… I understand the increased temperature and flood… But my

father has 2 timad of land and did not give any land to me. I have a wife and two

children. My wife does not have land from her father either. My income is only from

animal fattening... If not Choke, where do I feed my animals?" (Interview DG-35).

Nevertheless, some still believe that there is the lack of awareness and relate it to political stability and order. A treasurer of CBO DG, for instance, argues, "Because of the lack of awareness, there is no unity and solidarity in our *kebelle*" (Interview DG-01). An officer of Kebelle A agrees by saying, "Although the *kebelle* is usually covered by ice and cloud, the area is suitable for living. The problem is that the awareness level of community is low... It is related with their low adaption level of knowledge and technology" (DG-16). A former chairperson of *Kebelle* A describes,

"The biggest problem in our kebelle is the lack of awareness. They do not

show willingness to new ideas and projects in appropriate time... When you are a

leader you should tell followers the boundaries. The people do not have a

thorough understanding about what they are told to do and they do not give due

attention to the matters... The leaders raise the awareness of community, teach

them and build their understanding by explaining the significance of the project

for them... We have a shortage of land, but based on scientific findings we can use

the land more efficiently...We have to control population pressure and the youth

should engage in trading activities and save money. They can use Choke for

beekeeping and the production of seedlings... The youth has a lack of

understanding" (Interview DG-39).

In addition, contrary to the widely held belief, the population in this *kebelle* has decreased over the last few years. Most local people believe that the decline of arable land per capita is caused by overpopulation. A farmer explains, "In the previous years, everything was good. Nowadays there are great problems in

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livelihoods because of overpopulation" (Interview DG–13). A representative of *Kebelle* A echoes, "The weather is becoming hotter and hotter because of overpopulation and deforestation practices" (DG–21). However, an officer of *Kebelle* A explains, "The whole population size has decreased because of the departure of students to other places for schooling, the migration of youths from rural to urban areas and the use of contraceptives… We have been educated by health extension workers" (DG–16). She then adds, "The population will continue to decrease in the future" (DG–16). Then where is all land in this *kebelle*? A young farmer gives a hint, "There are people who have more than 4 *timad* of land… They are greedy and afraid of the redistribution [of land]… They closed our Choke… They don't like us and we don't like them" (DG–35). As mentioned at the start of the chapter, knowledge is disguised and unequally circulated in a community because of the differing power of social groups (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). Knowledge reflects the political ability of different groups and potentially decreases systems resilience and thus call for increased concern with social justice in the analysis of environmental change.

Political ecologists problematise the concept of indigenous knowledge in the community–based development approaches. Governance of CBA refers to a system which organises climate change adaptation by drawing on indigenous knowledge and experience for the development of common understanding and policies of community. Meanwhile, the hierarchical nature of the Ethiopian society creates distinctive mechanisms for the production and distribution of knowledge, labelled as 'authoritarian governmentality'. Most Ethiopian peasants believe that climate change is happening because of their livelihood activities such as logging, cattle feeding and charcoal production. This idea is neither entirely indigenous nor necessarily right, but was used to legitimise the area closure activity of the CBA project in those two villages. Knowledge reflects the

political ability of different groups and the ambition of political ecology in this context is to enhance the democratic content of community through identifying strategies for a more equitable mode of knowledge management as a specific component of systems resilience.

6.3 **Conclusion**

The chapter analysed how the scale of CBA is configured and how indigenous knowledge is taken up in discussions in Ethiopia. Peasant farmers who participated in the research were not regarded as a component of a single-voiced community, but as complex social actors with a variety of forms of social, cultural and political powers and aspirations. The chapter, first, drew attention to the politics of scale which represent the conflicting values and contrasting aspirations of different actors and institutions, and, second, called for increased concern with the democratic content of community through identifying strategies for a more equitable mode of knowledge management. In so doing, the chapter added political perspectives to the application of CBA and demonstrated how the hierarchical structures of community shape the building of adaptive capacity through CBA projects in 21st century Ethiopia.

In a literal sense, there is a degree of consensus around the *kebelle* as the scale of community between government and citizens – i.e. the scale of socio-ecological systems – even if the administrative purpose of the *kebelle* is different. As the lowest level of government, most ordinary Ethiopian citizens have contact with the *Kebelle* administration on an everyday basis. At the same time, the *kebelle* has complex governance structures that locally organised institutions and that of the state government are intricately interwoven. The *kebelle* system has been used a security apparatus of security by both the *Derg* and the EPRDF

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regimes and is now perceived as the scale of 'community'. Having the CBA projects at the *kebelle* level may create an opportunity to build administrative independence with a degree of local democracy, but also shows the intention of the Ethiopian government to keep local communities under surveillance whilst filling the financial gap in local development. Meanwhile, the individual definition of community is significantly dependent on the person's socio-political milieu. The perception of community cannot be reconciled unless one imposes its will upon the other and Ethiopian citizens are well aware of this security apparatus role of *kebelle*. The individual definition of community is used as a basis against the homogenising discourse of community against which the government's understandings and visions are compared.

Governance of CBA organises climate change adaptation by drawing on indigenous knowledge and experience. In the Ethiopian peasantry, discipline is often practised under the administrative supervision of government, which is empowered by the scientific forms of discourse as well as the ultimate authority of state. This practice runs through social networks of local community and becomes firmly embedded in people's perception and behaviour as if it was 'orders from above'. This condition was labelled as 'authoritarian governmentality'. Moreover, forms of explicitly indigenous knowledge become more apparent when a community considers the ways in which management practices adapt to its environment. Most Ethiopian peasants believe that climate change is happening because of their livelihood activities such as logging, cattle feeding and charcoal production. This idea is neither entirely indigenous nor necessarily right, but was used to legitimise the area closure activity of the CBA project. Knowledge reflects the political ability of different groups and thus call for increased concern with social justice in the analysis of environmental change as a specific component of systems resilience.

In conclusion, the approach adopted in this chapter not only presents political accounts of CBA, but also offers an original perspective on the structure called 'a community' in development practice. Yet, the thesis argues, there are forms of bureaucracy and hierarchy existing in both *Kebelle* A and B, which in many ways undermine the principles of CBA. It is therefore important to regard the peasant farmers as a component of socio-ecological systems that are shaped by their socio-political milieu, livelihoods and motivation. With this in mind, this thesis now moves on to the politics emerged during the CBA projects and the way the power dynamics of community were redefined by the projects.

Chapter Seven. Changing Power Dynamics within the Case Study Communities

The creation of community-based organisations (CBOs) has led to the emergence of a parallel governance system alongside the *kebelle* office for natural resource management. Whilst inheriting the top-heavy and intricate socio-cultural norms and rules of *kebelle*, this process necessarily involves a multifarious web of relationships between CBOs and other sub-*kebelle* institutions such as One-to-Five networks, women's leagues and youth associations. In this context, this chapter sets out to demonstrate the simultaneous decentralisation and recentralisation of power and authority within the case study communities, particularly through the case of area closure, which is one of the core activities of community-based adaptation (CBA).

In order to answer the research question 2), 'to what extent does the current practice of CBA shape complex socio-ecological systems of a community in Ethiopia', this chapter first addresses 'who participates in the decision-making processes of CBA' and 'how their identities are determined' (the research question 2a). Based on these findings, Chapter Eight will examine 'to what extent do CBA projects change the geometry of power of a community'.

The discussion which follows in this chapter aims to show how actors and institutions exercise various forms of political assets within the predetermined socio-ecological systems to compete over access to resources. The assertion of power is a source of social and administrative assets which community members wish to convert into a form of dominance in the decision-making process. In the two villages in which the field research was conducted, people gained a significant amount of political influence through their participation in the CBA

projects because of the extent to which the structures of community are inscribed into the way in which the projects are implemented. That is to say: participation in the CBA projects is a product of a politically-conflicted, economically-varied and culturally-imposed social order. In this sense, those forms of power are not simply projected into the practices of CBA, but rather the participation of actors emerge out of their experience and engagement with the social, economic, ecological and political realities of the community.

The first half of this chapter analyses the intra-community politics in the case study communities in terms of socio-political components such as position, education level, wealth, age and gender. Based on this analysis, the second half interrogates the change in power dynamics, considering the interaction between the practice of politics and the unfolding of the CBA projects in the northern case study (*Kebelle* A). In so doing, this chapter demonstrates how the dominant group of *Kebelle* A managed to remain predominant which directly affected the community's adaptive capacity – quite possibly in a positive manner in this case.

7.1   Internal Differentiation within the Communities

There are over eighty-five separately categorised ethnic groups in Ethiopia. The cultural diversity leads to an extremely complex and varied range of practices of power and authority within each group, which makes any kind of generalisation difficult. At the same time, many groups share a few key elements of what can be regarded as customary practice of democracy, which highlight consociational approaches to power-sharing whilst still being hierarchical (Bahru Zewde and Pausewang, 2002). Although it may sound far from an ideal democracy, this so called Abyssinian political tradition has long been considered the symbolic foundation on which to build a modern democratic political system

in Ethiopia. It is commemorated and recounted as 'indigenous' in vindication of these customary practices of democracy (Bahru Zewde and Pausewang, 2002). This tradition exists in different forms of practice depending on the ethnic groups throughout Ethiopia; the *Xeer* of the Somali (Lewis, 1961), the *Gada* of the Oromo, and the *Seera* of the Sidamo and the Gurage (Bassi and Boku Tache, 2011).

The Ethiopian peasantry is characterised by a complex set of norms and rules that often guide the social behaviour of people and ensure their place in their own socio-political structures. The CBA approach aims to empower local communities by strengthening members' participation in decision-making process. Yet there is a widely accepted assumption in the aid industry that if meeting places are local and rules for access and distribution are fair, all parties will be able to participate and benefit (Cleaver, 2009). The aspirations of the members become entrenched in the structures, ethos and logics of the communities. Bearing this in mind, this section first sets out to analyse a degree of local democracy in two villages, before proceeding to the specific case of CBA projects.

There is an institutionalised process of decision-making at the *kebelle* level. A officer of *Kebelle* A describes the process as,

> *"The kebelle office drafts agendas of discussion and then we discuss this with the kebelle council committee and based on their suggestions we have another discussion with the kebelle people. If they do not accept our decision and if the case is strong, we refer it to the upper governing structures... The kebelle office cannot make a decision alone. There are about ten government structures that work with us... We have a women's league meeting on the 21ˢᵗ, a militia meeting*

on 7th, the kebelle council meeting on 29th, etc. For the kebelle meeting, we have around 300 people coming. Half of them are women" (Interview DG-16).

A representative of *Kebelle* A adds, "When people have opinions, the platform is open and they raise questions. In the *kebelle* meeting, around 200 people come and some 20 people may speak and then a vote will be made" (Interview DG-21). Most interviewees during the field research agreed with this opinion and confirmed that both women and men have the right to attend any meetings and speak out. A leader of CBO DG explains, "Though people differ in communication skills, all have an equal right to speak" (DG-42). A young militia member also adds, "They speak equally. They have equal rights. Every Sunday we have a meeting [at the *gott* level] on gender specific basis, men and women separately. Sometimes they all come together for discussions" (DG-11). A female farmer also agrees by saying, "Nowadays everyone can speak in the meetings. There is nothing stopping you from speaking... even for women" (DG-09).

However, whether their voices are heard or not is another story. For some interviewees, the improved awareness and enhanced rights do not necessarily mean freedom of speech or automatically grant them a platform from which to express their views. A leader of a *gott* explains, "Yes, open-minded people speak openly and equally. However, people who are mentally sick and have negative motives do not get an attention" (Interview DG-22). This comment encouraged me to attend a few different *kebelle* and sub-*kebelle* meetings around the villages. My aim was to reveal who and what sort of criteria there are to decide the level of attention that a speaker receives and the influence a speaker has on the others. These include socio-political positions, education level, wealth, age and gender though their weighting is dependent on the make-up of the audience.

First, despite their own claims to listen to their 'constituency' the local government officers have very great influence over the residents in their designated village. In particular, there are one or two development officers at each *kebelle* appointed by the *woreda* government. This full-time position was initially created by the *Derg* to fill the role of previous *neftegna*. This was a mechanism to secure upward accountability whilst ensuring that a *kebelle* chairperson and leaders tow the government line rather than following community demands (Pausewang, 2002). The officers are often more qualified than the chairperson and move unpredictably between *kebelles* within the same *woreda* every three to five years.

In the Ethiopian tradition and language, there is no distinction between the word 'state' and 'government', they are both referred to as *mengist*. Being a government representative, the *kebelle* officers are vested with the authority of the state/government and as discussed in Chapter Five they have historically controlled the public political domain and activities of social groups at the village level. Considering the hierarchical structures of Ethiopian bureaucracy, they seldom question the 'orders from above' whilst also seldom being questioned by citizens in their locality. One farmer describes this condition as, "The *kebelle* officers are afraid of the *woreda* officers and dare not tell them the real situations here... And we are afraid of them... Then what is the point of having a number of meetings here?" (Interview DR-22).

Second, social, political and religious positions provide a great degree of influence to 'patriarchs' at the *kebelle* and sub-*kebelle* levels. For instance, more than 30% of interviewees answered 'Animaw Taye', the name of the current chairperson of the *kebelle*, when they were asked which *kebelle* they live in, in the northern case study. A former chairperson of *Kebelle* A explains, "People think

the leader of kebelle is the kebelle itself" (Interview DG-39). Most leaders of *kebelles*, *gotts*, CBOs, One-to-Five networks and women's leagues get a certain degree of public respect and tend to introduce themselves with reference to their position. Just as the bureaucracy inculcates ways of thinking and acting, the positions also extend a degree of influence further and take on broader socio-political, patriarchal and symbolic significance.

There are also nepotistic networks in villages created by those positions. A leader of a women's league introduces her family as, "My first son is a teacher at school, the second son is a leader of a *gott* and my husband is a leader of *kebelle* militias" (Interview DG-14). A treasurer of CBO DG also says, "The *kebelle* officer is a daughter of my cousin and we often discuss matters here [his house]. I also go to the *kebelle* office frequently" (DG-01). This trend somewhat divides the *kebelle* into multi-networked communities which support and oppose each other according to circumstances. Meanwhile, it often further isolates the already marginalised groups. When asked "Do you have any position in your *gott* or *kebelle*?", a young farmer answers, "Of course not, we are young adults and we do not have much land and I am not close to any of those people" (DG-13).

Militia men[31] and party members also have a strong influence in public meetings. Over the last 15 years, most chairpersons in the two villages have been ex-militia men. A militia man explains, "We are supposed to safeguard the village. The militia has no power unless they are educated… But more opportunities are given to militias if we are educated" (Interview DR-02). Here 'more opportunities' means leadership positions in the village. In general, they

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[31] 'The People's Militia' was first established by the *Derg* to 'safeguard the revolution' in 1975. The regime's intention was to raise a regional force on a local basis to carry out police duties in order to protect collectivised properties of Peasant Associations (PA) (Markakis and Waller, 1986). The system has still remained largely in rural Ethiopia and is used to organise community activities.

receive a certain degree of public respect and always introduce themselves as militia as they were trained, bestowed with a rifle and 'ordained' by government as a guardian of the village. They also go around the village and call people to come to the communal activities of *kebelle* (See *Figure 8*).

Figure 8. Militia men calling people to come for community work in northern Ethiopia

The political party members seemed more active in decision-making in the southern case study. According to a leader of a One-to-Five network, "The militia men and religious leaders speak more than others, but they only speak when they are asked to do so... But the political cadres [the political party members] always speak more" (Interview DR-03). A judge of *Kebelle* B also says, "Yes, the party members and *kebelle* leaders speak more... The agendas made by the *kebelle* leaders could not be accepted unless approved by the party members. Then the agendas go to the *kebelle* meeting which can be accepted or rejected by the members" (DR-05).

The religious leaders of Orthodox Christianity (in the north) and Protestant Christianity (in the south) have the influence on defining the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and to limit the social space of specific groups such as women. In northern Ethiopia, there were several local priests and deacons at every *kebelle* meeting, based on the researcher's observation, and they were often engaged in decision-making as small-scale power brokers. They ensure that the norms and rules of the Church are followed by people and confine women to narrowly defined roles (Vaughan and Tronvol, 2003). A local priest (and a treasurer of CBO DG) explains, "Elders and priests are more accepted by the people. We have only one religion, Christianity. The elders and priests do arbitration work and they can be heard more in the meetings" (Interview DG-23). A militia man agrees by saying, "The religious leaders are the platform themselves and they are given a place around the table in the meetings. They are also involved in arbitration" (DR-02).

Third, relative wealth and education levels are also central elements in determining people's socio-political status and therefore their authority and behaviour within decision-making processes. Built upon the cultural customs, the status is also judged by the appearance and behaviour of people in public. A local priest (and a treasurer of CBO DG) points out, "When your clothes are not similar... For instance, the rich dresses in clean clothes and the poor may not have soap to wash their clothes... Their acceptance will not be same and the poor will be shy in public" (Interview DG-23). A female farmer also agrees by saying, "People are not equal... After achieving the expected changes, such as hygiene at home, the rich can express their opinion freely" (DG-03). Or the difference might be about the way a person gives a speech, as a farmer explains, "The uneducated people do not speak in an orderly manner but they can still raise

their hands and speak like the educated people" (DG-31). A female farmer adds, "Educated people bring the truth to the attention of the public. They are appreciated and their speech makes us glad" (DG-17). An elderly farmer confirms, "The educated people speak more and we accept them. We like orators. They teach and advise us... So yes, educated people have a better chance of being heard in the meetings" (DG-34).

This condition may inhibit the poor and uneducated from speaking in public. As a militia man points out, "Poor people have anxiety and fear things. But rich people fear nothing... The poor may be afraid of politics and they fear that they will be imprisoned for an unknown political reason. The rich have some skills and they do not say things that could upset the political cadres" (Interview DR-02). A secretary of CBO DG also explains, "Since the majority is illiterate, people are slow to understand the issues... I was trusted by the community as I am educated and can make decisions by consulting with my friends" (DG-02). It is therefore apparent that the rich's influence is tied to their understanding of how to play politics, whereas the uneducated/poor often say what they think and expose themselves to risk. This explains how having a voice is not the same as being influential.

Fourth, whilst there are signs of ongoing changes to socially-imposed gender roles on the ground, various forms of social oppression of women persist in rural Ethiopia. A representative of *Kebelle* A explains, "Women come to the meetings by being forced... Not only women, but also some people did not have such chances previously. Nowadays there are more chances for women and they can speak even more than men if they want" (Interview DG-21). A female farmer supports this point, "Sometimes we speak more than men and probably with better logic, but it is less accepted by the public" (DG-18). A male farmer adds,

"Women come to the meetings but do not speak. [Researcher: Why?] They have not got used to the meeting procedures and they come only to observe the situation" (DG-19).

This oppression is in relation to other social circumstances of women such as education, perceived expertise or marital status. For instance, "Women alone will never go to meetings. We usually go with our men [husbands or male family members]" (Interview DG-03), as a female farmer explains. Another female farmer elaborates,

> "There is a chance for everyone to speak. Only being uneducated can prevent him from speaking… I do not speak. We, women, stay silent… They [men] give permission but we do not participate because even if we speak, they do not accept us. When we make a mistake everybody laughs… They will laugh at men too, but they are not shy… The leader [of a women's league] gives some comments in the meeting but even she becomes shy as she is illiterate" (Interview DG-17).

In addition, this social boundary is often defined by the religious leaders as a local priest (and a treasurer of CBO DG) explains, "They fear to speak but they raise their hands during voting… This is our culture…They never get used to attend meetings and they lack experiences. Men are not afraid of speaking in public" (DG-23).

Last, older age is traditionally accorded higher socio-political value in Ethiopia. A *shimagile* ('elder' in Amharic) is invited to meetings and is often involved in a process of settling local disputes, for instance, over land or grazing rights. A secretary of CBO DG describes how this works, "If the difference and contradiction is too much, the elders intervene and convince the arguing people

by saying that the leaders are our children and they do not bring bad issues to our village" (Interview DG-02). A local deacon adds, "The elders are heard when some wrong actions are carried out and they give decisions, arbitration and consultation and they are respected" (DG-28).

Yet, although they play an important role as arbitrators of power relations, they do not represent the community as a whole. As a farmer explains, "Elderly people tend to speak in the churches and meetings, but they do not participate in other community activities" (DG-32). Rather, they often support the community leaders and stay behind the scenes. Also, not all elders achieve the status of a respected *shimagile*, as the uneducated or women, for instance, are basically excluded. Generally, those who had previously held leadership positions are retired into the status of respected *shimagile* (Vaughan and Tronvol, 2003).

In addition to these criteria, there is a widely accepted opinion that decision-making processes in Ethiopia are not discussions of issues, but a process of convincing people about decisions already made at higher levels of government. One farmer complains, "When we have the meetings, they [the leaders] say the decision is already made at the woreda with the experts… In principle the CBO decides everything but in fact the decision is already made and the CBO leaders say that we have to apply it. The area closure was like that" (Interview DR-13). If decisions have not been predetermined outside the community, they generally reflect the views that leaders have already settled on before the meeting: "The leaders speak more and they are well accepted… They always try to get their ideas accepted and are always in competition with each other… They may listen to our opinions but might go for their ideas" (DG-26).

This predetermination of outcomes can be enforced by social censure, as a treasurer of CBO DG explains, "It is the decision of leaders. We discuss and make decisions based on cases. We also meet in church and decide against wrongdoers who act against the law of the village… We exclude them from social activities. Since they could not live alone, they will eventually agree with us…When there are strong arguments, it will be resolved by the law enforcing bodies of *kebelle*" (Interview DG-01). A local priest (and a treasurer of CBO DG) adds, "We teach [rather than discuss with] them about the benefits of the project for current and future generations" (DG-23).

In summary, the lives of the Ethiopian peasantry are characterised by a complex set of norms and rules that guide their social behaviour and tend to impose their place in the socio-political structures. The ethos and logics which the peasantry live by reinforce the structures which best suits the interests and aspirations of the central Ethiopian elites, as discussed in Chapter Five. The structures of community are bound up in a multifarious web of relationships between actors and institutions. They demonstrate that social action and domination in decision-making processes are multifaceted in terms of socio-political factors such as position, education level, wealth, age and gender. Hence the approach this study takes is not in a conventional form with a quantitative allocation of power, but considers 'community' in broader relational forms of analysis of complex socio-ecological systems. With this in mind, this chapter now moves on to the change in power dynamics at the *kebelle* level in the context of area closure, one of core activities of the CBA projects in Ethiopia.

7.2   Redefinition of Power Dynamics

Power relations are inherent in CBA projects. The CBA approach involves a variety of agencies and different degrees of community participation. This often causes friction among actors and institutions during project implementation and through these processes communities become politicised. In other words, through the CBA projects, communities are caused to become a field of "the practices and processes through which power, in its multiple forms, is wielded and negotiated" (Paulson et al., 2005:28) in which various actors compete over rights and resources. In order to seek locally identified problems and locally appropriate solutions, CBA needs to be built on indigenous norms and rules and to facilitate practices from within a community. This means that the CBA approach requires an appreciation of local socio-political dynamics and needs to confront the existing structures of communities that might oppress specific groups of people that are often 'invisible' to outsiders (Ensor and Berger, 2009).

CBA promotes equal benefits within a community through freedom of expression and debate (Ensor and Berger, 2009). The desired outcome of CBA is a product of negotiations built on the relationships of actors and institutions during the implementation of agreed rules and activities. In other words, the scope for aspects of adaptive governance to enable CBA is significantly determined by the geometry of power and politics around communities, not just within the context of CBA. Here politics is the (generally public) dialogue about the rules (both formal laws and less formal social regulations) by which a community lives and operates and through which scarce resources are allocated. At the same time, dominant narratives of 'who we are' and 'what we need' are often defined by the established groups within communities. The participatory space risks being dominated by these groups even when well-intentioned efforts

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are made to initiate equal participation within CBA processes. Moreover, institutions have great influence in the decision-making processes which determine the scope for adaptation and are deeply rooted in social hierarchies, often without being challenged. This section thus aims to acknowledge and probe the highly complicated socio-political nature of community, which is composed of actors and institutions with different degrees of influence, and describe the simultaneous decentralisation and recentralisation of power and authority within *Kebelle* A in northern Ethiopia. With this in mind, the focus is now on area closure of community forest (often described as *communal land* by locals), one of the contentious, but important activities of CBA projects in Ethiopia.

The most significant environmental problem in the Ethiopian highlands is deforestation. The starting point of this process is often the intensive logging done by local people to pasture more cattle and expand their farmlands. The need for this expansion stems from the substantial reduction in grain and potato harvests, due to the poor weather conditions over the last few years. Also, the decline in arable land per capita worsens the situation (Negusu Aklilu, 2010). In this context, the demarcation of protected lands, called 'area closure', has become one of the core activities of CBA. This activity closes off certain areas of land and its natural resources from human and cattle interference in order to prevent soil erosion resulting from intense rainfall. In the northern case study, the CBA project has closed more than half of the community forest in Choke Mountain, affecting several *kebelles* that belong to *Woreda* X.

Most leaders in the northern case study village admit that there were some disputes at first between the CBO and citizens of the *kebelle* on the issue of closing the community forest. However, they argue that nearly all those who

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were in opposition are now 'convinced' by the changes the project has made. A local priest (and a treasurer of CBO DG) explains, "When we initiated the activity, some members stood against our idea by saying that we are going to sell our Choke. When the *kebelle* saw the tangible changes they accepted the idea of area closure" (Interview DG-23). A secretary of CBO DG also describes how,

> *"Initially there was such disagreement. But at the moment they are convinced and nowadays they support the idea of area closure... We had discussions about area closure with the kebelle and then we went to the gotts and identified the available land for area closure and we closed the land. [Researcher: What if the gott refuses area closure?] We have to convince them. Even at the beginning of the project some people from one gott came up with axes and threatened to cut us into pieces and so we ran away. But today they appreciate the area closure" (Interview DG-41).*

A leader of the *gott*, who previously opposed the project and was one of the alleged axe wielders agrees by saying, "The area closure was made in consultation with our elders. We were also pressurised by our neighbours. We therefore agreed to the area closure and protect the forest. The area closure has many advantages since we can cut and bring the grass to our cattle whilst the forest is protected" (Interview DG-22).

There was also pressure from external actors such as the SGP coordinator and professors from Addis Ababa University. As discussed earlier, all messages coming from outside are considered as 'orders from above'. A secretary of CBO DG points out, "The SGP officer and professors from Addis [Ababa] suggested some new seeds which I knew could not be adapted to our environment, but it was included in our activities... The *woreda* people were also there and I could

not voice my opinion" (Interview DG–41). A leader of a CBO also explains, "They brought us an improved ploughing tool which was not suitable to our *kebelle*. But many other things they suggested benefitted us. Our activities were heavily based on their advice... They are more educated than us. It is good to be done by them" (DG–42).

The main concern here is that the decision to carry out the area closure was made by the CBO in cooperation with the *kebelle* and *woreda* officers, without being discussed at the *kebelle* meeting. There are however only 487 CBO members; not enough to represent the entire *kebelle* with a population of about 4,000. Nevertheless, it was only possible as a chairperson of the *kebelle* at that time gave his full support to the CBA project and most *kebelle* council committee members are registered at the CBO. A young farmer complains, "Since I was not a member of the CBO, I do not know why they did it [the area closure]. They didn't tell me... They only hear the voice of the [CBO] members" (Interview DG–12). Another young farmer adds, "There was no discussion at the *kebelle* meeting about the area closure. It was the decision of the CBO" (DG–35). A number of other non–CBO members echo this view whilst arguing that they are neither convinced, "the dispelling of doubts", nor persuaded, "the changing of minds" (Shovel, 2011). A farmer explains, "The leaders decided and managed the area closure. When people complain, they [the leaders] penalise them. That is why I say there is pressure and burden from the leaders" (DG–32).

In the first place, many young adults did not join the CBO as they were not convinced enough to pay the 40 *birr* (approximately USD 2) registration fee. A young adult explains, "My major income source is manual labour. I do not have land... Sometimes I buy animals and sell them again... Money is not always with me... I couldn't pay the registration fee for the CBO at that time" (Interview DG–

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04). Moreover, the practice of area closure has made the group of young adults who are already economically vulnerable and mostly dependent on animal husbandry even more economically marginalised. Another young farmer complains, "We still complain and shout for reopening the enclosed area. We go to the *kebelle* meetings to ask them to reopen the land... I graze my animals on the communal land at Choke Mountain... We live on animal husbandry and there is a shortage of land... I do not agree with the area closure although I understand the idea" (DG-12). Another young farmer adds, "Even though our Choke is given to the project and the CBO, no tangible changes are seen. Only we youngsters are disadvantaged by this" (DG-13).

The majority of the CBO members are males who are relatively well-off (which means having more than 4 *timad* of land and/or a good number of livestock) and educated, in their 40s and 50s, with a socio-political position in their *gott* or *kebelle*. They are less affected by the area closure since they can pasture livestock on their private land. They also tend to be more interested in the development of the *kebelle*. A militia commander explains, "Most of the enclosed areas are on cliffs and gorges. Anyway, we don't use that land. So we have never been affected... My own land is large enough to feed my cattle" (Interview DG-08). A secretary of CBO DG agrees by saying, "We did area closure on bare and marginalised land where no one uses it" (DG-41). A local priest (and a treasurer of CBO DG) echoes, "I had no problem from the beginning. I have 2 cattle, 2 horses and 10 sheep... I have a small plot of land where my animals can graze" (DG-23). That is to say, the CBO is given significant influence not only by the governments and the SGP, but also by having the already dominant group of people in the *kebelle*.

It also means that this dominant group that considers young adults as potential competitors for resources have managed to relabel themselves through the new institution of CBO. This new institution secured the support of government and external funders (the SGP) by using environmental rehabilitation as a justification. A leader of CBO DG criticises the young adults who oppose the area closure by saying, "Some people think of their own benefits rather than thinking of the national and environmental benefits. There are some youngsters who cause disturbance and go to other people's land...The *kebelle* agreed with the idea and no one opposed it except the youngsters" (DG-42). A member of the kebelle council also adds, "Initially it was because of the lack of understanding... But there are a few people who always have negative views on what we do and don't think about future generations" (DG-10).

Meanwhile, there is shared anxiety among these dominant group of people that the *woreda* government might redistribute land in the near future, particularly to those young adults who suffer from a shortage of land. They are also conscious that Choke Mountain is the only land in their area left for redistribution. An officer of *Kebelle* A explains, "Initially we talked to people and reached a consensus on enclosing the area... There are many people with small plots of land, not only the youth group... There are people who fear that the communal land may be given to the youth group through the land redistribution" (DG-16). A young farmer points out, "The *kebelle* and elders promised to give us [the young adults] the communal land six years ago and they abandoned their words and closed the land" (DG-35). That is to say, there is a shared belief among the dominant group that enclosing Choke Mountain is a better idea than giving it to the young adults.

There is a mixed perception of the young adults in the *kebelle*. On the one hand, some feel sympathetic towards them since they are the children of the *kebelle* as a leader of a women's league describes,

> *"It is true, we have a shortage of grazing land and the communal land is closed. I am sorry for the youth group. We adults own land from earlier years and have some possessions. But, the youth group does not have access to land and sometimes buy animal feed. So they migrate to Wollega and other regions where they may face different challenges... I have sympathy for the youth group, but I can't help them. I can't give my own land" (Interview DG-14).*

On the other hand, the *kebelle* is in need of their labour as a young adult explains,

> *"I am a youth who has no land. We youths work hard and there is a high number of unemployed youths. So I live on trade activities like the sale of grains... We also get hired to work on other people's farms and carry out terracing... The gott and kebelle give us nothing but work like this road construction (See Figure 9) and we don't have time to go to Waber [where the market is held]. My father has only 2 timad of land and we are three bothers... I like seeing the land being protected, but I need land. The land allocation is not equal. It needs to be redistributed without corruption" (Interview DG-31).*

Figure 9. The road construction site in Kebelle A

There were some efforts made by the leaders to convince and persuade the young adults on the basis of protecting the environment. A former chairperson of *Kebelle* A explains, "I made my best efforts to bring the watershed project here by discussing with the *kebelle* and the *woreda* officials… When they [young adults] argued about the communal land, I told them to use my land. I even quarrelled with some of my son's friends" (Interview DG-07). An elderly farmer also explains, "They [young adults] are opposing and confronting us. However, we are telling them that the area closure is beneficial. In order to protect the land, we are advising them to reduce their number of animals but focus on their quality" (DG-26). A local priest (and a treasurer of CBO DG) notes, "I told the youth group that we still get benefits from the area closure through beehives and the sale of grass on top of the rehabilitated Choke" (DG-23). There were even some attempts by the CBO leaders at reconciliation with the young adults. He adds, "We were all affected [by the area closure] and I needed to sell some animals too. But the grass from the enclosed area is only given to the youth

group, not all community members. We also hired some of them as guards for the enclosed area" (DG-23). A young farmer who was hired as a guard of the closed area explains,

> *"The watershed project is good and you can see many trees there are now. The beehives and other items help a lot. Some youngsters complain about the area closure...But we held the meetings and discussed it with the leaders. We argued but ended up closing the area... Cutting one tree is equivalent to the death of one person... I don't like people contradicting what the government says" (Interview DG-37).*

However, most young adults are still socially and economically marginalised and remain against the CBO and the CBA project. A young militia man explains,

> *"Yes, I am terribly affected, nowadays I buy grass for my animals... I understand the land has to be protected and trees should grow... But we need to strengthen our unity and solidarity towards the development [not the rehabilitation] of land... There is a shortage of land because land was allocated in the previous years and the youth has no access to land now. This is inadequate for us... We need to approach the woreda. We expect the woreda to allocate those unoccupied lands to the youth" (Interview DG-11).*

Nevertheless, the leader of CBO DG notes that the CBA project has been successful because it has slowed down the adverse effects of climate change in the area. He explains, "There are indigenous trees coming back to our village since we closed the areas with the watershed project... Fewer trees are being cut and the weather is becoming good again" (Interview DG-42). Despite the politics of the CBO, a number of people generally agree with the leader on the fact that

the project has contributed to improving the condition of Choke Mountain (See *Figure 10*). However, many young adults subsequently left the village during the project period, leaving their wives and children behind. The livelihoods of those who have decided to remain have also been significantly deteriorated. Some of them gave up gazing their own animals and became casual manual labour working on other's farm.

Figure 10. The site of area closure (the left side of valley) in Kebelle A

In contrast to the young adults, most research participants agreed that women's participation in decision-making process has been significantly increased. There are two major reasons. First, local governments have encouraged men to let their wives to join the CBO and come to the *gott* and *kebelle* meetings together, according to the principles of CBA. A female farmer describes how, "Gender equality is being promoted now after the project came... The culture of washing the legs of husband has been abandoned. In the previous years, the husband did whatever he liked... Nowadays during the weekend we can

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even go to the meetings with them" (Interview DG-03). However, a leader of a women's league explains,

"*As a leader I tell them [women] to know their right as equal to men and encourage them to come to the meetings. Previously my husband used to beat me and send me back to my parents. Now we own the resources including the house equally... [Researcher: Do you also speak out at the kebelle meeting?] No, no, totally not. We women participate in the meeting but we do not raise issues and we do not ask questions most of the time... [Researcher: How long would it take for women to have an equal voice to men in the meetings?] If we make consultations and agreements, it will not take much time. We are learning and teaching each other*" (Interview DG-14).

	Men's view on how many women speak for every 10 men	Women's view on how many women speak for every 10 men	Total
Kebelle A	3.7	2.3	3.3
Kebelle B	4.1	3.2	3.7
Total	3.9	2.7	3.4

Table 3. Comparison of men and women's views on the number of women that speak in a meeting (Unit: persons)

Table 3 (based on meetings attended) shows that women still speak far less than men in meetings, although the result in southern Ethiopia is slightly better than the north. A female *kebelle* officer points out, "Three to five women would speak nowadays... Before the project, it was zero... They even did not come to a meeting" (Interview DG-16). A young male farmer adds, "I would say four women compared to 10 men. Women are still ashamed of speaking in public... It has increased a lot though. In the earlier years they never spoke" (DG-31).

Yet single women tend to have less voice than other women. A widow explains, "I would say two women, but I wouldn't be one of those two because I have no husband... Women with husbands speak more... We are not educated and when support comes from the government the leaders marginalise me. I even borrowed money from my neighbours" (DR-18). A divorced female farmer agrees, "Because of our shyness, we do not speak freely. Our voice is zero. I go to the meetings and say nothing but listen to the messages delivered the whole day... If we speak there will be slanders and insult" (DG-29). Moreover, the absolute number of women in meetings is still lower than the men. Most women in meetings were older (40+) because it is traditionally considered a women's responsibility to take care of livestock, unless their child is old enough to do so, so they would not leave their livestock for a long time to come to a meeting.

Next, the reason most interviewees agreed that women's participation in meetings has increased, particularly compared to the young adults, is that men (the dominant group of the *kebelle*) let women do so. Many women believed that they are given a right to speak by men. A former leader of a women's league explains, "Women are given rights by men but we are ashamed of talking in public... This is our problem. The culture forbids us to speak in public even though men empower us to be better" (Interview DG-15). Women still discuss their concerns through women's leagues or at informal gatherings with their neighbours. The extent to which these informal channels of expression feed into the decision-making of *kebelle* depends on whether those concerns conflict with men's values. That is to say, women's participation was only possible because the dominant group found the participation not threatening to their dominance. An elderly farmer points out, "It is ok, we don't mind having women in the meetings... Anyway, they don't speak" (Interview DG-33).

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Meanwhile, this research provided the interviewees with a chance to review their perception on women's voice. A *gott* leader answers, "Women are not prohibited from speaking and now it is 10 women speak. [Researcher: You are the first person to say 10] [He laughs] In fact, women are afraid of speaking, but we encourage them to speak confidently. Their voice is not equal to men's... I can guess three or four women [He laughs]" (Interview DG-22).

In summary, power imbalances are inherent in CBA projects. CBA promises to promote equal benefits within a community through freedom of expression and debate. During the implementation of the project in *Kebelle* A, however, the group of young adults who were already socially and economically marginalised have become even more isolated by the activity of area closure. Meanwhile, women have achieved a certain, limited degree of participation in meetings. This is because the dominant group of *kebelle* members found women's participation not threatening to their dominance whilst the young adults continue to be marginalised due to fears about the possibility of land redistribution. The dominant group managed to stay in power through relabelling themselves with a new institution of CBO and by using the justification of environmental rehabilitation to support their own ends/interests.

7.3   Conclusion

This chapter has examined the intra-community politics and the simultaneous decentralisation and recentralisation of power through the activity of area closure in the case study in northern Ethiopia. Considering 'community' in broader relational forms of analysis, it answered the research question 2a),

'who participates in the decision-making processes of CBA and how are their identities determined?'.

The first half of the chapter argued that the lives of the Ethiopian peasantry are characterised by a complex set of norms and rules that determine their place in the socio-political structures of community. These structures are bound up in a multifarious web of socio-political relationships between actors and institutions in terms of socio-political factors such as position, education level, wealth, age and gender. Based on these findings, the second half of the chapter interrogated the change in power dynamics, considering the interaction between the practice of politics and the unfolding of the CBA project in the northern case study, *Kebelle* A. It demonstrated the current power imbalance of the *kebelle* and how the dominant group managed to remain predominant by relabelling itself as a new institution – i.e. CBO – and by justifying their control by using a discourse of environmental rehabilitation. During the implementation of the project, the group of young adults who were already socially and economically marginalised became even more isolated by the activity of area closure whereas women achieved a limited degree of participation in meetings. This was a result of the dominant group deeming women's participation unthreatening, in contrast to the status-quo challenging idea of land redistribution that the young adults constantly request.

As a result of the CBA project, *Kebelle* A managed to a large extent to restore a forest in the Choke Mountain but many young adults subsequently left the village, giving up their livelihoods. Given the evidence, we can see that CBA in Ethiopia is a complex, multi-voiced process which represents contrasting aspirations and conflicting imperatives and gives rise to a variety of outcomes at the end of the project with both winners and losers. However, the monitoring

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and evaluation report of SGP Ethiopia (2012) failed to capture this socio-political aspect of adaptive capacity and only focused on the physical environment as the outcome, describing the project as "generally successful" (2), "efficiently managed" (5) and "successfully reforested" (6). The thesis now moves to the next chapter to address 'to what extent do CBA projects change the current geometry of power of community' through examining the invisible politics of community leadership.

Chapter Eight.   The Invisible Politics of Community Leadership

Power and politics greatly determine the adaptive capacity of communities to climate change within community-based adaptation (CBA) projects. The four empirical chapters of this thesis address four different factors in the political arena of everyday life that affect the adaptive capacity of the case study communities. Chapter Five discussed the political legacies of Ethiopian history; Chapter Six analysed the politics of scale and indigenous knowledge; and Chapter Seven explored the internal power dynamics of local communities. In particular, Chapter Seven showed that the existing structures of the community were central to the decision-making processes of the CBA project in the northern case study community.

This final chapter examines the invisible politics of leadership in communities and their "underlying contexts and processes" (Bassett, 1988:453). In contrast to its northern counterpart, the project in southern Ethiopia was more transformative in the sense that the changes that occurred enabled new voices to be heard in public and new individuals to take on leadership roles. To some extent it escaped from the rigidity of pre-existing political relations within the community. Such a claim should not, however, be over-stated or over-generalised. The experience of people participating in the project demonstrates that CBA still tends to embrace the conventional structures of community but sometimes provides an opportunity to reshape its power relations. There is a contradiction here between CBA's claims about its potential for driving social transformation but its inherent tendency to enforce existing structures.

In order to consider this contradictory nature of CBA, this chapter draws attention to the politics of leadership. In such an historically hierarchical society,

the role of leaders is central to the socio-political dimensions of CBA projects and thus building adaptive capacity. During the fieldwork on which this thesis is based, it was repeatedly made clear by interviewees that leadership issues were almost synonymous with political issues in both key field sites. The politics of leadership existed before the projects began, are being redefined in the course of the projects and will continue after they ends. In most cases, however, these kinds of stories are 'hidden' or invisible because they are not explicitly part of the CBA projects. They reside in the space between written policy and the actual practice of everyday human interactions. In this context, it is important to understand the process through which leadership is legitimised and the place in which the process is carried out.

The neopatrimonial relationships are situated within multi-layered clientelistic networks and two of the layers in which these networks are found are (1) in between government officers and local leaders of community-based organisations (CBOs) and (2) between the leaders and the CBO members. Particularly in southern Ethiopia, neopatrimonial relationships hark back to the historic relationship between '*neftegna* and *balabbat*' and '*balabbat* and *gabbar*' respectively, as discussed in Chapter Five. Based on the findings of Chapter Seven (the socio-political components that affect local power dynamics), this chapter addresses how neopatrimonial relationships shape: the character of leadership in CBA projects, the community's internal politics and, therefore, the process through which the adaptive capacity is built.

Kebelle B in southern Ethiopia is used as the case study since it experienced a transformation of the key structures of community through the course of the project. Through this analysis, this chapter answers the questions: Who are the patrons and clients of this neopatrimonial systems? What are the outcomes that

patronage politics produce in this village? and eventually, research question 2b): To what extent do CBA projects redefine the geometry of power of community? To answer these questions, the chapter first discusses local people's perceptions of the politics of leadership. In particular, this is illustrated through discussions of elections and of nepotism. The chapter then moves on to the transformation of two different neopatrimonial relationships that are exemplified through the southern case study and considers the consequence of these issues in terms of the community's adaptive capacity. In so doing, it demonstrates what makes CBA complex is that challenging patriarchy in these leadership traditions might be normatively attractive, but environmentally problematic.

8.1 Politics of Community Leadership

Leadership in the Ethiopian highlands is often based on the management of neopatrimonial relationships with government officers and/or dominant groups in a village. In such an environment, local leaders tend to either swear an oath of loyalty (figuratively though) to government patrons or acquire social status through building their own patronage networks in a village. The CBA project in the village in southern Ethiopia shows both the former (enacted by the current leader) and the latter (enacted by the previous leader) model of leadership, whilst also illustrating a transformative change of the key structures of community. First, this section will briefly review the way people narrate their perceptions of leadership by contrasting the northern and southern villages of Ethiopia. Then it will discuss how neopatrimonial relationships are practised in the case study communities, firstly through the elections of the leaders of the CBOs and secondly through issues of nepotism.

Definition of Leadership

The way people define leadership shows its significance within the socio-political structures of the *kebelle*. First, the definition of leadership skills in the case study in northern Ethiopia is focused on perceived fairness, morality and honesty. A young adult explains, "If the *woreda* assigned leaders who are not corrupt, who are from the outside of *kebelle*... If the *timad* of land required for one person is identified, if the land allocation is fairly conducted... that would be good" (Interview DG-31). A farmer adds, "In the future, they [leaders] should be elected based on their morality, qualifications and experience. Their performance should be evaluated every year. They should be closely monitored and supervised in terms of their honesty" (DG-10).

Most of the leaders in *Kebelle* A also think that they were elected because they are trustworthy, educated or recognised in their socio-political networks. A leader of CBO DG explains, "Yes, I was elected as a leader because, first, people believe that I am trustworthy, and second, they consider me as a person doing a good job for people" (Interview DG-42). A secretary of CBO DG describes, "When the CBO was established, the *woreda* people said that the leaders should be ones who know how to handle financial resources. People elected us thinking that we do not embezzle their money and we can serve the CBO efficiently" (DG-41). It was clearly a post they undertook willingly, and in some cases with enthusiasm, because they were aware of the impact the project would bring about to the village and the role of leaders in this process. A local priest (and a treasurer of CBO DG) adds, "Based on the *woreda* procedure, the change of leaders [of a CBO] should be done every three years. However, since two of us are priests and honestly serving the CBO, the members reaffirmed us as leaders for another term. It is also painful to choose new leaders and teach them" (DG-23). The last

point, that it takes time and resources to train new leaders, is indicative of the way a conservative attitude to elite continuity is justified in apparently plausible rational ways that seem to have nothing to do with ideology.

In contrast, the leaders in *Kebelle* B insist that their positions were forced on them by the government. A chairperson of *Kebelle* B explains, "The *woreda* imposed upon me this position to serve the *kebelle* as a chairperson and it was neither my initiation nor my interest because this position takes so much of my time... And it is not salaried" (Interview DR-22). A former leader of CBO DR adds, "I did not want to be a leader of the CBO. The *woreda* assigned me and they brought the proposal to the CBO" (DR-20). A current leader of CBO DR echoes, "It was not me who wanted to be a leader... But it was them [not specifically defined]" (DR-21). Leadership is seen as a burden not a privilege in the south, partly because it is historically associated with collaboration with a distant (and to some extent colonial) alien power. To be a leader in the south is to feel obliged to the authority of that central power in Addis Ababa.

Alongside these differences in leaders' enthusiasm, there are also contrasting ideals around what makes good leadership. The definition of leadership skills in the southern community places great emphasis on strong leadership, the ability to command. A leader of CBO DR argues that strong, father-like leadership is required by leaders, saying,

> "*During the time of the previous leader, the CBO was weak. Under my leadership, the CBO is becoming strong... A leader of the CBO should act as a father of the CBO and has to show an ownership of the CBO and the project. He has to avoid his personal interests and be considerate. He should be in a position*

to teach and lead the CBO members and be able to handle the different opinions

of people" (Interview DR-21).

A chairperson of *Kebelle* B agrees, "The future of the CBO will be good if only the leader strongly leads the members" (DR-22). The sense here is that the 'strength' is required to overcome a natural position of reluctance among the population to participate and engage with the *woreda* and the CBO. In the south, it takes a strong leader to make things happen.

This perception is attested to by the way people assess their current leader of CBO DR. A chairperson of *Kebelle* B explains, "The current leader is educated compared to the previous one. He has a diploma and works better in documentation and financial recording... But he is not as strong as his predecessor" (Interview DR-22). A female farmer elaborates, "The leader calls for a meeting every 15 days, but the members are not coming these days... He is not calling upon the members seriously, for instance, using the *kebelle* militiamen. The previous leader was strong in calling upon the members. But the current leader is boastful and says that it is up to us whether we come or not. People are not interested in the current leadership" (DR-14). The implication is that the CBO leader does not have effective connections to the militia men, therefore has no control over them and cannot use them to coerce people into attending. A former militia man adds, "Last week after you left [after the focus group discussion], we had another meeting and discussed some issues. Then the leader reported [the *woreda* agricultural officer] about what we discussed. The officer told the leader to kick out anyone opposing your leadership" (DR-13). This shows that the current leader of the CBO is dependent on external government authority rather than carrying the people through his own charisma and respect.

Local perceptions of leadership in the southern case study have been built on geographical particularity. In particular, the colonisation during the Imperial era have reshaped the perceptions of leadership in a way that local leaders are forced to either confront or be compliant with local bureaucracy. This has also discouraged people to be a leader, compared to the northern counterpart.

Perceptions of Local Election Process

In Ethiopia, there is a system of elections at the *kebelle* and sub-*kebelle* levels. In the northern case study, local people's perceptions of the election process are that it is generally democratic and its outcome is not to be challenged as a feature of legal-rational state structures. A member of a *kebelle* council explains, "Yes, the election [of the CBO] was democratic. All members were happy and accepted the leaders by showing their hands" (Interview DG-10). A farmer echoes by saying, "The election is fair. People choose leaders they like to follow… At least I did so" (DG-12). However, such positive assessments are not universal. Particularly in the northern village, people freely express their opinions in public on who should be elected as a leader and are less inclined to hide their personal views. For instance, a commander of a militia team insists, "In the project committee, they did not elect better educated and experienced people. They did elections by friendship" (DG-08). A female farmer also complains, "Talented and open-hearted people were not elected in the election, if you have many relatives and families, you can be elected" (DG-17). This willingness to express public opinions in public is the most democratic aspect of these elections, particularly given that the electoral process itself is not unconstrained.

The election is not a secret ballot and it is generally attended by the government officers, which clearly has an impact on a process of 'voting by a show of hands'. A secretary of CBO DG explains the CBO's election process by saying, "Initially there were seven candidates. The CBO men and women gathered and elected three of us [a leader, secretary and treasurer] by voting, showing their hands… The leader got the highest number of votes, but he is illiterate and people said that the secretary and treasurer should be literate. That is why we were assigned. I completed grade 8" (Interview DG-41). A local priest (and a treasurer of CBO DG) adds, "People from the *woreda* and *kebelle* attended the election… At that time, we had 502 members and around 300 members attended the election to vote" (DG-23).

Moreover, the *woreda* and *kebelle* officers often get involved in the selection process of the election candidates. A officer of *Woreda* X explains, "We take care of the activities and performance of leaders of *kebelles*… But it depends on the votes of people. It depends on the activities of a chairperson and the needs of people in the *kebelle*" (Interview DG-38). But at the end of the interview he adds the 'invisible' side of the process,

> *"He was previously a deputy chairperson and now is an officially elected chairperson of the kebelle. We are aware that the kebelle is divided into two groups supporting the previous leader and the current leader… In fact, the woreda prefers the previous leader. The current one is too calm [not active enough]. In a short period of time we may nominate the previous leader as a new chairperson depending on his activities on the given tasks… With the interests of the woreda and the community" (Interview DG-38).*

Local populations are also aware of this quasi-democratic power to make appointments held by the *woreda* office. A local farmer explains,

> *"There were some disagreements between the leader and the woreda. The policeman and the woreda even disturbed the work of our monastery... [Researcher: Do you think that the woreda office can change the chairperson of the kebelle if they want to?] The woreda will not consult with us on the issue. This custom was abandoned during the Derg time. People have no actual power to select, but we still elect" (Interview DG-37).*

This shows that although there is a system of elections in place, a person cannot be elected as a leader if there is no support from the majority, even if they are selected and backed by the *woreda* office. That is to say, the procedure is still a mixture of top-down and bottom-up processing. The role of *woreda* government is clearly defined as supervising and guiding the administration of *kebelles* whilst acknowledging a certain, if not limited, degree of autonomy in local villages.

In the southern case study, the intervention of governments in the election process seems more complex. First, a former leader of CBO DR explains, "I did not want to be a leader of the CBO. The *woreda* assigned me and they brought the proposal to the CBO and then the CBO members approved me by seeing my experience and dedication... If the CBO rejected this, I could not have been elected. It is the community who accepted the proposal of the *woreda* and elected me with full accord" (Interview DR-20). A member of CBO DR agrees by saying, "Yes, he [the former leader of a CBO] was chosen by the *woreda* and approved by us because he is capable and strong" (DR-15). However, a female member of CBO DR has a slightly different view, "The leader was assigned by him [the *woreda*

agricultural officer]. He passed the decision and told us to accept the leader"
(DR-14). Another member of CBO DR adds, "Of course, the decision of the *woreda*
was greatly involved in the selection process of the leader" (DR-17).

Given this evidence, we can see that the local governments are generally
involved in the election processes of both case study communities, albeit with
different degrees of intervention. Local governments make no secret of the fact
that they are keen on having someone who is cooperative, if not compliant, with
them. This may be a consequence of the historically embedded distrust between
governments and peasant farmers throughout the history of Ethiopia, as
discussed in Chapter Five. A current leader of CBO DR concludes his interview by
saying, "I have become a leader because I have developed good relationships
with the *woreda* and strengthened the documentation system for the *woreda*"
(Interview DR-21). This then seems to be one key facet of leadership – the ability
to successfully manage relationships up the hierarchy with the *woreda* officials
and down the hierarchy with community members. Thus, this is a position that
clearly lends itself to patrimonial networks.

Nepotism and Leadership

The legitimacy of leadership depends on the support of dominant groups in
the village as much as on the process of election or the leader's attitude to the
law itself. Even where a leader is democratically elected there is tradition of
appointing supporters to local committees and this tradition is often inevitably
related to access to resources. This practice of nepotism creates a clientelistic
network within the community and is subsequently used to secure votes in their
constituency. In return, the group of supporters are given preferential access to

resources such as land and information and priority in the distribution of farming equipment.

Challenges to the governance of CBA are often related to this practice of nepotism. During the CBA projects, a number of people who were close to a chairperson of a *kebelle* or leaders of a CBO were given the information about the CBA project earlier than others. A young farmer complains,

> *"This is corruption. I paid the registration fee but received nothing. No tools, no beehive, not even a per diem for manual labour. I was told [about the CBO] later than people who are close to the leaders. I registered as soon as I was told. But they said all gifts are gone because it is on a first come, first served basis... I wanted my registration fee back and asked the leaders but they never gave me an answer" (Interview DG-31).*

Nepotism not only provided the leader's network with the opportunity to register as a member of CBO earlier, but gave them a better understanding of benefits of the project. A young farmer explains, "I was disadvantaged by the [CBA] project. They work through blood relations and I was not given a chance to be involved. I was excluded. I don't know what benefits they share. I think this is partiality" (Interview DG-13). This quotation also reminds us that these project practices are often as much about exclusion as inclusion.

The distribution of farming equipment, which was based on a first come, first served basis, is a clear illustration of the way nepotism affects the CBA projects. Forewarning of this activity was of great advantage. Some members who joined the CBO later than others, due to either their financial condition or uncertainty regarding its benefits, did not receive any equipment and were thus

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disappointed. A farmer complains, "Both my wife and myself are not members of the CBO. The leaders picked up their relatives, brothers and sisters first. They did not give me a chance to join the CBO... I did not want to join later as they serve on a first come, first served basis" (Interview DG-27). Another farmer adds, "Our *kebelle* is divided by corruption. When there is a conflict between people, the leaders and judges are in favour of their relatives and friends... It was the same when they distributed the benefits of the [CBA] project such as spades and apple trees" (DG-20). Seen from the perspective of 'fairness' there is an obvious basis to judge these practices critically. Seen from the perspective of politics, however, they represent an effective use of leadership skills through the maintenance of networks.

Figure 11. The office of Kebelle A in northern Ethiopia

Nepotism is a common accusation made by those who feel they lost out, but other explanations for the uneven distribution of information are also plausible. The geographical remoteness from the *kebelle* office (*Figure 11*), for instance, is

another reason that some people not receiving the information in an appropriate time. I met a number of people at the road construction site who rarely come to the *kebelle* office, unless there is a particular reason, as it takes two to six hours of walking depending on where they live. Some of them who did not join the CBO but who knew about the project told me that they heard about it at the local market (on Fridays) or churches (on Sundays). These places are generally where people gather and share information apart from the *kebelle* office. In particular, men discuss issues of the *kebelle* at restaurants or cafes near the market place, albeit infrequently. Women were rarely found at these places.

Local understandings of governance show how it is shaped by the socio-cultural norms of accountability, responsibility and legitimacy. A young farmer describes it as follows:

> *"For instance, there is a man in our neighbour who has six cattle and a huge farm land. He and his wife are members of the association [the CBO] and close to the kebelle leader. Although his wife is illiterate, whenever there are any training opportunities, she represents our gott and kebelle and attends... She never shares the information from the trainings with us though. I was told that it was not like this during the Derg time. Students at grade 9 and 10 used to give us necessary information and we shared it equally... When the EPRDF came and redistributed land, she invited the leaders and committee members with food and honey and then received more land... This is true to my knowledge"* (Interview DG-31).

Most people were aware of this practice of nepotism in the case study communities. One farmer grumbles, "When God gives us rain, it is equal for everyone. When money comes, it is distributed through blood relations" (Interview DR-12).

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Chabal and Daloz (1999) argue that this practice of nepotism is an indigenous form of governance, which is itself neither good nor bad. However, as discussed in Chapter Seven, this is also another way of consolidating the dominance of certain groups in a village, an outcome about which advocates of CBA tend to be more sceptical. Moreover, some in the community worry about the future implications of this practice. A young farmer says, "There will be corruption, if land is redistributed, through inviting people for food, bribing people and using their blood relations. With this condition, the size of land given to people will be different with each other. Probably the poor person ends up having less than half a *timad* only" (Interview DG-31). So, whilst it is of value to move beyond the kind of banal 'good governance' language that sees nepotism as inherently problematic because it does not accord with global norms of legitimate leadership, it is equally important to acknowledge the hostility that emerges to nepotism from within the community.

In summary, the practices of managing elections and of nepotism in relation to information, appointments and resources are often central to the real processes of securing and legitimising leadership in the case study communities. Through using these neopatrimonial strategies to secure the loyalty of supporters, both routes provide leaders with authority through the legal-rational structures of the state. At the same time, a significant degree of political influence is still determined by the local governments in this process. This aspect matters in the context of CBA because, although decisions are made within a community, either local governments or specific groups within the community often dominate the process for better access to resources. The influence of these leadership processes upon the CBA project will be further elaborated and exemplified through the case study in southern Ethiopia in the

following section that demonstrates the transformation of two different neopatrimonial relationships and its consequence on the community's adaptive capacity.

8.2   Game of Thrones: Whose Adaptive Capacity Matters?

CBA is centred on building adaptive capacity but is shaped by the political dynamics surrounding local communities. It is thus important to analyse CBA with a focus on the role, capacity and aspirations of actors who participate and benefit from it. Analysis must also consider a wider range of social institutions, which are culturally and historically formulated and built-in at every level of society. As discussed in Chapter Three, the theory of neopatrimonialism is relevant in understanding the socio-political forces in many parts of Ethiopia and in particular for providing "the heuristic foundation" for the southern case study (Hagmann, 2005: 515). The neopatrimonial approach is particularly meaningful in southern Ethiopia because of its engagement with the key features of historic community practices (the legacies of imperialism and colonialism) and 'modern' legal-rational state structures.

Neopatrimonialism in Ethiopia has a complex relationship to postcolonial theory. This is not only because there are critiques of the idea of neopatrimonialism that accuse it of being Eurocentric and colonial in its representation of African politics (Mustapha and Whitfield, 2011) but also because of the particularities of colonialism in Ethiopia. In relation to the former, it is acknowledged here that the framework of neopatrimonialism runs the risk of seeing African politics from the perspective of a single global norm, which casts Africa in its 'traditional' role of backwardness and criminality. But at the same time neopatrimonialism is an approach that can usefully be applied to

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many other parts of the world beyond Africa so does not necessarily single Africa out in the way critics suggest. In relation to the latter, the idea of southern Ethiopia as a space colonised *by Africans* within a nation-state that builds part of its identity around the idea of being the African space that was never colonised is always going to be complicated. However, empirically the case of *Kebelle* B certainly concurs with Bratton and Van de Walle's description: "In contemporary neopatrimonialism, relationships of loyalty and dependence pervade a formal political and administrative system and leaders occupy bureaucratic offices less to perform public service than to acquire personal wealth and status. The distinction between private and public interests is purposely blurred" (1994:458). Neopatrimonialism provides a set of ideas that seemed to fit very accurately to the observations made during the fieldwork.

Game of Thrones

The case study in southern Ethiopia faced a similar problem to its northern counterpart; a group of young adults in the *kebelle* opposed the area closure activity, which was organised by the CBO as part of the CBA project. The objection was based on the same reason as that given in the northern case study participants; the forest is largely used by young adults who do not generally possess enough private land and are thus most severely affected by its closure. One difference between the northern and southern case studies was that from the beginning young adults were actively called upon by the CBO in the south as it was looking for people with "physical strength" (Interview DR-13; 16). A former member of CBO DR explains, "I understand that the youths have less land. But we all generally suffer from the shortage of land. This land [the community forest] belongs to the government. Although this land is communal-based, no one controls it totally. Instead, we encouraged the youths and the poor

to join the CBO to bring changes to our environment and livelihoods" (DR-09). A number of young adults soon became members of the CBO and managed to obtain influence within the CBO, even though they were not part of the network of the man who was then the leader, a farmer who came from an older generation and had different interests and resources.

In neopatrimonial society, struggles in politics usually begin with the emergence of a group of new elites rather than the movement of sub-groups within the ruling party (Erdmann and Engel, 2007). This incites a marginalised and previously leaderless social group to obtain direct access to patronage (Erdmann and Engel, 2007). That is to say, the leadership of a reformed coalition usually comes from outside the incumbent group as the insiders in a ruling coalition are unlikely to promote political reform. This certainly was the case with the CBA project in southern Ethiopia. Whilst most young adults were sidelined by the CBO's dominant group, one female young adult who has a college degree managed to become a treasurer of CBO DR soon after the CBA project started. It was her individual initiative rather than an organised plan. The change occurred mainly because the CBO was in need of educated personnel for documenting and reporting. Effectively, this provided an entry-point for this more marginal group to start building up their own power-base. This brought about an opportunity for the group of young adults to transform the existing leadership of the CBO. This could also be analysed as evidence for the argument that neopatrimonial regimes are marked by the rapid turnover of political personnel to regulate rent-seeking and to prevent potential political rivals from developing their own networks.

The *woreda* agricultural office in the south, particularly its officer, was not in favour of the CBA project at the beginning. A former leader of CBO DR explains,

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"When he [the SGP national coordinator] came to visit our kebelle before the project was commenced, he [the woreda agricultural officer] told him [the SGP national coordinator] that the grant should not be directly transferred to the CBO since the leader is uneducated. But he [the SGP national coordinator] said that he will directly transfer the grant to the CBO and he hopes that the CBO members can learn from this practice even though they may make a mistake... This made him [the woreda agricultural officer] upset" (Interview DR-20).

Moreover, at the early stage of the project, the former CBO leader was encouraged by the SGP national coordinator to try to keep the financial autonomy of the CBO from the *kebelle* and *woreda* offices to secure the benefits of the CBO for himself and his supporters. When asked "Why was he [the *woreda* agricultural officer] unhappy with the former leader?", a member of CBO DR answers, "I don't know. You can ask him [the former leader]. I think he [the officer] wanted to have some financial benefits, such as per diems, from the project just like all other government officers... But the leader shut him out of the CBO and CBA project totally" (Interview DR-15).

A group of young adults from the CBO who opposed the area closure and the dominance of the former leader finally conspired against him in close cooperation with the *woreda* agricultural officer. Shortly afterwards, the former leader was accused of financial misconduct by those young adults and was subsequently discharged from the position by the *woreda* office. A chairperson of *Kebelle* B explains, "Initially there were some disagreements between the young CBO members and the former leader on the area closure activity... Once the *woreda* agricultural officer invited me to solve the problem, I found that there was the financial misconduct and that the former leader lacked financial

management skills" (Interview DR-22). A female farmer adds, "People say that he [the previous leader] embezzled the CBO money which was generated through the sale of agricultural products... During the audit, the *woreda* and *kebelle* officers made him resign" (DR-14). Another young member of CBO DR describes,

> *"It was based on the interests of the CBO. The CBO can promote a person and kick a person out. [Researcher: Wasn't it the woreda office's decision?] The opinion of the woreda is also involved. But if the members dislike the leader, they do not engage in development activities and meetings, so rather than keeping that kind of leader, it is better to make him resign. [Researcher: Why was he kicked out?] We were afraid of him whenever we found him in the office or community forest... The CBO could be in danger. It is better to kick him out. I supported the idea. After he left we are doing better work in the lowlands"* (Interview DR-17).

However, some members of the CBO argued that there was no internal discussion within the CBO on the issue. A militia man (a member of CBO DR and a brother-in-law of the former leader) argues, "We did not know how they changed the leader. The *woreda* decided and kicked him out. When we asked, they said that the decision was made based on the Articles of the CBO's constitution and was final. They did not accept our complaints" (Interview DR-19).

Another member of CBO DR insisted that the CBO's treasurer should be responsible for the financial misconduct, not the former leader, "The main problem was the lack of financial records, which is the treasurer's responsibility. The former leader wanted the treasurer to keep financial records every time they bought animals and equipment, but she was not happy... Later she mobilised a

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few members and brought the case to the *woreda* officer who was also not happy with our leader, accusing him of the financial misconduct whilst he was working in the community forest" (DR-15). The former leader of CBO DR agrees by saying,

> "*I quarrelled with the treasurer and told her not to report everything to the woreda agricultural officer. The CBO is independent and we have to make a decision by ourselves. But she did not agree with me… They accused me of making personal financial benefits from the construction of the CBO's new office. But I did not use the SGP grant for the construction. I managed to find another source of money for the office… This new leader is going to use the SGP grant for the new office… Based on the constitution of a CBO, they should have called a community meeting and held appropriate evaluations before kicking me out. But the woreda officer made the decision by himself and kicked me out without consulting the CBO members*" (Interview DR-20).

A former militia man supports the former leader's defence, "The previous leader listened to us in meetings… He just didn't execute some tasks given by the *woreda* officer… That was the problem" (Interview DR-13).

Because of their relations to higher levels of authority via the ruling party, Local government officers still rule supreme in many parts of southern Ethiopia. A leader of a One-to-Five network explains, "For me God and the government are comparable and their decisions must be accepted… The complaint is not right" (Interview DR-10). A farmer (and a former soldier) echoes, "Everything is good if it comes through the government… If I say something, it doesn't work. If the government brings something, we accept it. It is impossible to reject" (DR-11). So the transformation of the CBO (and with it the CBA project) was as much

about the relation between the new young leaders and the *woreda* office as it was about their capacity to transform their own community from within.

Though the authority of the new leaders rests on their ability to maintain good relations with the state, it is a relationship that they seek to deny publicly, in order to assert their own capacities as leaders. The current leader of CBO DR yet denies the accusation of complicity in the dismissal of his predecessor, "It was the decision of the CBO. The *woreda* gives us technical support only" (Interview DR-21). A treasurer of CBO DR adds, "The *woreda* does not have any influence on the CBO. Maybe a little at the stage of planning a project in finding appropriate activities. For instance, they suggested the omitting of poultry activities as there is a risk of attack by wild animals. The *woreda* cannot do anything without our consent" (DR-04). Meanwhile, the *woreda* agricultural officer refused to be interviewed.

In the meantime, a member of CBO DR alleges, "The new leader is smart, educated and has a diploma in clinical nursing... But it was the former leader who first brought him [the new leader] to the CBO as a member. He [the new leader] was more like an adopted son of the former leader. The former leader financially supported him [the new leader] during his schooling... Then the treasurer suggested him to the *woreda* officer as a new leader... So he betrayed his adoptive father" (Interview DR-15).

As a result of this move between the generations in the CBO, the members of the previous dominant group have become less active in the CBA project and gradually left the CBO. This minor political intrigue at the lowest level of the state brought about consequences for the CBA project which will be analysed

from two points of view in the following section: financial transparency and area closure activity.

Corruption: Financial Transparency

In the case study communities, most research participants were found accepting a certain degree of corruption from their leaders since they are aware that most of the leadership positions are voluntary and unpaid. They tend to turn a blind eye to the indirect benefits the leaders receive from aid or development projects. For some of them, this is also partially due to their clientelistic relationships with the leaders. In return for their disregard of corruption, they gain a certain degree of influence on specific matters directly related to their livelihoods (e.g. which parts of the forest are selected for area closure activity). In where the livelihoods of populations are solely dependent on a few economic sectors, the membership of a group like the CBO is one prominent way of securing earnings, if not directly, then indirectly. The case of the CBA project in southern Ethiopia shows the multi-layered clientelistic networks that work both upwards and downwards. In this context, corruption works as an apparatus that the patron (the *woreda* agricultural officer) uses to ensure that the clients (the current leaders of the CBO) are dependent upon him.

Accusations of corruption are often used by the government or by opposition as a political weapon of choice to undermine their opponent's credibility. A former militia man complains, "No, there has never been transparency in finance. For instance, this year we produced coffee seedlings and sold them for 12,000 Birr. After that we expected some benefits. But the [current] leaders gave each member only 35 Birr and shared the rest of money with the *woreda* office. They didn't tell us for what purpose the money was used… Most of us

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complained" (Interview DR-13). A female farmer agrees by saying, "Last week after you left [after the focus group discussion], the [current] leader asked the members to come and work for the CBO once a week, but people asked why we should suffer without benefits. The previous leader told us that all money is in a bank and the current leader says nothing... They gave us only 35 *Birr* this year. Some people were weeping and saying that they will only give us the money after we die" (DR-14). The former leader of CBO DR accuses the current leaders and the *woreda* agricultural officer of misusing the CBO's money by describing the case in detail,

> "There is government interference in the CBA project although the CBO has its own leaders and members. These days the management decisions are usually made by the woreda officer. [Researcher: Why does the woreda officer want to be involved?] Because of the financial benefits from the purchasing of animals and other project expenditures. The treasurer did not agree with my idea to exclude him and even communicated with him directly and misused the money... [Researcher: How did they misuse the money?] For instance, when animals need to be purchased for the animal fattening activity, the current leaders go to Chuko and Dilla markets with the officer rather than using the local market in Darra. They use a lot of money for per diems and transports... Moreover, if animals are purchased for 25,000 Birr, they write the price down as 35,000 Birr and make a deal with the seller to take 10,000 Birr... The CBO is supposed to be independent. If the woreda continues to interfere regarding financial expenditure, the problem is not going to be solved. [Researcher: Have you considered discussing this issue with the SGP office in Addis Ababa?] At some point, the CBO members made a consensus to tell the truth, but the woreda officer told us that if we say the truth, the project will be terminated and there will be no more projects coming" (Interview DR-20).

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Meanwhile, a young member of CBO DR argues back, "Some CBO members are not educated and do not understand financial issues. In principle, an audit is done and reported to the *woreda* once a year. When a CBO meeting is called, we also spend some money on coffee and the like. The members expect everything to be reported... I think there is no hidden work done in finance" (Interview DR-17). A treasurer of the CBO adds, "We are doing this work for our *kebelle* and *woreda*. I left my family behind and went for trainings to engage in community mobilisation. If I quit this job, I can earn more through trade activities. He [the SGP national coordinator] told us that the SGP grant should be regarded as an agricultural seed for a community and should not be used as per diem. So the CBO members have decided the per diem is 50 *Birr* (approximately less than USD 3). We have only 50 *Birr* for food and transport and get nothing else" (Interview DR-04).

As a result, the members of the CBO, mostly the supporters of the former leader, found that they were not benefitting from the CBA project under the current leadership. This has discouraged them from participating in the project. It also revealed that most young adults who just got married or have young children are busy working on their farm and pasturing their livestock, and thus tend to have much less time to participate in the CBO's activities compared to those who recently left the CBO. They are likely to be older and their children tend to be old enough to take care livestock, which allows some free time for them. The paradox here is that whilst on the one hand this account celebrates the capacity of an intervention like the CBA project to transform local political relations on the other it recognises that simple project goals are less likely to be delivered under the current leadership because older people have withdrawn from the project. In effect, the story endorses the view of some external funders

that it is better to turn a blind eye to the lack of democracy in local development projects than to put the project's goals at risk.

Area Closure: More Victims in a Newly Enclosed Area

Figure 12. The former site of area closure in Kebelle B

"If something is not used as what it is meant to be, it is a burden."

(A former leader of CBO DR, Interview DR-20)

As soon as the leadership was changed the CBO moved the site of area closure to the lowlands and reopened the previously enclosed area near the *kebelle*. Since then, the area has been heavily used for pastoral activities, not only because it was nearby but also because it was adequately reforested by then after a few months of area closure. The area has quickly become deforested again (See *Figure* 12). Moreover, the newly closed area was far away, three to four hours by foot,

from where most of people live. A young member of CBO DR describes the process:

> *"We had a series of discussions, made a decision and reported it to the woreda. Then the woreda gave us the land in the lowlands… We put it to a vote and the majority accepted the idea… [Researcher: But I heard that some people left the CBO after that decision] Nobody resigned after the decision was made. Rather, we used to work only once a week, but now twice a week. [Researcher: Isn't the newly enclosed area too far from your home?] No, only lazy people say so and they are lagging behind. We are hardworking"* (Interview DR-17).

However, a former member of the CBO argues to the contrary,

> *"The problem is that we had our community forest near the Ulaula river and now it has moved to the lowlands which is far away. When we go there, we do not have adequate food and safe water. Sometimes we need to spend a night there to guard the area without light or electricity. We are subjected to the attack of wild animals and mosquitos… Many people got disappointed and resigned and are not actively participating anymore… [Researcher: Was the decision made through consultation?] They had some discussions led by the new leader, but I didn't attend… Our leader is now kicked out and if we complain it will be reported to the woreda officer. I just do not participate anymore"* (Interview DR-09).

The phrase 'our leader' is a telling indication of how different factions within the community see this transformation of political leadership. There is little sense of a whole community project, rather the partisan interests of different

generations are shaping decision-making and ultimately therefore adaptive capacity.

Another problem revealed was that there are people living in this new closed area and they are in danger of being forcibly evicted from their land. A militia man (and a member of the CBO and a brother-in-law of the former leader) explains, "There are about 30 people living inside the area. They have been weeping as the CBO and the *woreda* told them to move out... This new leader moved the area closure to the lowlands, which is too far for us... That is why a number of people resigned" (Interview DR-19). Another former militia man adds, "There are a lot people who live in the enclosed area in the lowlands. Some people even joined the CBO... But they were told to move out and their livelihoods are in great danger" (DR-13). A leader of a One-to-Five network also complains, "The CBO is now meant only for the youths. Only the youths are allowed and actively participate. Who could walk to the farm in the lowlands every week? Only young and healthy people. Maybe my son could go, but not me" (DR-10).

However, a current leader of the CBO argues,

> *"Those people [who live in the newly enclosed area in the lowlands] are without land certificates and we [the CBO] sued them at the woreda court. The woreda justice officer ordered the people to move out. The woreda gave us 2,000 timad of land there. Five people refused the order and we will open a case against them as well. They will get imprisoned maybe for two years although they said that the land was inherited from their forefathers. We have successfully managed to make a number of people move out already through accusing them at the court" (Interview DR-21).*

Meanwhile, I tried to interview with people who live in the newly enclosed area, but all of them refused due to the sensitivity of the issue and referred me to the chairperson of the *kebelle* who explained the situation in detail:

> *"There are two kinds of people living there. Firstly, some people started living there more than 20 years ago and have legal land certificates. They have inherited land from their mothers. Secondly, some people moved to the lowlands over the last 10 to 15 years following the kebelle's development plan. They used to be our neighbours but moved to the lowlands due to the shortage of land. Then the woreda this year gave the land to the CBO for area closure and ordered all of them to move out. Now it is beyond our control... [Researcher: What is the status of people's livelihoods in the lowland?] Most of them are poor. Although the land is fertile, the life is not easy there. It is very hot and there are a number of wild animals and mosquitos. They work hard and have invested a huge amount of money and energy in it... [Researcher: Didn't the kebelle office and the CBO talk to the woreda about the issue?] The kebelle officers [who allocated the land for the people moved to the lowlands] are afraid of the woreda and not dare to report the situation. So, I have visited the land myself a couple of times to make a report and submitted it to the woreda... But the woreda officials ordered me to drive the people out by demolishing their houses and damaging their assets. For me, this sounds illegal... The problem is the kebelle officers. They should go to the woreda with the tangible and real information... People lived there for many years and some of them even inherited the land. But no one is forwarding their opinions to the woreda. The case is still going on. The woreda told them to continue farming until the case is settled. It is difficult to drive them out and it is illegal... I understand that the CBO is doing something good for the environment. I also understand why they wanted to move the farm to the lowlands. But it is*

causing another problem and putting some people's livelihoods in danger"

(Interview DR-22).

In summary, the consequence of the political turmoil between the dominant group and young adults was ultimately detrimental not only to the CBA project but also to a number of the poor households. The previous site of area closure became deforested again and the residents of the newly enclosed area are in danger of being forcibly evicted from their land. However, it is not easy to criticise those young adults who were previously marginalised from the decision-making processes of the CBO and have relatively weaker financial capacity (i.e. less land). They strongly believe the decision made regarding to the area closure is fair in that it enables them to make enough of a livelihood that there is no need for them to migrate to other regions for manual labour like those in the northern case study.

8.3   Conclusion

The practice of neopatrimonialism does not entirely rest on historical forms of authority but coexists with legal-rational legitimacy. Yet, despite the changes in political ideology and the market economy, there has been remarkable continuity in the characteristics of politics in Ethiopia. Informal relationships between patrons and clients remain prevalent and manifest themselves in notable levels of corruption and nepotism in which government officers and local leaders offer rent-seeking opportunities to other political elites or supporters in return for their support (Gray and Whitfield, 2014). In this context, the practice is based on the idea theorised by Weber and the prefix 'neo' just "serves to emphasise that we are no longer in a traditional context" (Blundo and Médard, 2002: 10 in Bach and Gazibo, 2012:11). Both formal and informal structures of

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Kebelle B in southern Ethiopia are intricately interwoven in a way that ensures the submission and loyalty to patrons. That is to say, the concept of neopatrimonialism is based on not only the patriarchal values of society, but also the rationally managed exchange of service between patrons and clients. When the former leader of the CBO failed to exchange services with the *woreda* agricultural officer in this manner the relationship breaks down and, as a result he was replaced by someone more compliant – even though this involved transforming the 'internal' political relationships within the community by marginalising an older elite and replacing them with younger, less well connected individuals.

In understanding a society, it is important to analyse not only the political influence that actors wield through their relationships, but also the context in which their capacity to steer change is exercised. The case study in southern Ethiopia shows that there are ongoing political dynamics in the multi-layered clientelistic networks around communities. The CBA project has given rise to transformability in the political arena, that is to say, a transformation of the community's decision-making process and leadership, that has subsequently affected the community's adaptive capacity – in this case quite possibly in negative ways.

As the consequence of this political turmoil between the dominant group and the young adults, the former site of area closure reopened and became bare land again, and the residents of the newly enclosed area are in danger of being forcibly evicted from their land. However, the new leadership strongly believe that the decision made regarding the area closure was less of an affect upon their livelihoods. As Van de Walle (2001) argues, the clientelistic system makes governance *politically resilient* but often economically and environmentally

irrational. In this context, neopatrimonialism is still a useful paradigm for understanding local politics in post-1991 federal Ethiopia's socio-cultural landscape (de Waal, 2015). In this thesis, this analysis of how important leadership is within the CBA projects has only been possible through understanding the 'invisible' politics of community, which existed before the CBA projects began, are being redefined in the course of the project and will continue after they end.

Leadership matters precisely because of the political resilience of clientelism, and this is something that organisations seeking to intervene in environmental management need to acknowledge. What makes it complex, however, is that challenging patriarchy in these leadership traditions might be normatively attractive, but environmentally problematic. To return to the over-arching question here we can ask to what extent CBA projects change the geometry of power of community? Clearly the project provided the resources that made it worthwhile for the *woreda* officer to collaborate with the new younger political challengers in overturning the existing socio-political dominance of locality. Yet, other ideas of power, primarily national-scale multi-layered clientelistic networks remain the structure within which such transformative changes at the local level occur. What looks like transformation locally is continuity nationally. The paradox here is that whilst on the one hand this account enjoys the capacity to transform local political relations on the other it recognises that simple project goals are less likely to be delivered. In practice, it supports the view of some donor agencies that it is better to turn a blind eye to the lack of democracy in local development projects than to put the project's goals at risk.

Chapter Nine.   Conclusion: Towards a Recognition of Politicised Communities

> *"I understand that the land has to be protected and trees should grow... But there*
> *is a shortage of [private] land... Now, we, the young adults, have no access to the*
> *community forest [because of the project]. This is inadequate for us."*
> *(A young farmer, Interview DG-11)*

This conclusion sets out to identify the key arguments made in the thesis and to draw them together. In so doing, it seeks both to summarise specific theoretical conclusions and to outline the links between the theory and the empirical materials laid out in the thesis. Ultimately the conclusion recapitulates the consequences of the analysis of the case studies presented in the thesis for the practice of Community-Based Adaptation (CBA).

CBA is a community-led intervention, which seeks to address climate change through participatory approaches, based on communities' priorities, knowledge and capacities. Particular emphasis is placed both on integrated adaptation measures capable of eliciting local knowledge and on understanding complex socio-ecological systems (Ensor et al., 2016). CBA, in this thesis, is also about development processes that bring participatory decision-making to the centre of climate change adaptation. Decision-making processes likewise may be about governing communities as much as increasing adaptive capacity. Given that communities are shaped by conflicting values and contrasting aspirations, CBA comes to be seen as a complex, multi-voiced process which gives rise to a variety of outcomes.

The first key argument developed through the thesis is that power dynamics are inherent to the working out of CBA projects. The stated goal of the projects is to help villagers to cope with the consequences of climate change through their own institutions and actions. This thesis, however, argues that the CBA projects are also a crucible for competition over rights and the pursuit of differential access to resources in complex socio-ecological systems. That is to say, CBA is an intervention that forces us to question the usefulness of pre-formulated understandings of community-based development as context-free and apolitical. Different actors, institutions, environments, ideas, traditions and hopes shape the activities of CBA in different places as well as the variety of outcomes. In order to address this, the thesis has analysed the politicised narratives that emerged through a study of two CBA projects funded through the Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Ethiopia. In particular, it has attended to the ways community members narrated their own experiences of the projects.

In the account of a young farmer quoted in the previous page, for example, it is evident that his complaint makes no explicit mention of politics, but on further analysis it shows how political the changes the CBA project requires are. The conflicting values and contrasting aspirations of the young farmer's situation are familiar from accounts by others cited in this thesis: environmental rehabilitation (climate change adaptation), land shortages and socio-political stratification are inherently divisive. They are therefore political issues. The thesis has pursued the idea that though everywhere is different, power dynamics are important in every community. Although CBA is presented as outside politics, it is the local contexts and wider political relations that shape the way it is implemented and the outcomes of the projects.

A second, subsidiary argument that flows from the first is that power relations are seldom symmetrical. The decision-making processes of the CBA projects are frequently dominated by a few members or groups. Critical analysis of the power dynamics of communities is therefore necessary. In an era of shrinking international development budgets and rising climate change concerns, international donor agencies are increasingly referring to the need for practice to come 'from the community'. It is the task of academic work to interpret community action in the light of field research. In order to accomplish this task, the thesis has demonstrated the need for a flexible, context-sensitive and power-conscious analytical framework to evaluate CBA. It has then synthesised *resilience thinking* and *political ecology* to produce a conceptual hybrid that strengthens the socio-political dimensions of the former and the policy-relevant dimensions of the latter. The thesis aspires to make a distinctive contribution to the field of studies of community development in general, and studies of CBA in particular, by developing an analytical framework that foregrounds underlying contexts and both local and national politics.

Using this lens, the thesis has analysed the dynamics of two interrelated aspects of CBA at different levels, or scales, of adaptive governance. First, it has examined control of land as a central organising feature of Ethiopian governmentality at the national level. It has argued that three successive Ethiopian regimes over two hundred years have deployed control over land to steer the behaviour of the peasantry. As a result, a number of rural communities in Ethiopia have never been internally equal or fully democratic, but instead have consistently been hierarchical and internally divided in terms of rights and resources. Peasant farmers have not merely tolerated this inequality; they have given their consent and support to hierarchical structures, in part because these

connect villages to a distant central government. Such relationships shape the way CBA works out in 21st century Ethiopia.

The second aspect relating CBA to governance operates at a more local scale. The thesis has offered a political account of adaptive capacity during the time the CBA projects were implemented in two case study communities in the Ethiopian highlands. Attention was given to the details of the ways in which different individuals and interest groups within these communities articulate their experiences of the projects. The research participants were not regarded as a homogeneous component of a single-voiced community, but as complex social actors with a variety of forms of social, ecological, cultural and political assets and aspirations. The case studies reveal that the CBA projects gave rise to a variety of outcomes, with both winners and losers. Some people gained a significant amount of political influence through their participation in the CBA projects because of the extent to which the structures of community are inscribed into the way in which the projects are implemented. That is to say: participation in the CBA projects is a product of a politically-conflicted, economically-varied and culturally-imposed social order. CBA has been conceptualised less as a set of recipes or procedures geared to an agreed set of climate-related outcomes and more as a visible manifestation of invisible and contested social relationships infused with diverse expressions of power. This demonstrates how new theorisations can be brought to bear on the empirical stories from the case studies in Ethiopia. The practical consequences are shown to include, significantly, a recognition amongst those who are expected to deliver CBA that, though it can be an important opportunity to bring social reform to communities, it can also promote inequality and maintain the political status quo, with all its existing complexities and social injustices.

9.1   Summary of Findings

By bringing together resilience thinking with a political ecology approach, the thesis has shown that the current practice of CBA will have limited long-term success. This is because it is conceptually under-developed, depending on an unrealistically depoliticised understanding of the communities involved. CBA is currently thought of primarily as a type of development practice with agreed goals; but it is also a redeployment by powerful actors of ideas of progress and development that serve their own interests. The thesis has taken a critical approach, treating CBA as a discourse and seeking to analyse the relationships of power, scale and knowledge that underpin the production and operation of that discourse, thereby revealing their political nature. It has analysed the standard or orthodox theoretical foundations of CBA, showing how the participatory development (PD) discourse and the concept of resilience came together to formulate the notion of CBA. It has then conceptualised CBA through the alternative lens of political ecology, developing the argument that this approach responds to the weaknesses associated with resilience thinking notably its limited capacity for political analysis. It has approached the research setting not as a paradigmatic site for the analysis of a particular process, but as a location from which to build theories that might be productively applied elsewhere. The thesis has intervened in current conceptual debates to make three theoretical contributions to the field of research on CBA.

The first of these conceptual innovations is to understand participation and empowerment in specific local communities without neglecting the politics and wider structures in which these local communities are embedded. Far from being purely 'local', CBA projects are part of a vertically nested hierarchy of scales, so it is necessary not to treat the local in isolation from regional, national and even

international relationships. The thesis has taken this injunction seriously and analysed the assumption that the idea of 'the local' has itself become hegemonic in some development discourses and needs to be treated more critically. The role of 'the local' in development practice should be determined in relation to other scales. The thesis has responded to this paradox by analysing the dynamics of specific CBA projects without losing sight of the dynamics of regional, national and global scales in terms of decentralised decision-making, effective knowledge management and participatory processes. This – rather than merely stressing the physical impacts of climate change at the local village level – is the key to identifying appropriate solutions for Ethiopian peasant farmers.

In answering the research question 1a), 'how are the socio-political structures of a community constructed?', the thesis has questioned the assumption of social equality that characterises CBA projects. It has addressed, in Chapter Five, how three successive Ethiopian regimes have deployed control over land to steer the behaviour of the Ethiopian people, particularly the peasantry, over the past two hundred years. It has demonstrated that a considerable number of rural communities in Ethiopia have never been internally equal or fully democratic but instead have consistently been hierarchical and internally divided in terms of rights and resources. In particular, it has argued that peasant farmers have given their consent and support to strongly hierarchical structures, which have often connected villages to a distant central government. The belief that such inequality cannot be challenged is a legacy of Ethiopian history. This history has been examined in order to show why it is so hard to apply some of the assumptions of CBA to communities in Ethiopia.

The thesis has provided an historical outline of the ways in which the land tenure system in Ethiopia has been established, promoted and maintained – partly through the lens of authoritarian governmentality (Dean, 2010). It has shown how ideas from imperial administration and two post-revolution regimes have all sought to ensure the voluntary participation of the peasantry in land management in ways that best suit the elites. The policy of state ownership of land has been retained, and rural peasants have continued to accept that their land holdings were not permanent property but temporary allocations that can be reduced, if not confiscated, by government at a moment's notice. The politicisation of land has made peasants increasingly dependent on the state and its directives and more easily manipulated, particularly when they fear another famine. The memory of the coercive power of the state is pertinent to the behaviour of peasants and so to the current practices of CBA. This approach has reinforced the existing structures of the society to such an extent that, despite a verbal commitment to bottom-up development practices, the reality is still one in which, in practice, higher tiers of governance retain their primacy.

A second analytical contribution of the thesis is to link CBA with the idea of systems resilience. This defines communities and their surrounding environment as complex socio-ecological systems. In such systems, all components of the systems are intricately interconnected (Berkes et al., 2003). The definition of community, in this thesis, is a group of people who share similar socio-political interests that are shaped by differences and competition in terms of access to rights and resources. Thus to understand communities it is necessary to question representation, authority, governance and accountability among multiple and contradictory constituencies and alliances (Li, 2004). The notion of adaptive capacity – central to resilience thinking – involves cross-level and cross-scale activities that aim to formulate an overarching management

system to guide climate change adaptation. This is conceived holistically, bringing together knowledge of systems, studies of institutional linkages and collective action in response to climate change (Folke, 2006; Walker and Salt, 2006). Considering adaptive capacity in terms of resilience thinking also implies the ability to respond to change and transform systems into more desirable states.

In answering the research question 1b), 'to what extent do socio-political dynamics within and around a community shape the local accounts of adaptive capacity and with what consequences?', attention has been drawn, in Chapter Six, to the socio-political accounts of adaptive capacity which emerged during the time CBA projects were implemented in the two villages in the Ethiopian highlands. The thesis has argued that the scale on which CBA is configured and the way indigenous knowledge is regulated represent conflicting values and contrasting aspirations on the part of different actors and institutions. This calls for increased concern with the democratic content of community (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003; Watts and Peet, 2004). In particular, the thesis has demonstrated how the socio-political structures of community shape the building of adaptive capacity through CBA projects in the case study communities.

In a literal sense, there is a degree of consensus around the *kebelle* as the scale of 'community' between government and citizens – i.e. the scale of socio-ecological systems – even if the administrative purpose of the *kebelle* is different. As the lowest level of government, most ordinary Ethiopian citizens have contact with the *kebelle* administration on an everyday basis. At the same time, the *kebelle* has complex governance structures through which locally organised institutions and those of the state government are intricately interwoven. The

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kebelle system has been used as a security apparatus by both the *Derg* and the EPRDF regimes. Organising CBA projects at the *kebelle* level may create an opportunity to build administrative independence with a degree of local democracy, but it also reveals the intention of the Ethiopian government to keep local villages under surveillance whilst filling the financial gap in local development. Ethiopian citizens are well aware of this security role of *kebelle*. An individual's definition of 'community', the thesis has argued, is significantly dependent on their socio-political milieu. Individual definitions of community, "a combination of critical perspectives and the hard-won insights distilled from field work" (Rocheleau, 2008:716), have been used to critique the homogenising discourse of community.

Adaptive governance of CBA organises climate change adaptation by drawing on indigenous knowledge and experience. The thesis has shown that most peasant farmers in the case study communities believe that climate change is happening because of the effect of their livelihood activities such as logging, cattle feeding and charcoal production. This idea is neither entirely indigenous nor necessarily correct, but has been extensively used to legitimise the area closure activity of the CBA projects. Access to knowledge reflects the political capacity of different actors and institutions. It calls for increased concern with social justice in the analysis of environmental change as a specific component of systems resilience.

The third analytical contribution of this thesis is to weave political ecology's understanding of relational power into resilience thinking in order to rethink questions of politics in the analysis of CBA (Foucault, 2009[1977]; Haugaard, 2002; Scott, 2001). Here politics is the (generally public) dialogue about the rules (both formal laws and less formal social regulations) by which a society lives and

operates and through which scarce resources are allocated. This is a recognition of the need to improve understanding of power relations in communities in order to respond flexibly and collectively to climate disturbances in complex socio-ecological systems.

In answering the research question 2a), 'who participates in the decision-making processes of CBA and how are their identities determined?', Chapter Seven of the thesis highlighted the way that actors and institutions deploy various political assets around the structures of community to compete over access to resources linked to CBA projects. It has examined the intra-community politics and the simultaneous decentralisation and recentralisation of power through the activity of area closure in the northern case study.

The lives of peasant farmers are characterised by a complex set of norms and rules that determine their place in the structures of community. These structures are bound up in a multifarious web of relationships between actors and institutions in terms of socio-political factors such as position, education level, wealth, age and gender. Based on these findings, the thesis has interrogated the change in power dynamics, considering the interaction between the practice of politics and the unfolding of the CBA project in the northern case study (*Kebelle* A). It has demonstrated the current power imbalance of the *kebelle* and how the dominant group managed to remain predominant by relabelling itself as a new institution – i.e. Community-Based Organisation (CBO) – and by justifying their control by using a discourse of environmental rehabilitation. During the implementation of the project, the group of young adults who were already socially and economically marginalised became even more isolated by the activity of area closure whereas women achieved a limited degree of participation in meetings. This was a result of the dominant group deeming women's

participation unthreatening in contrast to the status-quo challenging idea of land redistribution that the young (male) adults constantly request.

In answering the research question 2b), 'to what extent do CBA projects change the geometry of power of a community?', Chapter Eight of this thesis examined the ongoing political dynamics in the multi-layered clientelistic networks around the case study communities. In understanding a society, the thesis has argued, it is important to analyse not only the political assets that actors gain through their relationships but also the context in which their capacity to steer change is exercised. The case study in southern Ethiopia (*Kebelle* B) has shown that there are ongoing political dynamics in the multi-layered clientelistic networks around local communities. The CBA project gave rise to transformability in the political arena, that is to say, a transformation of the community's decision-making process and leadership that subsequently affected the community's adaptive capacity – in this case quite possibly in negative ways.

The practice of neopatrimonialism does not entirely rest on historical forms of authority but coexists with legal-rational legitimacy. Yet, despite the changes in political ideology and the market economy, there has been remarkable continuity in the characteristics of politics in Ethiopia. Informal relationships between patrons and clients remain prevalent and manifest themselves in notable levels of corruption and nepotism in which government officers and local leaders offer rent-seeking opportunities to other political elites or supporters in return for their support (Gray and Whitfield, 2014). The concept of neopatrimonialism is based not only on the patriarchal values of society but also on the rationally managed exchange of service between patrons and clients. When the former leader of CBO DR failed to exchange services with the *woreda* agricultural officer in this manner, the relationship broke down, and as a result,

he was replaced by someone more compliant – even though this involved transforming the 'internal' political relationships within the community by marginalising older elites and replacing them with younger, less well connected individuals.

The clientelistic system, as Van de Walle (2001) argues, makes governance politically resilient but often economically and environmentally irrational. *Kebelle* A managed to a large extent to restore a forest in the Choke Mountain (See *Figure 13*), yet many young adults subsequently left the village, giving up their livelihoods. Meanwhile, as the consequence of this political turmoil in *Kebelle* B, the former site of area closure reopened and soon became bare land again (See *Figure 14*), and the residents of the newly enclosed area have been in danger of being forcibly evicted from their land. Given this evidence, we can see that CBA is a complex, multi-voiced process which represents contrasting aspirations and conflicting imperatives and gives rise to a variety of outcomes at the end of the project, with both winners and losers. However, the monitoring and evaluation report of SGP Ethiopia (2012) failed to capture this socio-political aspect of adaptive capacity and only focused on the physical environment as the outcome, describing the project as "generally successful" (2), "efficiently managed" (5) and "successfully reforested" (6).

Figure 13. The site of area closure in Kebelle A

Figure 14. The site of area closure in Kebelle B

Leadership matters precisely because of the political resilience of clientelism, and this is something that organisations seeking to intervene in environmental

management need to acknowledge. What makes it complex is that challenging patriarchy in these leadership traditions might be normatively attractive, but is environmentally problematic. To return to the research question 2b), 'to what extent do CBA projects change the geometry of power of a community?', the CBA project in southern Ethiopia (*Kebelle* B) provided the resources that made it worthwhile for the *woreda* officer to collaborate with the new younger political challengers in overturning the existing socio-political dominance of locality. Yet, other power relations, primarily national-scale multi-layered clientelistic networks, remain the structure within which such changes at the local level occur. What looks like transformation locally is continuity nationally. There is a paradox here. On the one hand this transformative account enjoys the capacity to change local political relations, on the other it recognises that simple project goals are less likely to be delivered. In practice, it supports the view of some donor agencies that it is better to turn a blind eye to the lack of democracy in local development projects than to put the project's goals at risk.

9.2   Critical Reflections

In promoting the concept of 'politicised communities', the thesis has engaged with the political legacies of Ethiopian history, competing scales and knowledge of the environment, varied power dynamics of the communities and the politics of local leadership in the multi-layered structures of adaptive governance. In so doing, the thesis has contributed a sympathetic critical analysis, rather than a dichotomous view of whether it works or not, to the field of research on CBA. There is a wider set of reflections to be considered at the end of this research project. The concept of 'politicised communities' is not a theory that seeks to explain all instances of community-based development approaches; rather it seeks to provide a framework for studying these processes. The thesis

as a whole has developed concepts that can be employed to analyse diverse settings and address the power dynamics that give rise to a variety of outcomes.

These socio-political accounts have been interpreted in the light of field research that seeks to understand complex socio-ecological systems. In an era of shrinking international development budgets and rising climate change concerns, international donor agencies are increasingly referring to the need for practice to come 'from the community'. Many of the attempts to find a formula for community-based development falter when they are confronted by the heterogeneity of communities. Different actors, institutions, environments, ideas, traditions and hopes shape the activities of CBA in different places. CBA increasingly comes to be seen as a complex, multi-voiced process that forces us to question about power, justice and democracy in the context of environmental change.

There are aspects of this thesis which might be undertaken differently if the opportunity arose again. For example, the accounts of the CBA projects the thesis collated are mainly drawn from the peasant farmers' perspectives and are thus complicit with a silence on the perspectives of (CBA) field practitioners who monitor and evaluate the projects. The thesis was written from the perspectives of the local populations and could not do justice to the autonomous perspectives of actors in NGOs and on the donor side, whose own views on the aspects of CBA also merit attention and reflection. This should be noted in view of the 'ivory tower syndrome' prevalent in political ecology, that is to say, it is better at criticising the status quo than developing a feasible or practical blueprint for policy-makers to address the future.

Political ecology tends to advocate structural changes in the relations of production. These changes are both profound and radical and (as such) alien to the more modest ambitions of most real world policy-makers. Political ecologists believe that the sources of environmental changes are rooted in the political and economic dimensions of society. Accordingly, they argue for the need of "the far-reaching changes to local, regional and global political-economic processes" (Bryant and Bailey, 1997:3). These changes, however, require a substantial amount of political effort because they inevitably involve the transformation of highly unequal power relationships upon which the present system is based. This is why political ecologists have been sceptical about the concept of sustainable development, which is built on the 'business-as-usual' agenda (Peet et al., 2011). The concept of political ecology sees resolving environmental problems as a basis for radical change in the context of the developmentalist onslaught (Escobar, 1996). Such a position would seem easier to sustain at an academic conference than at an NGO workshop.

Is it possible to bridge this gap between theory and practice, between political analysis and practical action? This thesis opens up some key practical questions for the future. As participatory development ideas are progressively incorporated into CBA, the concept of participatory monitoring and evaluation (Estrella and Gaventa, 1997) should also be revived. CBA projects might then begin to incorporate a process of critical evaluation based on the ideas considered throughout this thesis. Practitioners could be trained to apply this research methodology as part of the project monitoring and evaluation process. Although it would undoubtedly be a challenge to find the time and resources for such ethnographically informed project assessment, it could be put into practice by reducing a number of CBA projects implemented in a country – that is to say, 'quality, not quantity'. In Ethiopia, for instance, 54 projects were being

implemented in 2015 alone, by only two members of SGP staff. The pay-off would be more realistic project design and, ultimately, more effective projects. In a field so critical to our global future, such a development would be a step in the right direction.

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Appendix 1. List of Interviewees

Name	Gender	Age	Job	Place	Remarks
DG–01	M	48	Farmer, cashier of CBO	His yard	
DG–02	M	48	Farmer, chair of CBO	His yard	
DG–03	F	30	Housewife	Her husband's yard	
DG–04	M	26	Farmer	Common field	
DG–05	F	25	Farmer, housewife	Road construction site	
DG–06	M	40	Farmer, commander of militia	Road construction site	
DG–07	M	48	Farmer, militia	Road construction site	Previous leader of *kebelle*
DG–08	M	40	Farmer, militia	Road construction site	Commander of the militia team
DG–09	F	34	Housewife	Road construction site	
DG–10	M	33	Farmer	Road construction site	One of leaders at *kebelle* level
DG–11	M	25	Farmer, militia	Road construction site	Development team leader
DG–12	M	25	Farmer	Near his house	
DG–13	M	30's	Farmer	Hill where he herds his cattle	
DG–14	F	40's	Housewife, farmer	In front of the *kebelle* office before the meeting of women	Leader of women's league
DG–15	F	45	Housewife, farmer	In the field with her husband	Leader of women's league
DG–16	M	24	Kebelle administrator	DG–01's house	
DG–17	F	40	Housewife, farmer	Near her house	
DG–18	F	45	Housewife, farmer	Road construction site	
DG–19	F	38	Farmer	Road construction site	Leader of One-to-Five network
DG–20	M	36	Farmer	Road construction site	
DG–21	M	52	Farmer	Road construction site	Representative of *kebelle*
DG–22	M	55	Farmer	Near his house	Leader of *gott*
DG–23	M	32	Farmer, priest	DG–16's House	Deputy leader of *gott* / Casher of lower *kebelle* CBO
DG–24	M	25	Housewife, farmer	Next to her house	
DG–25	F	15	Student	Near her house	

DG-26	F	51	Farmer	Near her house	
DG-27	M	50	Farmer	Road construction site	
DG-28	M	35	Diaqon (pre-priest)	Road construction site	
DG-29	M	28	Housewife	Near his house	
DG-30	F	18	Farmer	Near her house	Divorced
DG-31	F	24	Farmer	Road construction site	
DG-32	M	35	Farmer	Road construction site	
DG-33	M	65	Farmer	Near his house	
DG-34	M	70	Farmer	Near his house	
DG-35	M	22	Farmer	Near his house	
DG-36	M	56	Farmer	Road construction site	
DG-37	M	35	Farmer	Road construction site	
DG-38	M	26	*Woreda* agricultural officer	Near the office	
DG-39	M	35	Farmer	My accommodation	*Gott* leader and vice chair of *kebelle*
DG-40	M	45	Farmer	*Kebelle* office	Leader of kebelle
DG-41	M	29	Merchant	A local pub	Secretary of CBO
DG-42	M	47	Farmer, merchant	My accommodation	Leader of CBO, former soldier
DR-02	M	45	Farmer, militia	Near his farm	
DR-03	F	40	Farmer	Near her house	Leader of One-to-Five network
DR-04	F	25	Housemaid		Casher of CBO
DR-05	M	30	Student	His house	Secretary of One-to-Five network, judge of *kebelle* court
DR-07	F	40	Housemaid		
DR-08	F	30	Farmer, merchant		CBO member, leader of One-to-Five network
DR-09	M	37	Farmer		Committee member of *kebelle* / Land administration officer
DR-10	M	38		His house	Leader of One-to-Five network
DR-11	M	56	Farmer	His house	Former soldier
DR-12	F	25	Farmer	His house	
DR-13	M	30	Farmer		Former militia man
DR-14	F	25	Farmer		

DR-15	F	25	Merchant		Wife of former leader of CBO, member of women's league
DR-16	F	20	Farmer	*Kebelle* office	Former student
DR-17	F	20's	Farmer, student	*Kebelle* office	
DR-18	F	45	Farmer, merchant		Member of women's league, widow
DR-19	M	29	Farmer, militia	Former leader of CBO's house (His brother in law)	Member of One-to-Five network
DR-20	M	40	Former leader of CBO	His house	Leader of One-to-Five network, EPRDF party cadre
DR-21	M	22	Student		Leader of CBO, executive committee member of the electoral board
DR-22	M	50's	Farmer	My accommodation	Chairperson of *kebelle*
DP-01	M	37	*Woreda* officer	*Woreda* office	
DP-02	M	41	*Woreda* officer	*Woreda* office	
DP-03	F	32	*Woreda* officer	*Woreda* office	
DP-04	M	40	*Kebelle* officer	*Kebelle* office	
AA-01	M	56	SGP Ethiopia national coordinator	SGP Ethiopia office	
AA-02	F	34	SGP project administrator	SGP Ethiopia office	
AA-03	M	45	NGO worker	Field	
AA-04	M	42	NGO worker	Field	
AA-05	M	32	NGO worker	Field	
AA-06	M	59	NGO worker	WFP Tanzania office	

Appendix 2. Focus Group Discussion Topics of Interest

1.   Introduction

   1.1   Greetings and introduction of the researcher and the research

            (Purpose, format, duration, consent, confidentiality and rights)

   1.2   Any questions before starting the discussion

2.   Local environment and climate change

   2.1   Describe any differences of where you live between the past and

            now

   2.2   Describe your community

   2.3   Discuss about any problems of where you live (particularly, in

            relation to weather) that you concern

3.   Livelihoods

   3.1   Discuss any changes or problems of your livelihoods (maybe in

            relation to section 2.3)

   3.2   Where do you graze your animals these days?

4.   The CBA project

   4.1   Describe the project

   4.2   Tell us about any stories you experienced or heard about the

            project

   4.3   Discuss any changes, benefits and disadvantages made by the

            project to you, families and communities

Appendix 3. Interview Questions

1.   Introduction

    1.1   Greetings and introduction of the researcher and the research (Purpose, format, duration, consent, confidentiality and rights)

    1.2   Any questions before starting the interview

2.   Local environment and climate change

    2.1   Introduce where (the environment) you live (e.g. weather, land, forest, water sources, rainy and dry season, wind, temperature, etc.)

    2.2   Describe any differences of where you live between the past and now

    2.3   Describe your community

    2.4   Discuss about any problems of where you live (particularly, in relation to weather) that you concern

    2.5   Why do you think that problems have happened and what shall you prepare for that?

3.   Livelihoods

    3.1   Introduce your family members and their jobs (main income sources)

    3.2   Describe your activities of a day/season/year

    3.3   Discuss any changes or problems of your livelihoods (maybe in relation to section 2.4)

    3.4   Where do you graze your animals these days?

4.   **The CBA project**

    4.1   Describe the project

    4.2   Tell us about any stories you experienced or heard about the project

    4.3   Are you a member of CBO? Who are members of CBO in your family?

    4.4   Describe your participation in the project

    4.5   Describe any changes, benefits and disadvantages made by the project to you, families and communities

5.   **Local Communities and CBO**

    5.1   Introduce your *kebelle* and *woreda* (e.g. religion, ethnic groups, elders, gender, local governments)

    5.2   Describe people that you are (and not) close to, usually talk to and do everyday activities with (e.g. other *gotts* or *kebelles*)

    5.3   Discuss about these people's participation in the project during the decision-making process

    5.4   Discuss about any chances made on your relationships with other people after the project

6.   **Any Other Issues**

    6.1   Any other topics that you may want to discuss with us

    6.2   Any other potential interviewees that you would like to recommend

    6.3   How was the interview?