

# **Ethiopian Village Studies**

**(Designed and edited by Philippa Bevan and Alula Pankhurst)**

**Do'oma**

**Gamo**

**North Omo**

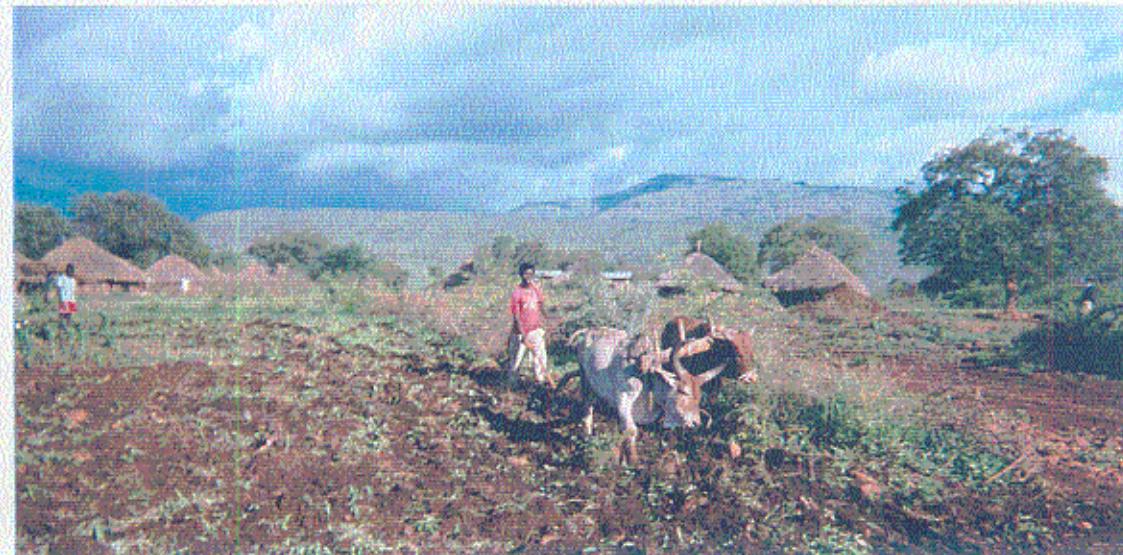
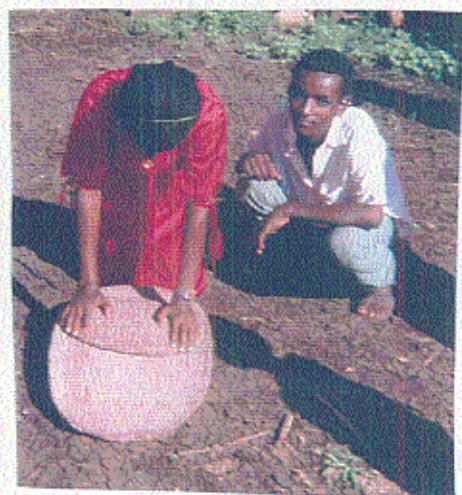
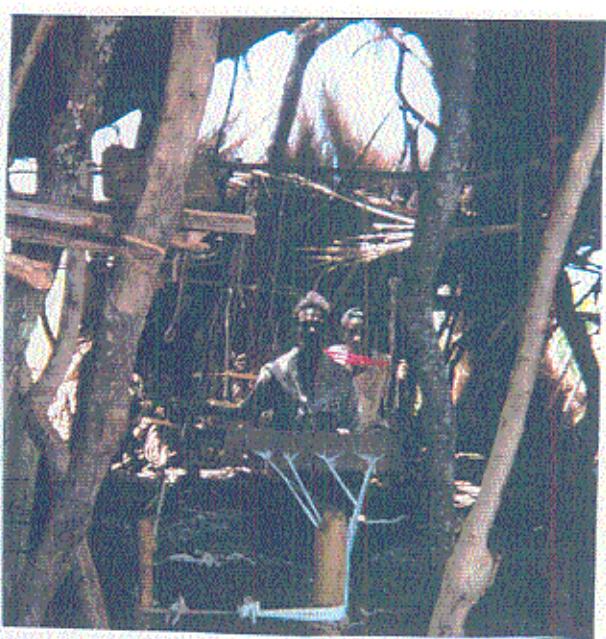
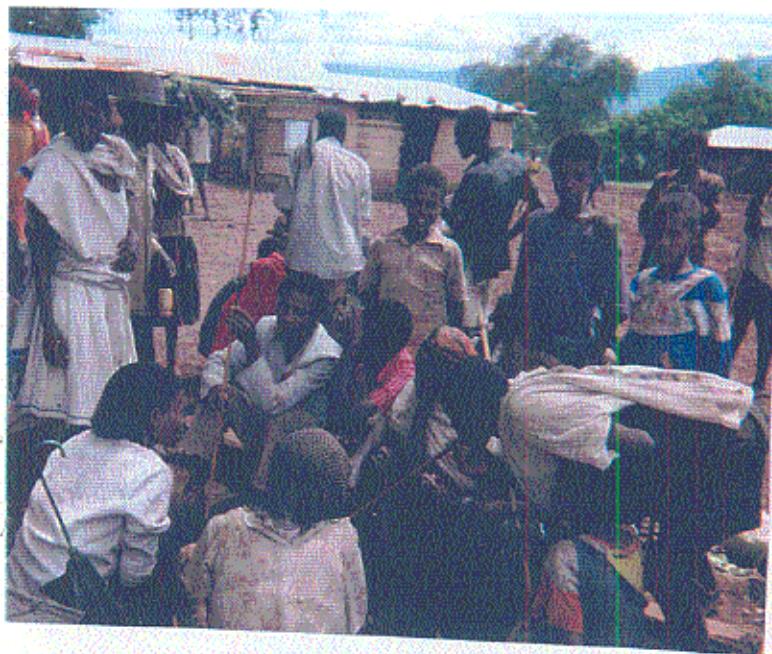
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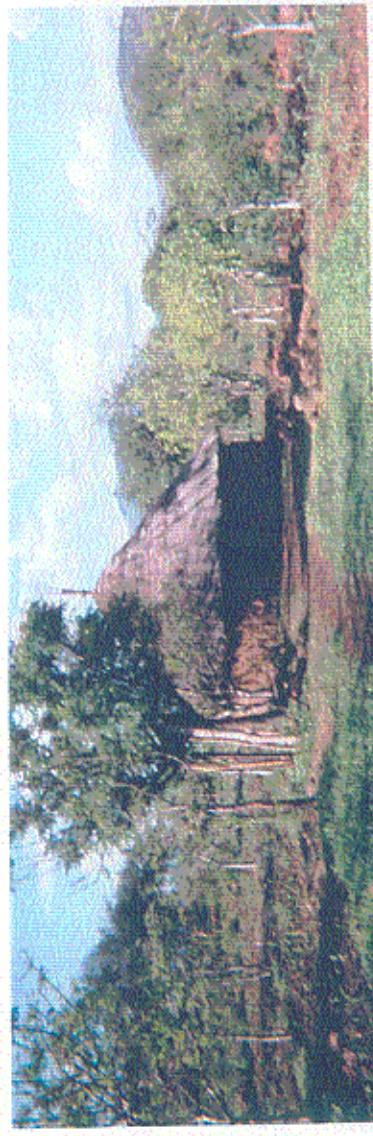
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## *Forward*

All the reports in this series have been constructed from a number of sources:

- A background paper on aspects of the local culture in which the Peasant Association is located, based mainly on secondary sources;
- Some rapid assessment material collected in the PA by site managers and enumerators whose chief business was administering 3 rounds of a household economic survey which covered a whole year of economic activity;
- A field visit to the site by an anthropologist who took a draft village profile for correction and supplementation. In a few cases the profiles were not ready before the field visit was done, but the same questions were followed up;
- A questionnaire completed by the enumerators at the end of the survey;
- A community economic survey administered by the site managers.

A large number of people has been involved in the construction of these profiles. Most important are the people in the villages who answered questions, raised issues we had not thought of, and provided hospitality for our fieldworkers. The site managers, enumerators, and anthropologists played a vital role, but are too numerous to mention by name here; the names of some are on the title pages of the profiles. Etalem Melaku-Tjirongo and Joanne Moores constructed the majority of the first drafts of the profiles. Sandra Fullerton Joireman provided important assistance in the preparation of the final drafts. Backup in terms of translating, editing, word processing, mapmaking and general support were provided by Tina Barnard, Ziggy Bevan, Girma Getahun, Haile Redai, Sarah Smith, and Ruth Tadesse. Our economist colleagues at Oxford (Shukri Ahmed, Stefan Dercon, and Pramila Krishnan) and Addis Ababa (particularly Bereket Kebede, Getinet Astatke, and Mekonnen Tadesse) provided ideas and conversation from economics which stimulated our thought processes. The administration in the Economics Department at Addis Ababa University was extremely supportive.

Profiles are available for the following villages:

<i>Tigray:</i>	Geblen Harresaw	<i>Gojam:</i> <i>North Shewa:</i>	Yetmen Debre Birhan environs
<i>Wollo:</i>	Shumsheha	<i>Gurage:</i>	Dinki
<i>Arssi:</i>	Korodegaga	<i>Wolayitta:</i>	Imdibir Haya Gasha
<i>South Shewa:</i>	Sirbana Godeti Turufe Kecheme	<i>Kembata:</i>	Gara Godo
<i>Gamo:</i>	Do'oma	<i>Gedo:</i>	Aze Debo'a
<i>Harerghe:</i>	Adele Keke		Adado

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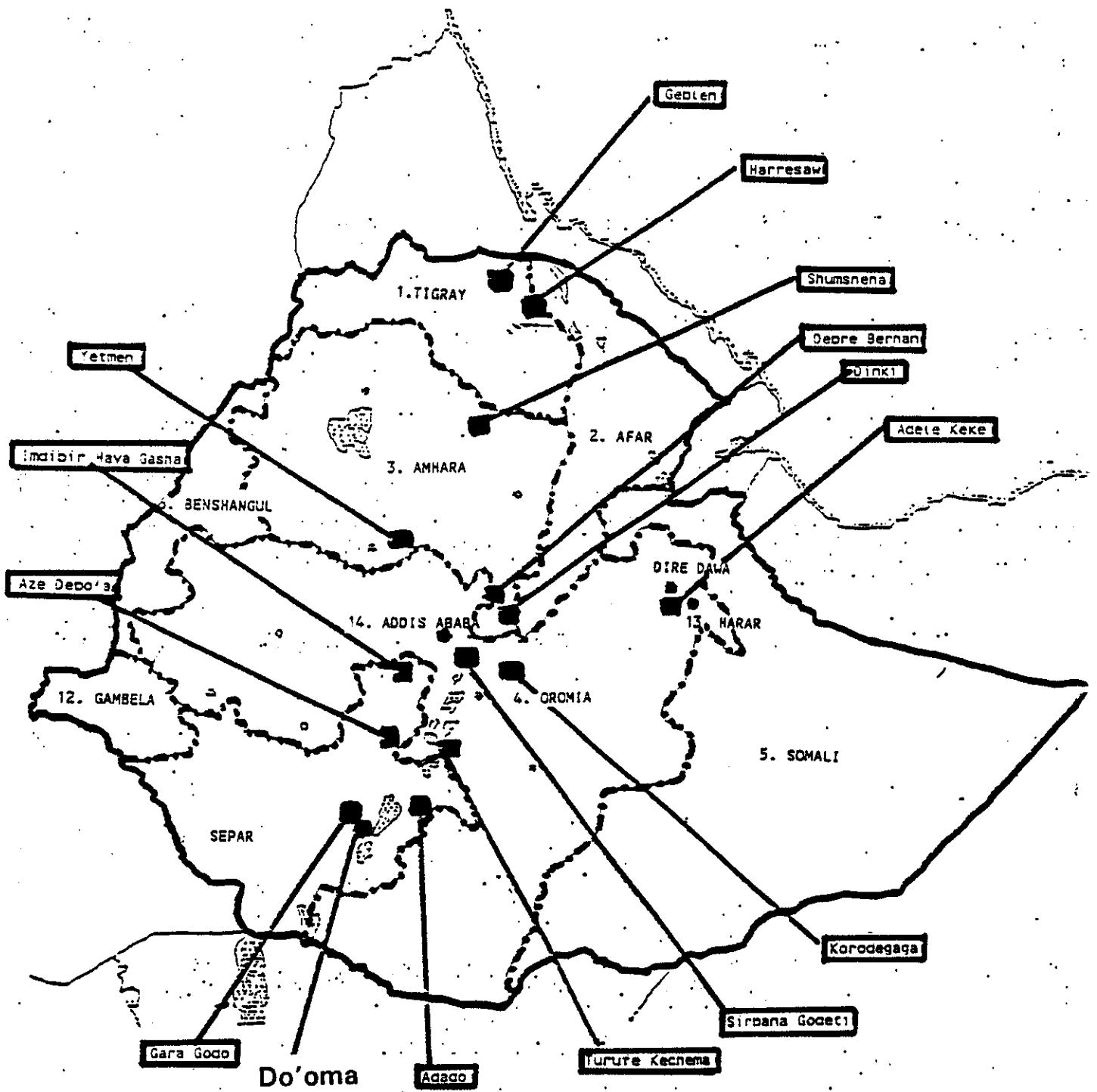
Further information about the household survey can be obtained from:

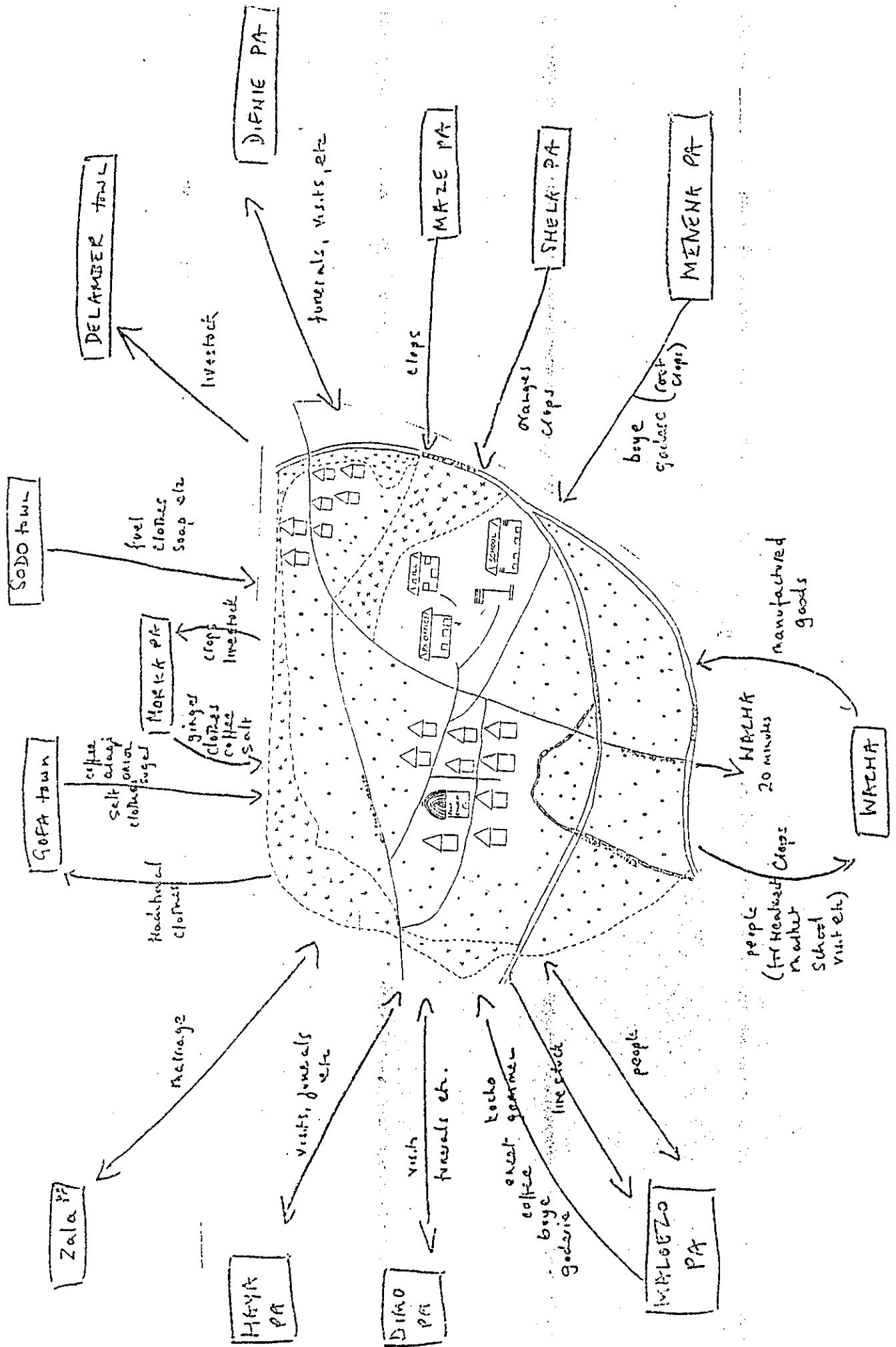
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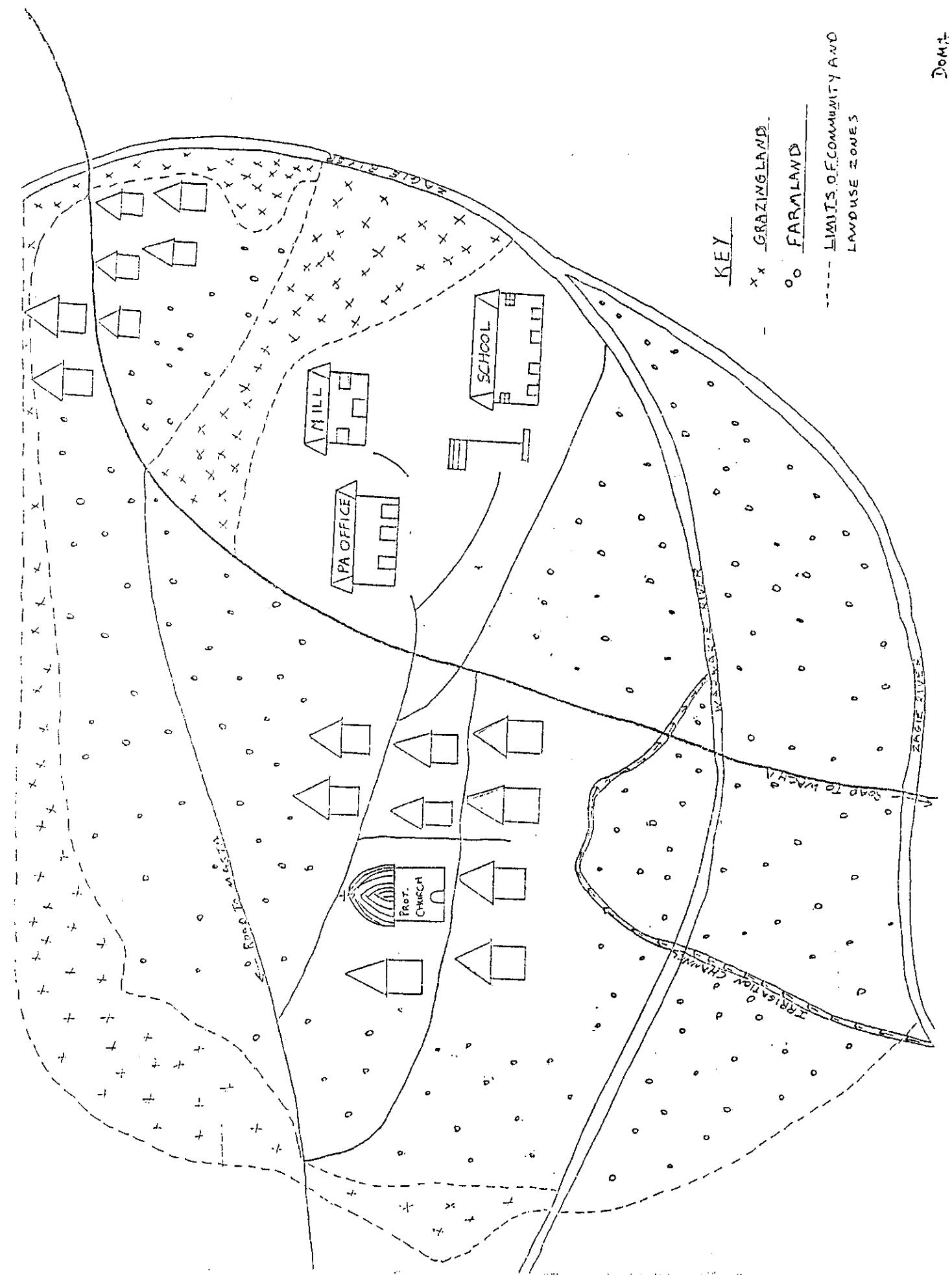
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## 1. Locating the Site in Time and Place

### *Geography and population*

Do'oma Peasant Association is located in North Omo Administrative Zone in Gamoland, about 492 kms south of Addis Ababa and 102 kms from Sodo, the capital of Wolayitta. The Gamo, whose members speak mutually intelligible dialects, are located in Southern Ethiopia, just west of the Rift Valley. Gamo consists of a number of localities, formerly autonomous entities, now functioning as a unit of local government administration. In 1984 the total population of Gamo ethnic group was 457,757 (CSA 1991:35). Do'oma is currently in Dera-Malo *Woreda* which has a population of between 50,000 and 60,000. It is estimated that around 40 male-headed households and 13 female-headed households are not registered in the PA. Compared with surrounding PAs it has the least population.

Do'oma is a PA consisting of recently resettled, largely Ometo-speaking people. Most inhabitants speak a mixture of Gamo and Wolayita dialects. Do'oma is the name of a place and it means harshlands. The PA is about 10 years old. It was founded in 1985 under the auspices of UNICEF in its attempt to rehabilitate drought-affected people from different parts of the Gamo highlands such as Hoya-Degeza, Malo-Ezo and Zala and Malle Mecho. There are about 510 households at the site of which 450 are headed by men. The total population is estimated at 1880 out of which 1270 are men.

Prior to the 1985 settlement, Do'oma is said to have been inhabited by one of the Gamo clans, the Angotes, some time in the remote past. For a not well-remembered reason, the Angotes moved into different parts of the Gamo highlands, leaving the area for the forest to grow. There are two conflicting accounts about the dispersal of the Angotes. One tradition says that the Angotes moved because they faced problems from the neighbouring clans because of resource competition. The other version attributes the dispersion to the Italian period and the difficulties they encountered then. Whatever the reason for the abandonment of the site might be, the traditional accounts unanimously agree that there had already been a settlement in Do'oma well before the 1985 UNICEF-backed settlement.

To the Do'oma PA is affiliated another settlement area called Womala, a settlement sponsored by the RRC (Relief and Rehabilitation Committee) in 1976. The settlers came from different parts of the country especially from the various Gamo highlands, Wolayitta and even as far as Gondar and Wolo. Once an ambitious and flourishing settlement, Womala was affected by successive years of drought and the site was moved temporarily to Tsedele in Shewa administrative region. It was not long, however, before some of the settlers returned to Womala owing to the difficulties they encountered in the new site. The reconstituted settlement in Womala was no longer "the most favoured", rather it was affiliated to its junior PA, Do'oma. Womala is 30 minutes walk from Do'oma proper.

The first settlement in Do'oma proper started in 1982 when 50 households arrived. Three years later, 200 households joined the first settlers. For several years, the population size has remained more or less constant, some leaving and others arriving. Currently there are 277 households living in Do'oma proper and in Womala. Unlike in Womala, where the population is mixed and made up of the related linguistic communities of the Gamo, Wolayitta and Dawro, it is the Gamo who live in Do'oma proper. The underlying factor in the push-pull business was the irrigation potential of Do'oma and its environs, which are within reach of the two rivers, Zage and Masta. It was hoped that the irrigation scheme would alleviate the lot of the people living in the highlands who have been caught by the vagaries of nature, as is exemplified by the recurrent drought and crop failures.

Do'oma is situated on a plain in a semi-arid area despite its encirclement by a ring of mountains that makes up the Gamo highlands. The altitude is about 1000m which means it is in the *kolla* zone. The vegetation is savanna covered by a sizeable canopy of trees. There are forest resources on the nearby mountain slopes and river banks, though the size of the forest is diminishing because of tree-cutting and forest fires. The soil consists of well-drained clay loams of a dark red-brown hue. The area can be characterized as fertile by the standards of the region.

### *Climate*

Do'oma is located in a semi-arid region and receives an estimated 500-600mm of rainfall per annum. Although the rainy season has increasingly become unpredictable, the area obtains most of its rain in May. However, there is also some rain during July and August, and a small amount in March. In the last 2 years the rainy season has fluctuated thereby contributing to crop failures. The rainy season brings mixed feelings for the inhabitants of Do'oma. On the plus side lies the agricultural cycle and its role in sustaining the harvest. On the minus side, the rainy season causes various difficulties for life in Do'oma, the most conspicuous being the transportation problem. During the rainy seasons, Do'oma is almost cut-off from the neighbouring regions since three of the biggest rivers of the area, Domba'a, Zage and Masta, are impassable. During this period the exchange process between Do'oma and the highlands, where the root crops come from, is adversely affected. Hence, the rise in price of such root crops such as sweet potato, *bul'a*, *enset* and *godere* and cereals such as wheat and barley. The rainy season also affects the production process, especially in Womala, where the main production site, the *Nefes Makoya* (the "life line") lies on the banks of the river Zage. Since crossing the river is unthinkable, men who look after the fields to protect the crops from pests, especially the baboons, are stranded there.

Being located in a semi-arid zone, Do'oma is dry most of the year. During the months of January and February, the temperature rises to 34 degrees centigrade.

### *Infrastructure*

The road to Soddo is reported to be bad, but it is possible to drive to Do'oma throughout most of the year using a 4-wheel drive vehicle. However, the 2 rivers on the way to Do'oma are impassable when they are in full course.

There is no market in the PA, but Do'oma is only 2kms from the nearest town of Wacha which serves as a market centre and a place where people find grinding mills and private shops. There is a grinding mill in Do'oma but it is broken. The regular market days in Wacha are Sunday and Thursday from 12am to 6pm. There is a wholesale market in Wacha. There are 2 traders buying large quantities of grain from farmers. But farmers do not usually buy grain in large quantities.

### *Production*

Almost all the people in the PA are dependent on agriculture and practice subsistence farming. Over and above the harsh environment, which restricts cultivation to small pockets, agriculture is affected by lack of agricultural inputs, the existing farming system, and other socio-economic problems. Generally productivity is very low and crop yield unsatisfactory. Irrigated agriculture is the mainstay of Do'oma's economy. There are two production seasons. *Silla (meher)*, the major harvesting season, extends from August to October, during which *tef* and root crops (particularly sweet potato) are harvested. The *gebbar (belg)* season extends from March to June during which maize is cultivated. The *meher* is sustained by rain-fed agriculture whereas irrigation is used during the *belg*. Some root crops such as sweet potato and *godere* and bananas are also cultivated during the *belg*. Currently there is an attempt by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) to encourage the farmers to cultivate maize during the *meher*.

Many farmers do not have access to irrigated land, and there are further constraints due to shortages of oxen. Most farmers do not have oxen and, due to the shortage of irrigation landholdings, the majority have to eke out a living by renting, sharecropping and casual wage labour or petty cash trading. The demand for these agricultural resources has forced prices up. Rents are in general very high and conditions of tenancy are varied and unfavourable.

There is an enormous loss of livestock every year. The 1994 *meher* harvest was bad because there was drought in the general area. As of May 1995 (when weeding was taking place) it seemed as if

the *meher* harvest would be good since the rain was good. The people use irrigation water for the *belg* agricultural season. The level of water did not decrease at this time and the harvest was as good as ever.

One fieldworker reported the following information on recent harvests

Year		MEHER		BELG	
		Overview	Reason	Overview	Reason
1988	1980/1EC	not bad	drought	good	irrigation
1989	1981/2EC	good	enough rain	good	irrigation
1990	1982/3EC	good	enough rain	good	irrigation
1991	1983/4EC	good	enough rain	good	irrigation
1992	1984/5EC	bad	drought	good	irrigation
1993	1985/6EC	good	enough rain	good	irrigation
1994	1986/7EC	bad	drought	good	irrigation
1995	1987/8EC	"good"	"enough rain"		

### *Social structure*

The ethnic make-up of Do'oma is composed of the Gamo (60%) and the Wolayitta (40%) and 1 man who is an Amhara. Both languages are spoken at the site and about 60% of the population speak Amharic as well. Despite the currently simmering rivalry among the elites of the Gamo and the Wolayitta, the settlers appear to have enjoyed harmony, since they have cultural values in common. The fact that almost all the settlers are poverty-stricken also adds to the sense of belongingness. There is "ethnic" conflict among officials of the district administration and members of the council.

The Do'oma settler community consists of different social classes such as the so-called "Pure Gamos" and "Pure Wolayitta", and the "caste" groups and the *Kalicha*. The defining feature is occupational status. Thus, the so-called "pure" Gamos and "pure" Wolayittas are farmers who stand at the apex of the social pyramid. Below them come the various "caste" groups like the *Menna* who, in addition to farming make a living as potters. Next to the *Menna* we find the *Wegecha* who are the blacksmiths. At the bottom of the social pyramid stand the *Degelas*, the tanners, who are the most despised by all. When asked how this social stratification come about, the inhabitants of Do'oma, in fact the whole Gamo people, respond that this is the way things are, with a fatalistic expression. Except for occasional associations among the *Menna*, *Wegecha* and *Degela*, marriage across the ladder is considered as a taboo.

Social stratification also occurs along religious lines. There are traditional believers in the all pervasive Gamo cultural ethics, the *Gome*. There are also people who follow a sort of syncretic religion between Islam and the traditional religion. They are called the *Kalicha*. Followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and the Kale-Hiwot Protestant Church are also present. With the exception of the followers of the Kale-Hiwot church, there is a great deal of accommodation among the traditional believers, the *Kalicha* and the followers of the Orthodox Church. It is estimated that about 70% of the population are Protestant Christians, about 20% are Orthodox Christians and the remaining 10% are traditional believers. There are no religious tensions at the site.

Amidst such socio-religious differentiation, there are some macro-cultural units which serve as horizontal linkages. The socio-religio-ritualistic festival called *Meskel* stands out. As in other parts of the southern regions, *Meskel* means a lot for the Gamo. It marks the beginning of a new year, a time of feasting and a time when the rainy season ends so that visiting of friends and relatives becomes possible. For the Orthodox Christians it also symbolises the finding of the "True Cross". Beside the levels of meaning attached to it, people of different social categories celebrate the *Meskel* ceremony

both at the family and community levels. There is a ritual leader of the ceremony called *Bitante* who presides over the procession at a place called *Dubusha* (upland). The *Bitante* is always from the *Angote* clan of the Gamo ethnic group since Do'oma is said to have been inhabited by them before the new settlement started. Given the strong sense of territoriality among the Gamo, it is of little wonder to see this "favouritism ". The *Bitante* gives his blessing so as to make the new year prosperous and healthy. He demands that sacrifices be made at the various stages of the ceremony and ensures that the traditional rituals are orderly. The Bitante also approves the *Gole*, the ritual anarchy by which the youth are licensed to grab whatever edible material they may get in people's houses. *Gole* is undertaken at night.

### *History*

Do'oma is one *kebele* peasant association among the twenty-two within Dera-malo *Woreda* in North Omo zone. The inhabitants of Do'oma are predominantly of the Gamo ethnic group. During the 19th century the Gamo highlands were politically autonomous and divided into 40 small discrete political units - *dere* - under their respective traditional rulers variously called *Kawo*, *Haleqa* and *Huduga*. The role of the rulers in local politics was balanced by that of the elders' council - *dulata*. In those days each *dere* was a named autonomous entity capable of waging war on, or making treaties with, its neighbours. The citizens of each *dere* used to be called *mala* and each had the right to own and cultivate land. Non-citizens, which included potters, tanners, smiths and slaves, could only build houses on public land when it was granted to them.

Over most of the Dera-Malo region, within which Do'oma is one *kebele* peasant association, it is the *Huduga* who used to administer the Gamo. The political economy was embedded in the institution of the *Huduga* and accordingly, it was wealth that defined and generated political leadership. In contradiction to the case in most of traditional societies where power begets wealth, for the Gamo of the Dera Malo region the opposite was true. It was the wealthy who were supposed to be vested with power. Although the institution of the *Huduga* has been declining because of acculturation and the socio-economic degradation of the livelihood of the Gamo people, it has greatly conditioned their social discourse. The Gamo of the Dera-Malo region differed from the neighbouring Kucha and Dawro people, who were used to a fair degree of centralization and monarchical traditions. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Gamo, like other socio-political units in the southern parts of the country, felt the pressure of the expansion of the Shewan kingdom. In 1888 the Gamo highlands were incorporated into the Ethiopian empire bringing about changes in the nature of political leadership. The *Kawo*, the *Haleqa* and the *Huduga* were reduced to the status of *Balabat* to serve as go-betweens for the administration and the people. The Dera-Malo region became just one *woreda* in the wider Gamo Gofa region under its own *Balabat*. The last *Balabat* of the Dera-Malo region was a man from the neighbouring Kemba region, *Kegnazmach Wega Weze*.

During the *Derg* regime, as part of the policy of creating wider socio-political units, the *woreda* structure was changed into the *awraja* structure. The Dera-Malo region was merged with Kucha to form the Maze *awraja* with its capital at Selamber. The change in the administrative structure proved to be disadvantageous for Dera-Malo region since it was marginalised. Whatever government facilities there were, were concentrated in Selamber.

While the research was going on in the village there was a circular sent to the *Woreda* Council office announcing that the lowlands of Dera-Malo *Woreda* have been merged with Kucha *Woreda* with its capital in Selamber, and the highlands of Dera-Malo *Woreda* have been merged with Dita *Woreda*. This has caused discontent and the people have raised their voice against the decision. It is not known what has happened since.

The recurrent famine and drought of the 1970s and the 1980s, coupled with the shortage of land, triggered off population movements from the highlands to the lowlands. It was in Womala first, and then Do'oma, that the highlanders settled. The resettlement was possible despite the strong sense of territoriality among the Gamo, since the settlers did not feel alien in the new area. They moved into the

same cultural space. There had also been a tradition of double-residence in the highlands and in the lowlands.

The settlement in Womala was sponsored by the RRC (Relief and Rehabilitation Commission) in order to establish a state-farm sustained by the drought-affected people. The settlers were gathered from the different parts of the Gamo highlands, Wolayitta and even as far as Gondar and Wollo regions. The project was ambitious and well-backed by the government. Very soon, however, drought struck the area. The settlers petitioned to the government to be transferred to another area. Thus, they were moved to a place called Tsedele in Shewa administrative region. The settlers, who are predominantly Gamo speakers, could not come to terms with the Oromo speaking community of the new site. Thus, most of the settlers left Tsedele and returned to Womala.

Meanwhile, drought-affected people started to settle in Do'oma proper under the auspices of UNICEF. If the main pushing factor was drought and the fact that some people lost land in the highlands because they could not pay the land tax, the irrigation potential of Do'oma was the pulling factor. The early days of settlement were demanding. The settlers had to clear the forest and construct houses and turn the woodland into farmland. Moreover, most of them did not own oxen since they were used to hoe-agriculture in the highlands. It was UNICEF which supplied them with oxen, hoes and other means of production. The early harvests were not good owing to crop-failures. Hence, UNICEF's policy of introducing a CFF program (cash for food). Unlike in other settler communities where food was distributed, the settlers in Do'oma were given cash so that they could buy whatever food was available. UNICEF also established an irrigation schemes and a grinding mill.

Rural poverty is considerable across much of the *woreda*. Reasons include the general shortage of resources, the inability of the agricultural system to accommodate all households, and lack of alternative sources of employment and income.

## 2. Seasonal Activities and Events

On the whole, except for the daily farming activities which start early in the morning and continue till mid-day, other activities are done as is convenient.

There are two farming seasons: the rain-fed *meher* and irrigation-fed *belg*. The *meher* agricultural season extends from December up to August. The *meher* calendar is as follows: December and January for clearing; half of February for tillage; the other half of February and March for sowing; April, May and June for weeding, and July and August for harvesting. *Meher* is the major agricultural season during which such crops like *tef* and root crops are cultivated. The second agricultural season is sustained by irrigation which extends from August (sowing), September and October (weeding), and December (harvesting). The main irrigation crop is maize. Some root crops are also cultivated.

The following calendars can be found in the Appendix: crop activities; rain; consumption and women's agricultural work; the hungry season; fuel and water availability; credit needs; festivals; off-farm activities; labour (men, women, boys, girls); diseases; migration; livestock sales and diseases; crop pests.

## 3. The Farm Economy

### *Crops*

The principle crops grown are maize and sweet potatoes. *Tef*, cotton, bananas and other root crops are also grown in the area. Maize is the staple food not only for the inhabitants of Do'oma but also for the entire Gamo people. Maize is used in different forms: *genfo* (porridge), *kitta* (backed flour), *kollo*, (toasted maize) and *borde* (local drink). Maize is harvested during the *meher* season. Currently the MoA is encouraging people to cultivate maize by using irrigation. Next to maize, sweet potato is the

most widely cultivated crop at present, because of its ability to cope with rainfall problems. Accordingly most farmers are growing sweet potatoes and it has become the most important crop for household consumption, for hosts and guests during ceremonies, and for sale for cash income for household requirements. Maize, and the other root crop, *godere*, are also important for household consumption.

As far as *tef* is concerned, it is primarily produced as a cash crop. There are also other cash crops such as bananas and sugar cane.

Different factors adversely affect the farm economy. The most conspicuous is the unreliability and unpredictability of the rainy season which has caused successive crop failures. Nature appears to have been unsympathetic to the farmers of the area. At times, the rain is too minimal to sustain the harvest. At other times the rain is so intense and heavy that it damages the harvest. Moreover, the irrigation scheme, the principal pull factor for the settlement, is not as elaborate as it was designed to be. There has never been any follow-up from UNICEF as to how far the project has met the demands of the farmers. Indeed, the users complain that the flow is not fairly distributed which has induced competition and water "stealing". The problem is highlighted when one compares the Do'oma irrigation scheme with the Lutheran-backed irrigation project in the nearby Hoya PA which is making good use of the Masta river which it shares with Do'oma. Without its irrigation potential Do'oma would lose its *raison d'être* as a settlement area, given its aridity.

The other major problem which limits agricultural activity is low livestock ownership, particularly of plough oxen. There is widespread animal disease in the area and there is an enormous loss of livestock every year. The main animal product which is sold is butter.

The fieldworker, visiting in August 1994, reported that the harvest seemed to be better than last year's but the intensity of the rain was so high that it may damage the crops especially if it continues to rain unabated throughout September. So far the successive crop failures have been caused by drought but this year's harvest is being affected by excessive rain. The best harvest year which farmers remember as "the good old days" are 1980 and 1991 owing to the fair distribution of the rain.

The major crop pest is *temuch*, the army worm. It affects maize, especially in its early stages. Perhaps the most serious problem affecting the farm economy in Do'oma is the destructive *gelesho* (baboon). Enjoying the aridity and the protective bush, the *gelesho* are a real nuisance to the farmers. They affect the production process at various levels. For one thing they require the strongest manpower to keep them away from the fields. The *gelesho* recognise as their superiors only the ablest men not the children, let alone the women. The ablest spend most of their time chasing one *gelesho* after the other. At another level, they damage most of the harvest which the farmers laboriously looked after. The *gelesho* are so numerous that they have caused a sense of helplessness on the part of the farmers. Their number is not the only problem. The belief system also appears to have favoured the *gelesho*. Among the Gamo of the Dera-Malo region there is the institution of the *Demuta* a spiritual leader for crop diseases and wild animals. In the service of the *Demuta*, there is a lion meant to grab wild animals which affect the people. The *gelesho*, however, are believed to be of the same order as man so that if the lion is allowed to eat the *gelesho* it would not spare human flesh. To make matters even worse, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection is vigilant about whatever expeditions are waged against the baboons as part of its protectionist policy. In face of such multiple odds, the farmers appear to have thrown in their lot for whatever "leniency" they can get from the baboons despite their watchful guard of their fields. While describing the seriousness of the problem, one informant interestingly enough used the political metaphor, *yegna neftegna gelesho naww* (the baboons are our *neftegna*). By *neftegna* they mean the gunmen of Menelik who settled in the conquered southern regions as masters of the area. Like Menelik's *neftegna*, he went on to say, the baboons are beyond the "law".

During the years that preceded IFPRI's research in 1989 crop yields were extremely low and in 1989 the majority of harvests were reported to be failures. IFPRI suggested a number of reasons. First, the settlers were trying to adapt to a totally new environment using agricultural techniques they were not used to. Second, there was crop damage by insects, pests and baboons. Third, and most important, was the continuing drought.

People in Do'oma experienced a food crisis of varying severity between 1983 and 1990 and there were 2 peak crisis periods, the first between 1984 and 1986, the second between 1988 and 1990. In 1985 almost all settlers suffered a lot and life was difficult for most of them. This is because they had to work hard turning woodland into farmland, food supply was low, disease was rife, the year's harvest failed, and the accommodation was rudimentary. The problem was exacerbated by problems of adaptation to the lowland climate, lack of experience of plough cultivation, and shortage of oxen. Many people resorted to hunting small game and the collection of wild foods when the entire community faced severe food shortage during the worst months of 1985/86,

### *Land*

According to Olmstead (1973: 224-5) there were a number of features characteristic of access to agricultural land in Gamoland. Land access was restricted to men. Women were the economic and ritual dependents of their menfolk. An unmarried girl may be given land on the death of her father but this would revert to her brothers when she married. Non-citizens (craftsmen and slaves) were not allowed to own land. By the mid-twentieth century, however, non-citizens and women began to own land due to changes in the legal system. Temporary transfer of usufruct rights was possible through share-cropping with the owner of the land receiving half the crop. A permanent transfer of land might be made through selling for cash. Earlier (in the 19th century) land was bartered for livestock, slaves or cloth. Once a person had access to land he retained rights in it to the end of his life. Individual fields were clearly marked with ritualized stones and moving such a stone or cultivating beyond it was considered as an infraction or taboo. The transfer of ownership of land was marked by a ritual performance. Inheritance of land was partible but there were no fixed rules; it depended on the will of the father. During the Revolution different forms of land practices might have been entertained within the general land policy that land belongs to the state.

When the settlers first arrived the average size of landholding was 0.5 hectares; in 1987 after an additional allotment the landholding increased to 1 ha. The average landholding in Do'oma in 1989 was 1.24 hectare. The smallest holding was 0.1 ha while the largest was 4 ha. Our group respondents said there was no difference in the size of landholding. Between 1985 and 1991 access to land was through the Peasant Association. Since then it has been through the Ministry of Agriculture. There is no scarcity of land and so far land has been allocated regardless of family size. What matters most is the capacity to sustain the farm land. This in turn depends on the size and quality of the means of production a farmer can marshal, above all the number of oxen. However, there is a scarcity of irrigated land. People get access to land through a variety of interlinking arrangements. Sharecropping is widely practised. There are different types of sharecropping in Do'oma which may differ from other survey sites (see below under Interlinkages). There is no cash rental of land and no *wolled aged*.

There was no redistribution of land after the fall of the Derg regime. There are some landless people: mostly young households recently coming to the area and some female-headed households. Women can own land if they can manage and are able to pay the tax. Widows can inherit land on the same terms. Observers agreed that there is not a problem of shortage of land; the problems are serious shortages of oxen, farm tools and means of transport. As a result farmers' lands lies fallow.

### *Labour*

There is a division of labour which determines who does which activities and when. The *Aba Wera* (head of the family) is responsible for the farming activities. Men rise early in the morning and continue to do the farming till mid-day. Since the heat becomes unbearable in the afternoon, and the oxen need a rest, the men are engaged in less demanding farming jobs, performing social activities and going out to the market. The women are not directly involved in the production process since farming is believed to

be manly among the Gamo. Even if there are no sons someone would be hired rather than letting the women work in the fields. The women do the daily cooking and milk the cows twice in a day : *maledo* (morning ) and *umarsi* (night). They also spin and carry out most of the trade. They help to carry the harvest.

Children of five to ten years of age, called *Nako*, help their parents with domestic work. Boys of 11-16 years of age assist their father in farming activities and start actual farming at the age of 18. Men of above 60 are called *Chemma* when they retire from the field.

In 1985 when the settlement was started 40% of the labour was carried out in groups to clear the new forest. *Debo*, *tikesha* (like *wonfel*), and *limena* ("help") are the common labour-sharing arrangements. *Debo* is the most common. The basis of participation is voluntary and in rotation which is not strict. *Tikesha* involves strict rotation, while *limena* is strictly voluntary. In all the arrangements the one who called for labour prepares bread (*kitta*), milk, sweet potato, *haleko* or *shiferaw*, and *tella or birz* for the consumption of participants. However, the type and amount of food and drink depends on the capacity of the calling person and varies among the different types of arrangement. *Debo* usually requires more food than the others, while *limena* requires the least.

There is no tradition of wage-labour since this is looked down upon by the people, especially if it is performed by a person who is from the same area. Indeed, there is a kind of migrant worker coming from the neighbouring regions of *Dorze* and *Ditta* who performs the weaving. People prefer going out of the area to work as wage-labourers rather than looking for the same work within their own community. The nearest thing to wage labour in the community is an *aro* (domestic servant), a job which the poorest resort to. There is also casual labour for weeding (*kutkuato*) and harvesting. Wages are mostly paid in cash and the rate is 3 *birr* a day.

In addition to Sunday, Orthodox Christians do not work on the days of St Mary and St Gebriel. Pagans do not work on Sunday ,Wednesday and Friday.

### *Livestock*

Cattle are almost the only form of livestock in Do'oma, although there are some goats. Cattle are used for farming and to produce milk and butter. The cattle are fed before they set out for farming early in the morning and they take a rest the whole afternoon. The cows are milked twice in a day, at *maledo* and *umarsi*. The livestock population is small, most of which were donated by UNICEF. There are very few mules and horses which are used for transportation, and above all as status symbols. Interestingly enough, some people own mules or horses worth 700 *birr* and yet they do not have two oxen for farming. Instead they use the ox-sharing strategy.

Livestock diseases, especially *gendi*, cost the lives of many cattle. *Gendi* is correlated with crop failures since when the cattle become weak, they are vulnerable to livestock diseases. Since veterinary facilities are almost non-existent it results in a deterioration of the conditions the livestock are in. The MOA has just started its operation since the restoration of the *woreda* structure.

There were times when most people had to sell or consume their cattle, especially in the early years of settlement when successive famines struck the area. Most people either ate or sold the cattle they obtained from UNICEF. In 1993, most people also sold their cattle to cope with the latest famine. The supply was so high that the price of cattle went down to as low as 60 *birr*. In 1990, on the other hand, the price of cattle went up owing to the terrible *gendi* which cost the lives of many cattle.

### *Interlinkages*

Among the residents of Do'oma there is a tradition of much sharing and borrowing of assets, particularly oxen along with their ploughs. Oxen-sharing arrangements often call for payments to the owners of oxen either in labour or in kind. A farmer owning only a single ox pairs his with a fellow farmer owning an ox and they work on each others' fields taking turns. This is variously called *kotsa*, *gesso* or *mekenajo*. There is another practice called *ye kollo*, which is an arrangement whereby a

person rents an ox for a full season with an agreement to share the harvest with the owner on mutually acceptable terms.

With the depletion of the livestock population owing to various cattle diseases, there has developed a tradition called *hadera*. *Hadera*, literally returnable gift, is a kind of redistributive mechanism by which the relatively better-off lend their cattle to the deprived to sustain their lives. Accordingly, a person who receives an oxen in the form of *hadera* is supposed to look after it and either return the ox he was given, or respond in the form of a calf or milk and butter. If the *hadera* cattle dies, the receiver is not under any obligation to pay compensation. *Hadera* is based on friendship lines and the governing principle is conscience, not pragmatism or utilitarianism. At the root of the institution of *hadera* lies the notion of *hashe*, fear of a similar fate in the future. There is a strong belief among the Gamo that success and failure are not merely individual attributes. Interestingly enough, the institution of the *hadera* is not widely practised among relatives for fear that the asset might not be returned.

There are also various forms of labour arrangements. *Welqa waga* is a form of labour arrangement whereby a person tills the farm of another in order to share the product on the basis of their agreement. Moreover, there is a tradition called *kiray* according to which labour is exchanged for oxen.

As described above share-cropping is widely practised in Do'oma. There are three arrangements which might stand out as exceptional:

1. There are share-cropping arrangements among three parties: the land owner, the owner of oxen, and the share-tenant who does the work.
2. Share-cropping seems to serve more as an instrument by which farmers get access to plough oxen, which is the most scarce input in the area, rather than land.
3. Provision of inputs to the sharecropped land differs not only from other sites, but also in different arrangements within the area. The most common one is that the landowner provides land, seed and labour, while the other party provides oxen and labour. This is usual on irrigated land parcels. The other arrangements is that the owner of the land provides only seed, while the other provides oxen and labour. The third arrangement, which is common on land parcels not accessible to water, is that the landowner provides all inputs except plough oxen.

### *Technology*

As has already been indicated, the main pulling factor for the settlement in Do'oma is the irrigation potential of the two rivers, Zage and Masta. While the people were in the highlands they were not used to irrigation. It was UNICEF which constructed irrigation schemes on the Zaga and Masta rivers. However, the irrigation scheme is not as productive as it was designed to be. For one thing, the level of technology employed is rudimentary. There are no pipelines and even the carving is not good. This has kept the volume of water to the minimum. While all the farmers were given access to irrigation, the mechanism was inadequate to meet the demands of the farmers. The problem is that little water reaches the fields due to seepage losses on the way. Three other communities share the Masta river for irrigation and this limits the amount of water reaching Do'oma. There are also some reported cases of recklessness and irresponsibility by some farmers using the water supply.

The predominant farming technology is plough agriculture. For most farmers, plough agriculture is an innovation since they were used to hoe-farming in the highlands, where the configuration of the land is largely unsuitable for ploughing. The first settlers were provided with cattle by UNICEF. In the early days there were some difficulties in adapting to the new technology. A lot hinged on trial and error. Of course, there were a few settlers who were already familiar with plough agriculture, and these farmers played an important role in diffusing the new technology.

Pesticides are occasionally used.

There is a traditional storage house called *shale*. It is a miniature of a living house. It is made of wood and grass. The floor is cemented with cow dung. Despite the elaborateness of the *shale*, the

stored crop is damaged by rats and weevils. Most of the informants state that about 10% of the crop in *shale* is lost due to these pests. The farmers use both traditional (smoking) and modern (malathion) preventive measures. The crops from the field are transported by portage. The field is about 15 minutes walk from the homestead. Transportation of the harvest from the field involves great difficulties. The amount of loss depends on the amount of labour employed in the collection and transportation process. There are only a few farmers who currently employ mules and horses for transportation. Likewise, fuel and wood are carried to the houses by women. As far as the household tasks are concerned women use the products of traditional technology such as knives, containers and home-made hearths.

### *Innovations*

The two innovations picked out as being useful for the community are new crop varieties and ditch-digging. The new crop varieties are maize and *tef*. Maize and *tef* account for the lion's share of total production as compared with the predominance of root crops in the highlands. They were introduced in 1990 and 1992 respectively. They were introduced because old varieties could only be harvested from 5-6 months after planting, while these new crops can be harvested within 3 months of planting. The government proposed use of these seeds and they have been accepted very much by the farmers, as they can now produce twice a year and they get a good harvest. Currently, new maize varieties from the MoA with high yields are also being experimented with in the special fields.

Ditch-digging was introduced by UNICEF in 1989 to increase agricultural production. Everybody knows how to make ditches and now the farmers can produce, even when there is insufficient rainfall. As has already been indicated, plough agriculture is also an innovation for most of the farmers.

### *Common Property*

Common property resources include: land; irrigation channels; grazing land; forestry; water; a grinding mill (which no longer works) and an elementary school. Access to land is through membership in the PA. In relation to the number of households in the PA, there is abundant land. Due to the inadequacy of the irrigation scheme, however, only the lands at the banks of the rivers are effectively used. These lands are always green and are called *nefes maqoyya* (lifeline). In the last four to five years, the size of the communal land has been reduced owing to the arrival of more settlers from the nearby regions attracted by the relative abundance of land in Do'oma.

On matters of irrigation, there are intra-village and inter-village committees to decide on mechanisms of water use in the area. Officially, only a limited numbers of households receive irrigation when it is Do'oma's turn. In practice, however, many farmers receive water by "stealing" during the night, though conviction for such stealing incurs fines of up to 15 *birr*. It is only Do'oma proper which enjoys the privilege of access to irrigation. Womala, the nearby settler community which is affiliated to Do'oma, is devoid of such a privilege save during the early years of the settlement. There are three farmlands in Do'oma proper which get access to irrigation: Yemo, Welecha and Kayesha. On average, each farmer obtains irrigated water twice in a year.

There is communal grazing land and there is no restriction on the use of it. Farmers get income from the sale of fuelwood from the communal forest land.

There is a small grinding mill in the PA. It was established by UNICEF. A year has elapsed, however, since it has stopped functioning because of technical problems. The people, instead, use the mill in Wacha and Morka. The one in Wacha gives services not only to Do'oma but also to most of the neighbouring PAs. Hence, it is very crowded. Most of the people of Do'oma prefer going to Morka, a PA in Kucha *woreda* which is about 3 hours walk from Do'oma where they obtain better facilities thanks to the efficient Chinese-installed mill there. However, it is not an easy task to travel for three hours to get the work done. Hence, a mill is one of the most pressing needs of the people of Do'oma.

## *Environment*

The agricultural ecology of the Gamo highlands has been characterized by a steadily growing imbalance between crop land and pasture. With increased population pressure on crop land pasture land began to decline, which in turn led to a decline in animal fodder and lowered the amount of manure available. Production began to decrease because of insufficient manure. Consequently a cycle of degradation was observed in the Gamo highlands. This gradually resulted in recurrent famine forcing many people to move out to settle elsewhere.

Do'oma is said to have been inhabited twice. The first is the not-well-recorded settlement in the remote past that obscurely ceased to exist. The depopulation of the area resulted in an expansion of the bush. Thus when a settlement was launched in 1985, a great deal of work had to be done before the wood land was turned into farmlands. This, in turn, led in to a steadily growing deforestation of the area. It has been estimated that while in 1985 the tree cover was 75% of the land, it had declined to 25% in 1993.

The soil is fertile. Much of it is unexploited and uneroded. The land is level and so there is no serious erosion problem. The farmers say there is no need for fertilizer. The land has good potential particularly for maize production. As one of the efforts to make the area food self-sufficient the RRC, in coordination with the *Woreda* Agricultural Office, gave fertilizer to most of the farmers at the beginning of the 1994 *meher*. However, in spite of every effort to persuade the farmers to use the fertilizer, it is reported that almost all the farmers sold it to the private traders in Wacha.

Most of the land was covered with forest before the resettlement. There is still an enormous area of forest although it is decreasing all the time.

## 4. Off-Farm Income Activities

### *Within the Community*

In IFPRI's report it is not mentioned that people in Doma engage in weaving, which is a common activity among the Gamo. The common sources of supplementary income include: (1) renting out fields for other farmers to cultivate; (2) selling firewood and/or charcoal; (3) selling beverages (eg *areke* and *tella*); (4) selling pottery; (5) selling animal products such as eggs, leather and hides; (6) honey production; (7) migration for paid labour. Vulnerable families take an active role in these non-agricultural activities which they seem to adopt as a strategy for coping with their vulnerability.

However during the rapid assessment men said that the major off-farm activities for men are weaving and woodwork. The weavers weave the cloth and sell it to the nearest market or sometimes they prepare clothes. The wood-workers prepare wood for doors, windows, beds, tables and chairs for local houses. These activities have been practised since the community settled in 1985. Women have also been making pots for sale in the market and spinning the cotton to sell to the weaver or the consumer in the market since the community began. Since 1990 women have also been trading. They buy coffee, onions, and salt from the cheapest market and sell to the nearest and relatively expensive market.

There are different off-farm activities that encompass all members of the family. Trading is one such activity. Men, women, and children are all involved in trading at various levels. Women, for instance, produce and sell beverages, such as *borde* (local beer), *tej* (mead) and *areke*, *lekakit* (woven cotton) and other goods. Children are involved in the sale of beverages which they bring from far-off regions like Gofa to sell in Wacha markets. Men are also engaged in trading on a smaller scale. Selling firewood and/or charcoal is another complementary income-generating activity. Firewood, which is collected from the nearby forests and bushes, is sold in the town of Wacha. The *Manna* women, the

potters in Do'oma, also make pots for sale.

Whoever makes money in the market contributes to the sustenance of the family. If at all personally used, it is for clothes and to buy some jewellery. On the whole, it is used to cover the expenses of the family.

#### *Occupation Structure*

Farming is the predominant occupation for men. In fact, Do'oma is a farming-settler community. Pottery is an occupation for some *Manna* women. Trade is also one growing occupation, especially since the new *woreda* administrative structure which has activated town life in Wacha.

#### *Migration*

Migrant labour in Do'oma is a rarity. So far, there have been a few people who went to the towns of Gofa or Arba Minch to make a better living. However, it seems that very few have succeeded in sending anything like remittances back to their family. Most of them went in times of severe drought. They are making a living through trade and as government employees on the state farms.

There may be more opportunities for migration locally since private investors are coming to the area and there is the possibility of the development of large-scale farms which will need labour.

There are migrant workers coming to Do'oma who do the weaving. These people come from the neighbouring Dorze and Ditta regions which are known for their weaving skills. There is not a definite time or season when they come but they carry out their job when it is convenient.

Those who cannot make it in Do'oma and sick people migrate to other areas.

### 5. Reproductive Activity

#### *House Management*

The main tasks involved in house management are organizing tasks, cleaning, washing, cooking, fetching water, and the collection of firewood. Cooking consumes much of the time of the women. The rest of the tasks are mostly done jointly. The men even fetch water when the need arises.

#### *Fuel and Lighting*

The main source of lighting is *kuraz* whereas wood is the main and the only source of fuel. Firewood is collected from the nearby bushes and from the communal forest land.

#### *Water*

Although there is no piped water, drinking water is not recognised as a major problem not only in Do'oma but even in the town of Wacha. The main source of drinking water is the river Zage. Water is fetched in the morning and at noon, when the dirt is believed to subside. There is also a strong belief that since the Holy water from Eli Gabriel, a medieval monastery where the springs come from, joins the river, drinking even the dirty water would not do harm. The belief aside, there are numerous reported cases of bacterial diseases in the area which are probably attributable to the dirt in the water.

#### *Sanitation*

In the early days of the settlement, there were some latrines established under the strong recommendation of UNICEF. The distribution was one latrine to four households. The latrines did not last long owing to lack of group responsibility and partly because the people were not used to such a

practice. They prefer the "open air " to the latrines.

### *Fertility*

Among the Gamo infertility is recognised both for women and men. If the love between two partners is strong enough, one of them lets the other bear a child from outside. Otherwise, divorce follows. Usually infertile women are married as a second wife. Likewise, an infertile man either lives with his family, especially if he is a first-born son, marries a second wife or marries a widow. Infertility among the Gamo is explained in terms of fate. Thus, there is no treatment.

On matters of family planning, the rudimentary services provided by the Dera-Malo clinic are used by no-one. Having children or not is believed to be God's mandate. Above all, there is a belief that to have more children is to have more labour, especially sons.

### *Childbirth and Child care*

During pregnancy, women are less active than usual. It is the daughters who assume the bulk of the household activities. Usually a month after delivery the women resume work. But if they face difficulties at delivery and the family is well-to-do, they may take more time.

### *Socialization*

The most desirable qualities for men are those which help them become a good farmer, the most important skill of which is to manage timing on matters of ploughing, weeding, and harvesting. Hard work and patience are also demanded. To be a good farmer is an index of success. For women, cooking, spinning and other related household skills are expected. It is interesting to note that some men keep mistresses for their cooking skills. Women are also supposed to be respectful of their husbands. Undesirable qualities are subsumed within the Gamo ethics under the name of *gome*, which includes adultery, theft, lies, disobedience and other related behaviour. In short, *gome* is the "do nots" in the Gamo social discourse. It is all pervasive. *Gome* is also the infliction upon a person who performs any of these "don'ts". Misfortune in the family or personal difficulties are usually explained as resulting from *gome*. *Gome*-cleansing is sacrificial. A person who performs *gome* is supposed to slaughter a goat or sheep. Above all, it has to be declared to the ritual leaders or to the elders. *Gome* is the framework within which the moral codes of the Gamo are articulated. The awe inspired by *gome* is understandable since the affliction is meant to affect one during one's life-time not in the hereafter as some other moral codes have it.

Two middle-aged farmers from the community suggested that the following qualities are desirable in men: being good at arguing; intelligence; courtesy; independence; bravery; and the ability to manage more than one household. People are given these qualities as a gift and develop them by learning. Adults teach boys in the family to be good people and take them to the working areas to teach good farming practices. Undesirable qualities include quarrelling with others without reason, thieving, and being lazy. Hard work and good behaviour makes a good farmer. The technical skill most respected is weaving. It is useful to be able to read, write and do sums since it gives a man the opportunity for additional jobs more than those who know nothing. The social skill most respected is the ability to solve disputes. At primary school children learn to read, add, subtract, divide, and some skills like making ropes and woodwork. It is not useful for being a better farmer because they are not taught farming practices but rather they learn laziness and are not willing even to help their parents. It does make it easier to earn off-farm income because an educated person can deal or negotiate with everybody and run businesses. It makes a difference how long they stay at school because, as the grade increases, so the opportunities increase. He can also introduce new works to be independent from his parents. In the community 40% of boys go to school and 60% do not. 99% of those at school are at primary school and 1% at secondary school.

A group of women said that the qualities desirable in women are cleanliness, good housekeeping abilities, and good behaviour. They learn these from their mother and from the community by observing their mother's day-to-day activity and copying the good things. Undesirable traits include insulting behaviour and quarrelling and unnecessary behaviour in the community. A successful farmer's wife can spin, keeps her husband in a good manner, and treats everyone in the community well. If she is educated she can manage her family in a better way than those who have not learned. Spinning is the most respected technical skill. It is important for women to be able to read, write and do sums because they can think things over more than women who cannot. At primary school children learn home economics, sanitation and reading, writing etc. It is useful for being a better farmer's wife because she knows how to keep her family and compound, how to be economical and how to plan. It also makes it easier for her to earn off-farm income and it makes a difference how long they stay at school. 30% of the girls in the community are at school and of these 99% are at primary school while 1% is at secondary school.

### *Education*

There are one junior and sixteen primary schools in the whole of the Dera-Malo *Woreda*. And one of the sixteen primary schools is the one in Do'oma.

The Do'oma primary school was established in 1988. It teaches up to grade 3. When students reach grade 4 they join the junior primary school either in Wacha or Manna. The curriculum includes Amharic, English, Social sciences, sport, art, Mathematics, science, home economics, and music. Currently, the medium of instruction is Amharic but there is a plan to use the Gamo language in the Latin alphabet. A visit to the school produced the following figures:

Grade	Number of students (male)	Number of students (female)	Total students	Number of Staff
1	41	9	50	2
2	8	2	10	1
3	10	3	13	1

The school fees are 2 *birr* for grades 1 and 2, and 3 *birr* for grade 3. The fee is the annual registration payment. Of this, 30 *birr* is for sport, for books and certificate cards. The rest is for salaries for the *degoma* (direct) teachers. In fact, there is only 1 *degoma* teacher in Do'oma.

Usually the first-born sons are not encouraged to go to school. They assist their fathers in farm activities. There are a few unemployed school leavers in the PA who attended their school elsewhere before their families settled in Do'oma. Some are engaged in farming and others help their mothers with household activities. There is one person who completed high school and joined the government bureaucracy in the *woreda* council. People have started to encourage their children to attend school, hoping that they might make a living in the expanding government bureaucracies and party politics. Organizational and party affiliations have become very important in gaining placements. The policy of localization is likely to foster such a sentiment in the near future.

The nearest junior secondary school (1-8) is in Wacha. The nearest higher secondary school is in Gofa-Sawla, about 73 km from the village.

## *Health*

A calendar in the Appendix shows the seasonal occurrence of major diseases in Do'oma. The most terrible human disease is malaria which become rife especially during the rainy season when swampy areas are formed that create favourable conditions for the reproduction of mosquitoes.

There is no clinic in Do'oma. The people use the one at Wacha. The hospitals they go to for serious illnesses are found in Arba Minch and Sodo. There are traditional healers both in the site and the surrounding PAs.

The Wacha clinic gives service not only for Do'oma but also for all the PAs included within Dera-Malo *Woreda*. It is staffed by 3 nurses, 7 dressers and 10 health assistants. There are 4 vaccination sites in 4 of the PAs, one of which is located at Do'oma. It gives vaccination services once a month. It also gives health education and family planning guidance though it has not been very successful owing to the unfavourable attitude of the people towards such activities. There are three birth attendants in Do'oma.

The "top diseases " of the year according to the statistics of the clinic are as follows : malaria; anaemia; intestinal worms; lung sickness; *ye kolla kusel* (prolonged wound); gastritis; skin diseases; venereal diseases; menstruation problems; accidents; and malnutrition; the most chronic of all being malaria. The chloroquine which the clinic provides is losing its effectiveness since the mosquito has become resistant. During the fieldworker's stay in Do'oma, it was a daily event to witness at least one person dying of malaria.

The people of Do'oma use extensive traditional medicine. The following are the most noted ones :

- i) *Aste* (headache and fever): Two pieces of woods are prepared. A hole is made in the one and filled in with ashes and the remains of wood. Then friction is used to produce fire. Then the material is placed on the upper skin where the affected area is found. *Aste* is used for various purposes. Predominantly it is used to cure malaria-affected spleens.
- ii) *T'at'ate*: a heated wire is put on the head hurriedly to cure headache.
- iii) *Gole*: a bird's waste is mixed with water to cure stomach ache.
- iii) *Enk'ok'o*: a kind of root is mixed with water to cure tape worm.
- iv) *Dok'a*: a kind of shell is worn to protect from evil eyes.
- v) *Mutse*: the seeping out of the blood from the affected area. It is used especially for swellings in the body. The specialists are the *Degelas*, the tanners, who live in the highlands.
- vi) *Mek'adu*: a form of powder processed from a plant and mixed with lemon. It is used for the traditionally recognized disease called *alta*.

People also visit hot springs and *tsebel*. The nearest hot spring (Bilboi) is in Mazle, around 20km from the village. The nearest *tsebel* is in Ali Gebriel (a PA in the *woreda*) around 3 hours walk from the village.

A group of men in the community ranked diseases in terms of the problems they caused as follows:

- (1) *Alta* (headache and fever): They don't know the cause or how to prevent it. If you get it you can use traditional medicine in the form of a powder called *mek'adu* which is processed from a plant and mixed with lemon. If treatment is taken this is used a quarter of the time while people go to the health centre about three-quarters of the time.
- (2) Malaria is caused by mosquitoes but they don't know how to prevent it. If they have treatment they use traditional medicine about three-quarters of the time and modern medical treatment about a quarter. The traditional medicine is less effective.
- (3) Abdominal ache is the result of drinking a lot of water. if they get treatment it is from the health centre.
- (4) Tropical ulcers develop from every small scratch. They don't know how to prevent them and the only treatment they have is modern medical treatment.
- (5) Diarrhoea.

A group of women ranked the major illnesses as follows :

- (1) Malaria is caused by the mosquito and can be prevented by taking tablets before (many people do not use this method), clearing the surroundings, and closing bedrooms well. When people seek treatment they go to the health centre and about 10% of time to the hospital at Arba Minch or Sodo. They don't use traditional medicine any more because it failed to cure it.
- (2) *Alta* (headache and fever): They do not know the cause or how to prevent it. Traditional medicine - *mek'adu* and *aste* - is used to cure it.
- (3) Arthritis is the result of cold and it can be prevented by wearing shoes if possible and good clothes. There are a number of traditional cures: to tie on the skin of a snake; to burn the affected part with fire; to tie the foot, tongue and tail of a crocodile on one's neck or to go to the health centre (about 25% of the time when treatment is sought).
- (4) Abdominal ache is caused by drinking water that is not clean and flies. They do not know how to prevent it. Traditionally there is a person who bites and sucks some dirty substance from the stomach of sick people and spits it out. This is done every year. When cures are sought they are traditional in about 12% of cases, otherwise they go to the health centre.
- (5) Elephantiasis is the result of walking in dirty areas in bare feet. Sometimes it is hereditary. Wearing shoes helps to prevent it. If treatment is sought it is traditional. They pour out blood from the enlarged flesh by scratching with a blade. They burn the enlarged body with fire which is created from a special tree by friction. It can also be cured by the person who heals abdominal aches.
- (6) Tropical ulcers.

The women who answered for children ranked children's diseases as follows :

- (1) Malaria is caused by the powder of flowers. They don't know how to prevent it. When treatment is sought about a quarter of the time it is traditional, otherwise they go to the health centre.
- (2) Fever/headache is caused by malaria and the common cold. They don't know any preventive measures and, if they seek treatment, it is always at the health centre.
- (3) Tropical ulcers are caused by poor personal hygiene and good hygiene can help to prevent them. The traditional medicine is called *balatit* and when treatment is sought it is traditional more than three quarters of the time.
- (4) Diarrhoea is the result of eating spoiled food and with unwashed hands and avoiding this food and washing hands before meals helps to prevent it. Traditional medicines are used rather more than health centre treatment.
- (5) Pneumonia is caused by waking up early in the morning and changes in weather conditions. It can be prevented by waiting in bed in the morning. When children get treatment it is at the health centre.
- (6) The common cold

## 6. Consumption and Welfare

### *Food and Other day-to-day goods*

Maize is the main cereal consumed. It is used in various forms : *kurkufa*; *kita*; *kollo*; and *borde* (local drink). Sweet potato, *enset* and milk are also eaten frequently. A plant called *shiferaw* is used as part of the diet especially with maize-meal (*kurkufa*); it is much consumed in times of food shortage.

The difference in diet between the well-to-do and the poor lies in variety. Meals are served three times a day in most households except in the poorest households, at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Breakfast and lunch are valued most since they are served immediately before and after farming activities. The meal time is the same for all members of the family. The parents and the grown-up children eat from the same plate whereas the children are served on separate plates.

The community has a habit of smoking traditional tobacco called *gaya* or *pipa* (see picture on top left taken in the market).

### *Saving and Investment*

Generally, the level of cash savings in Do'oma is low since most of the settlers are the drought-affected people. Those who were relatively better-off used to save in the form of livestock. The disastrous livestock diseases which cost the lives of many cattle, however, have greatly discouraged such saving. Interestingly enough, some farmers have begun to "save" whatever surplus they have in the form of consumer goods especially radios, and a few have also bought tape recorders.

Only a few households are reported to have become involved in indigenous saving groups such as *equb*. Rather, the most common form of saving is called *kamache* (the *Meskel* Bank). The members contribute an amount of money for *Meskel*, on a weekly or monthly basis. The money is kept until the *Meskel* festival so as to buy anything they want in common (e.g. an ox). If the money is a large amount they may also use it to buy clothes. There is no limit to the number of members. It is voluntary and expansive. The *kamache* exemplifies the centrality of the *Meskel* in the lives of the Gamo. This traditional savings association lends money to anyone in the village (non-members as well as members). The interest payment for the amount borrowed is 50% per month. Members contribute as much money as they can and at any time they want. The total income from the association is divided among the members according to their contribution.

### *Housing*

Sticks and mud form the basic construction materials for the house wall while grass thatch is the most common type of roof. The houses are mostly two-roomed with an additional one for the cattle. About a month or so is needed for construction, but if it is done by *jiggle* groups it takes a week, depending on the size of the labour involved. The house of a wealthy family is usually big. The difference in the quality of the house between the poor and the rich, however, is not remarkable. The richest man's house, for instance, exhibits minor differences from the house of an average family. Not one house in the PA has a corrugated metal roof. The only buildings with metal roofs are the PA office and the school. Since all the material is obtained locally it is difficult to estimate the cost incurred to construct a house. The longevity of the house depends on the kind of material used. On average a house lasts about 15 years.

### *Household Assets*

The following household assets are the commonest in most families: a sturdy wooden bench; skins; a wooden table; wooden chests; wooden chairs; plates; a store; pots of various sorts, *gaya* (traditional pipe), and farm equipment such as sickles, hoes, axes and ploughs. In addition to these assets, only the wealthy families own radios and sometimes tape recorders and wooden beds. The poor families, on the other hand, own only some of the assets described for average households.

### *Local Services*

In the early years of settlement about 43% joined the Service Cooperative (SC) based in Wacha, just 2 kilometres to the west. According to the IFPRI report different reasons are cited for the lack of interest in the SC. Two of the principal provisions, chemical fertilizers and pesticides were not attractive for the early settlers, owing to Do'oma's virgin soil. It was also very cumbersome to obtain a cash loan from the SC in times of food crisis. Moreover, there was no SC shop in the village from which members could purchase basic commodities. With the decline of government activities in Wacha, as a result of the change in the administrative structure, the SC gradually ceased to exist. Currently there is no attempt to revive the SC.

There are no shops in Do'oma. The people obtain items in Wacha where there are five shops selling sugar, oil, salt, biscuits, kerosene, clothes and other related items. Tablets are available only in

the clinic since there is no drug shop in the town.

The agricultural extension agent used to visit the farmers occasionally. Currently, the MoA has just started functioning in Wacha. It intends to resume the service soon.

The *Kalicha* in Do'oma, in fact in the whole of the Gamo region, differ from other *Kalicha*. They constitute one social group, almost a clan, with distinct ritual practices. They are believed to have been vested with the power of cursing. They do not perform the usual medicinal and propitiatory acts of a *Kalicha*, as is the case in most parts of Ethiopia. Such work is done by the *Demmuta* who live in the Malo highland. In his capacity as a traditional doctor, the *Demmuta* "prevents" or "eliminates" pests. For his services, the *Demmuta* is rewarded at the family or at community level when matters of great concern arise such as successive droughts or crop failures. There are also sacrifices made for his deeds. The *Fuga*, the caste groups, and the *Kalicha* are excluded under any of the obligations, for lack of recognition and respect respectively.

Below the *Demmuta*, there are various personalities who serve the community as traditional doctors for bone-setting and herbs. There are also 3 birth attendants in the PA who were trained at the Dera-Malo clinic.

There is one grinding mill established by UNICEF. It has stopped functioning due to technical difficulties. Instead the people use the one in Wacha or Morka.

## 7. Local Institutions and Organizations

### *Households*

The Gamo term for a household is *ketta assa*. There are different kinds of *ketta assa* since polygyny is practised. The most favoured *ketta assa* is the one formed by the first marriage. It constitutes eating together, sharing a roof and farming together. At the centre of *ketta assa* stands the head of the family, the father. Although the second, third, and at times the fourth *ketta assa* share the husband's love, the communalities in all the *ketta assa* is the leadership role of the husband in household and farming management. Polygyny for the Gamo is as much economical as it is a status symbol. Not all the Gamos, however, practice polygyny. Adoption is not practised among the Gamo.

### *Marriage*

Marriage among the Gamo is exogamous. A person marries outside his clan. There are a multitude of inter-marriageable clans which are considered as "true" Gamos. The inter-clan marriages have fostered a sense of "Gamoness" amidst highly accentuated territoriality. There are, of course, the caste groups, the *Menna*, the *Degela*, and the *Wegecha*, which, despite their linguistic and cultural affinities with the Gamos, are not socially entitled to marry the so-called pure Gamos. They are engaged in craftsmanship such as pottery, smithing, and tanning, which complement the Gamo economy. Hence, marriage among the Gamo in a way reinforces the reproduction of the socio-economic status quo between the so-called pure Gamos who are entirely farmers and the caste groups who practice a sort of mixed economy, farming and handicrafts.

There are different forms of marriage among the Gamo: marriage by betrothal (*ayosha*), marriage by seduction (*borka*) and currently marriage by consent between the two spouses, especially among the new generation. What is common in all these forms of marriage is the nature of transactions among the kin groups of the partners. Like in other societies, marriage among the Gamo involves a flow of resources in different directions. Hence, whatever the form of marriage, the groom's family is supposed to give bridewealth to the bride's family and to the immediate kin groups. The flow of resources used to be mainly in kind : an ox for the bride's father; clothes to the bride's mother and butter for the immediate relatives. With the growing monetization and the difficulties involved in providing cattle due to the recurrent drought, bridewealth has changed both in form and amount. If the parents are

wealthy enough they give livestock, land and other equipment to their son when he gets married for the first time. Whatever they provide to their first son they have to provide for all the rest equally. When a daughter gets married for the first time her parents give her traditional clothes (*gabi*, *bilko*, and *kuta*) and nothing else. But the parents of her husband have to give up to 200 *birr*, jewellery, clothes and maybe a watch after and before the wedding. The gifts of other kin depend on how wealthy they are. Heifers and calves are common gifts. However, a poor relative can give 10 - 100 *birr*.

Currently, the average bridewealth is estimated at 150 *birr*. If the groom can afford it and the bride's family is wealthy the bridewealth would be higher, since status is counted on both sides. In such cases the amount of bridewealth may reach as high as 500 *birr*. The bridewealth is raised by contributions from the groom's family and his immediate relatives. When they reach a marriageable age, sons are also encouraged to raise money from their little farm. Cash is given to the bride's father by the groom which he uses either to cover family expenses, to buy cattle or as bridewealth for his son. The transaction also involves presents to the bride mainly in terms of clothes. The significance of the bridewealth and the present is that it legalizes the transfer of a woman and her future children to her husband's control. Children become legitimate and the woman belongs to her husband's kinsmen. It confirms the transference of rights and duties. Whereas the loss to the bride's kin group due to her absence is compensated by the bridewealth, the groom's family is rewarded by the degree of control it acquires over the bride by the same token. There is also a flow of resources from the bride's family to the spouses as a form of conjugal fund. It is called *donna fugesso*. It consists of cash and household assets (both undetermined amounts) meant to support the new family.

The predominant form of marriage among the Gamo of Do'oma is *ayosha*, marriage by betrothal. *Ayosha* is performed by the agreement of the two partners' families after well thought-out deliberations. Criteria such as genealogical purity, exogamy, economic and social status, virginity, and the skill and conduct of the girl, are seriously considered before and after the marriage proposal by the groom's and bride's family respectively. Such mutual cross-checks are needed since marriage is not merely an individual concern, but essentially a union of kin groups on both sides. For fear of facing rejection, the groom's family use metaphors while putting the proposal. Thus, they propose a union between their *woifen* (bullock) and the *gider* (heifer) of the bride's family. If the bride's family is positive, a coffee ceremony is prepared which symbolizes the approval. This is, of course, followed by an elaborate wedding ceremony on both sides as a declaration of the union and the resultant change in kinship roles. The wedding ceremony may cost between 500 and 1000 *birr*.

The couple usually construct a house before they are married. If so they will live in the house straight after marriage. Otherwise they will live in his parents' house until they build their own. The couple live next to their parents. Culturally it is not acceptable to live with the parents of the wife. They do not like to marry girls from the same village or from nearby Peasant Associations. They have to travel a long distance to get girls to marry. They do not have any justification for this except that they say they do not want to be called dependents of their parents-in-law, or that it should be said that they are interested in their wealth. In the immediate post-marital period, the bride is looked after by her mother-in-law for a time and she goes out to a known market place where she is served with reputable traditional foods and drinks. This is called *soffe*, a kind of consociation in anthropological parlance.

A man can marry for the second time with a little wedding ceremony. In this case he prefers to marry a divorced woman. They do not want to marry a girl whose first marriage it is because of the expense. A widow can marry for the second time a man who was divorced, or whose wife died, or a man who cannot afford to marry a girl for the first time. There is the tradition of polygyny among the Gamo. It is as much economical as it is a status symbol. Usually second and third marriages do not involve wedding ceremonies. And it is the first wife who is the most favoured. One respondent said that almost everyone in Do'oma practices monogamy, although there are about four rich people who practice polygyny.

### *Divorce*

As the ethnographic data throws into relief, in societies where bridewealth is practised, the divorce rate is low since the bridewealth has to be returned once the contract terminates. Viewed against such a background, the nature of marriage among the Gamo proves the exception. It is not the fear of the return of the bridewealth which discourages divorce, for there is no such tradition which is believed to affect pride. Instead, it is the overarching Gamo moral code, the *gome*, which plays the greatest role in stabilising marriage. Divorce is one of the "don'ts" within the Gamo normative framework. Although the practice of polygyny "sabotages" this "sacred" moral code, since most of the second and third wives are mostly widows, on the whole the divorce rate is low due to the prohibitive impact of the *gome*. The only reason which appears to have been more important than *gome* is infertility. In fact, most divorcees are infertile women or men. Rarely, divorce may also happen if the two partners reach a point where they cannot live together and if this is recognized by the elders. In such a case the wife would take her share of the common property with the exception of the land which is exclusively the man's domain. If there are children they would live with their father.

If the couple get divorced the woman can take her dowry with no problem. In the case of wealth she has no right to share equally, regardless of whether she has children or not. If she is divorced before having children she will have a share of  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the wealth of the household by the decision of the elders. If the divorce is after having children the woman cannot take any of her children with her. They all grow up in their father's home. As a result the rate of sharing of wealth decreases to  $\frac{1}{5}$  or  $\frac{1}{6}$  and even below that, depending on the number of children. The higher the number of children they have, the higher the share of wealth for the husband. They say "he claims and deserves more of the wealth because he is responsible for looking after the children who cannot live with their divorced mother at all." However, the mother can visit her children whenever she wants. Sometimes a divorced woman can rejoin the home if their disputes are resolved by the elders.

A woman cannot claim any of the household's property if she is suspected of a sexual relationship with someone else and if this is the cause of their divorce. She will be totally rejected by the society and her parents. A woman who is divorced on suspicion of sexual relations cannot marry unless she leaves for another area where her background is unknown. If she is married to a man at a nearby place there will be great hostility between the ex-husband and the new husband.

### *Inheritance*

Inheritance takes place if, and only if, both the mother and the father die. The eldest son is the most privileged in matters of inheritance. For it is he who is supposed to support the family should either of the parents die. The house is given to him and he is also vested with the responsibility of sharing all the land, assets including livestock, furniture, jewellery and other related items equally among the other sons. If assets and livestock are not able to be distributed equally they sell them and divide the money equally. The inheritance of a house is different. When parents die the eldest son inherits the parents' house and his younger brother takes over his house, and the next youngest takes over his house and this continues until a brother without a house is reached.

Women are not entitled to inherit anything unless the parents have only daughters. Rather, the women are given rewards when they get married as a form of conjugal fund. Daughters without brothers can inherit land, livestock and other assets. In this case they usually either sell or rent the land, livestock and house.

### *Kinship and Lineage*

Kinship among the Gamo stretches up to the clan level. The notion of self includes the whole gamut from the "I" through the immediate relatives up to the clan. That is why marriage is exogamous. This extension of the border of kinship to the clan level makes Gamo's socio-economic kinship roles loosely

articulated. Clan level obligations are mainly attendance at mourning and wedding ceremonies. Since the clans live across territories the sense of clan corporateness is reduced, Instead it is the immediate relatives who are involved in more commitments, for example contributing money for bridewealth, and provision of material support in times of misfortune. There are no economic, ritual or any other obligations attached to the lineage.

### *Age Grading, Life Cycle Changes and Rites of Passage*

Rites of passage among the Gamo are defined economically i.e. people assume different economic roles that in turn define their status. Children up to five years of age are called *gesho noyta*. They are considered as babies and not given assignments. Children of 5-10 years of age are called *na'o*. These are years when boys and girls begin to assist their father and mother respectively. The third phase is *wet'et'e na'o* when boys and girls assume full responsibility in domestic and farming activities. *Donza* is the stage of adulthood which extends from the 20s up to the 50s. It is mainly during *donza* that men get married. Indeed, circumcision has to be undertaken before marriage is arranged. There is a small-scale ritual associated with circumcision. The circumcised boys go out to the market to declare their new status. This is called boys' *siffe*. The last stage in the life cycle is *choma*, a time when people retire, especially men, from their occupation. The elders receive special care from members of the family and they do some supervisory work. It is men of *choma* who are very active in social activities. Most of them become involved in the elders' committee and chair various social meetings. People assist their elders in any kind of work they want to get done. They help them willingly in agricultural work and take and bring messages to and from different distant places. Elders have the power of being listened to, acceptance in reconciling disputes and recognition.

### *Markets*

There are bi-weekly markets, held every Thursday and Sunday. The market is at Wacha, the capital of the Dera-Malo *Woreda*. The Thursday and Sunday markets are fairly large since Wacha serves as a focus for the exchanges between the highlands and lowlands. Highland root crops such as *enset*, *boye*, *godere*, and *bu'ula* are exchanged for lowland cereals such as maize and *tef*, bananas, and sugarcane.

The principal traditional weight measure is called *messo* which amounts to 3 or 4 glasses. Glass is also used as weight. The peace of the market is mainly kept thanks to the *Gome* which outlaws theft and infidelity. But *Gome* does not exclude persistence and haggling in pricing which in a way brings the sellers and buyers to terms. The harmony among the marketeers can easily be sensed at the northern site of the market where the people enjoy the *gaya* (the traditional pipe) without paying for it. There is no police force which maintains peace and order in the market.

Other than the bi-weekly markets at Wacha, the people of Do'oma occasionally go to the weekly markets in the neighbouring PAs. In fact, some people go as far as Morka, 3 hours walk from Do'oma. The market days in the whole of the Dera-Malo region appears to have been arranged in such a way that they do not overlap.

Do'oma is situated in a remote area of a distant region, Gofa, and due to the high cost of transportation and marketing people usually pay higher prices for non-agricultural household consumables, while they receive lower output prices for agricultural produce. These are generally very low compared with other areas nearer to the major towns or good all-weather roads.

### *Credit and Social Security*

People borrow cash and grain from relatives, friends and money lenders when they face problems. During the 1987/8 drought many households borrowed cash and food from each other. For example 44% of the hundred households sampled in the IFPRI study borrowed cash and/or food. In most cases largesse took the form of gifts rather than loans. According to the study more than 50% of respondents

shared food with relatives who asked them for help. As far as the loans are concerned interest rates varied from 0 to 100% payment.

*Equb* have recently been started but they are not as widely practised as elsewhere in Ethiopia. There are about 6 *equb* in the PA. The average number in each is between 10 and 15 people. The amount is also very low. The smallest is 1 *birr* and the highest is 20 *birr* per month. Membership depends on trust: either the applicant is well known or has a guarantor. As it has already been pointed out the most widely practised form of social security is the "Meskel Bank".

There are two *idir* which support the deceased during mourning with memberships between 40 and 60. The support ranges from condolence to financial reward depending on the amount of fee members pay. There are St Mary's and St Gebriel's *Mehber*, religious group associations based on the objective of mutual assistance to members who need the help of others. These create a sense of belongingness, close friendship and good relations between members. They meet at least once a month in one of the member's houses. Members share condolences and happy times. It is voluntary. Leaders are democratically elected for an unlimited period.

### *Community Decision-Making*

The primary decision-makers are the elders. There is a five-men elected elders' committee which can decide on claims and other different issues relating to land, livestock and other property ownership. They can make a person pay compensation for his bad deeds toward someone else. Elders can also make people repay money or property owed to others. They are entitled to divide the plots between different people if there are competing claims, or they can decide to give the plot to one or the other. However, the decisions of the elders may not be binding. Every dispute within and between households is first seen by the elders. Usually the dispute is resolved by them. When disputes are beyond their capacity they refer the case to the PA court. If the matter is serious enough the PA may refer it to the government police.

### *Local Organizations*

In 1986 the Peasant Association and Youth and Women's Associations were formed. In 1989 *equb* were started and in 1990 *idir*. A group ranked the organizations in terms of usefulness as follows: 1. Peasant Association; 2. *Equb*; 3. *Idir*; 4. Youth and Women's Association.

### *Redistributive Mechanisms*

There are different redistributive mechanisms among the Gamo. The first, and perhaps the most conspicuous, is the institution of *huduga*. *Huduga* is a politico-economic-administrative institution in which wealth generates leadership. Underlying the notion of *huduga* lies the Gamo understanding of wealth. Accordingly, to have is to give. A wealthy person is the one who gives most. A person becomes a *Huduga* either by personal initiative, family connection or by the people's proposal. The people select eight *Lazansa* very close to the candidate who are meant to serve as go-betweens. Once they secure his consent, (often he would not be hesitant), the ceremony called *Chawga* is held whereby cattle are slaughtered (maybe as many as 17 depending on the capacity of the in-coming *Huduga*), and traditional foods are served. Other than the feast, the incumbent *Huduga* is supposed to hand out everything he can afford to the people. There are different *Huduga* stages. *Huduga Kema* is the first stage where a person is assigned to alleviate the major problems of the people. Literally *Kema* means to cover. *Huduga Kema* lasts for a year during which he would be put to a test. The last stage is *Huduga Polchanto* or *Tseranto*. *Polchanto* literally means over and above the required. A *Huduga* becomes a *Polchanto* after having held lavish feasts for the people at various times. Indeed, a *Huduga Polchanto* needs to be very wealthy to live up to the expectations. He is distinguished from other *Huduga* by his *Tsenbero*, a decorated spear with a copper coil called *Ankasse*. To be a *Huduga* is very exacting so that

some of them go bankrupt as a result of the responsibility. *Huduga Polchantonos*' responsibilities, for instance, extend as far as five *kebele* PAs. Against such a background it would be necessary to see the other side of the coin. What do the *Huduga* get out of their title? There are no economic rewards attached to the institution of *Huduga*. Indeed, it is "disastrous" for the incumbents. The most important reward of the institution of *Huduga* is social. To be a *Huduga* is to be a "Big Man". It is the main avenue to higher status. *Huduga* are greeted with *kushe*, high respect. Interestingly enough, a *Huduga* responds to a *kushe* by saying *Gako*, " May you get the chance to be like me ". The status obtained through *Huduga* is hereditary up to the third generation. From then on, the status is renewable only if the feasts are observed afresh. The *Huduga* are also vested with administrative responsibilities. They act as high judges. Nowhere is respect for the *Huduga* displayed more than during burial ceremonies. There are special verses which eulogise and praise the *Huduga*:

*Huduga Guche Tseyera* the *Huduga* is second to none  
*Malen Mades* one who supports the needy  
*Dire Ayesesus* the administrator  
*Arshe Zawa Dannas* we weep all the day for you  
*Danay Guche Tseyera* since you are the guardian of our culture

The transfer of power from the out-going to the in-coming *Huduga* is ritualised through the symbolic giving of grass. This ceremony is called *Ashe Akre*.

The institution of *Hadera* is another important redistributive mechanism among the Gamo. *Hadera* is the borrowing of cattle from the relatively wealthy by the poor. It is not borrowing in the strict sense of the term for there are no fixed days for the return, or legal rights on the return of the assets. If the cattle dies, the benefactor is not supposed to pay compensation. Rather the governing principle underlining the institution of *Hadera* is the Gamo moral code: the ideology of sharing. It is conscience which prevails over pragmatism. In fact there are some "obligations" on the side of the recipient. However, these obligations are moral and loosely defined. If the borrowed cattle reproduces, the donor receives one or two calves depending on the condition he is in. He may also receive butter, milk, and/or cheese. However, these are secondary in significance. Most of the people of Do'oma are sustained by the institution of *Hadera*. They have *Hadera* linkages in the neighbouring PAs and as far as Morka. In Womala, most farmers are given cattle in the form of *Hadera* by the rich man of the area who owns about 400 cattle. The rich man who is "sponsoring" the *Hadera* in Womala came from Zala, not as a drought-affected family, but, with the expectation that the lowlands are more suitable for cattle keeping than the highlands. He is of *Kalicha* origin. With the growing monetization of the people the economic obligations may be strictly defined in the future. There are already signs in this pragmatic direction, for some people are avoiding *Hadera* relations among relatives for fear of the complications in the return of the asset.

*Meskel* is another redistributive instance. Although not so lavish as the neighbouring Dorze community, *Meskel* among the Gamo is also celebrated in a series of feasts. It is very common to see people during the *Meskel* feeding those who cannot afford to make a feast. There is also a small ritual anarchy attached to *Meskel* called *Golle*. Accordingly, the youth seek permission from the *Bitante*, the *Meskel* ritual leader, to grab whatever edible material they can get from people's house at night. The "raids" are cautiously carried out since people are aware of the tradition. Since the root crops in the garden are not spared, they are diligently watched over. Despite such precautionary measures, *Golle* happen every year. The "looted" cannot complain since the act is ritually licensed. What makes *Golle* interesting is that it is a temporary "deviation" from the Gamo tradition which places a huge emphasis on fidelity, honesty and purity. In a way it exemplifies a "ritual of rebellion", to borrow Gluckman's notion.

There are also various agricultural rites meant to bless the harvest when sacrifices are made. The sacrifices may be at the family or community level. At the family level, the sacrifices, the traditional food called *yarsho* and the local drink *borde*, are made by the head of the family in both

sides of the house, whereas the sacrifices at the community level, often cattle, are made by a ritual leader called *Dubusha Eka*.

## 8. Beliefs and Values

### *Land*

People are buried outside their farmland except those of young age who are buried within the farmlands upon which *enset* is cultivated. There are separate burial places for the *Kalicha*, the "caste" groups, and the so-called pure Gamos.

Land is believed to be sacred among the Gamos which explains the strong notion of territoriality. Private ownership in land is an alien concept. While asked which they prefer, all the informants opt for communal ownership, for what they call social and economic reasons. Socially, because land stands at the centre of Gamos' identity and economically, for fear of tenantization which they were used to under the imperial regime.

### *Religion*

There are 4 religious groups in Do'oma: the traditional believers; *Kalicha*; followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox church; and followers of the Kale Hiwot Protestant Church. The traditional belief is largely animistic, a belief in natural objects which appear to be unique. These might be a tree, a river or a mountain. The people justify their belief in the natural objects as a proxy to God. The logic in their animistic belief is that all objects being God's handicraft, those which are unique are the most favoured and are representatives of God. Interestingly enough, the objects are described as the "natural churches" more godly than the Christian churches which are "man-made". The traditional religion is enmeshed with a moral code called *Gome*. *Gome* governs the "don'ts" in the Gamo social discourse. One of the "don'ts" is failure to make sacrifices and observe rituals attached to the traditional gods. *Gome* is also the affliction suffered as a result of wrong deeds. Although more meaningful for the traditional believers, the notion of *Gome* is also still kept alive by the Orthodox Christians, the *Kalicha* and even some Protestant Christians.

The *Kalicha* are what the Gamos call the Muslims of the area. Their origin in most of the south-western regions is shrouded in obscurity. Perhaps they might be survivals from medieval Muslim communities. As the historical data suggests there were various Islamic principalities in the south-west during the medieval period. The modern day *Kalicha* practises a sort of syncretic religion that exhibits both Islamic and traditional elements. They observe Friday as a holy day. They have a ritual song with a traditional drum called *Dibe*. They are believed to possess the power to curse. They have a separate burial place. Despite the cultural similarities with the so-called pure Gamos, there is a limit up to which a *Kalicha* can go within the Gamo social discourse. For instance, a *Kalicha* cannot become a *Huduga* which is exclusively for the pure Gamos. That is why the richest man in contemporary Do'oma could not become a *Huduga*, despite his wealth, simply because he is a *Kalicha*. The *Kalicha* are diffused among the Gamo and other ethnic groups of the south-west.

There are also a number of followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The congregation is at Wacha. In fact, the Orthodox Church once made a major breakthrough in the south-west during the medieval period. There is a monastery in the nearby region of *Eli Gabriel* which was believed to have been established by Zera Yacob. The monastery is considered sacred and there is Holy water running from its streams. The people of Do'oma go to *Eli Gabrial* on a sort of pilgrimage. The Orthodox Christians observe Wednesday and Friday as fasting days. The Orthodox Christians do not work for about 10 days in a month on average because of the different holidays including Saturdays and Sundays. The fasting rules of their religion are that followers must not eat or drink up to 12.00am on Wednesdays and Fridays and other fasting days, which sometimes extend to a week or a month or two.

The application of the rules depends on the strictness of the followers. They do not eat any kind of animal product on these fasting days. The fasting rules of the Protestants are different. They do not take any food or water for half a day or the whole day when they want to pray for any reason. There are also different religious associations (*mehber*) which venerate one or the other saint.

There is also a steadily growing Protestant community in Do'oma. The local church is called Kale Hiwot. There is one at the centre of Do'oma. The followers of the Kale Hiwot church appear to be more "fundamental" in sticking to the Bible. They keep a low profile, and at times withdraw from social activities with religious implications. They do not, for instance, observe *Meskel* as a holy day as the traditional believers or the followers of the Orthodox Church do. They also abstain from other ritual affairs. There is a strong sense of solidarity among the Kale Hiwot community.

### *Explanations of Misfortune and Illness*

There is a widely accepted belief accounting for misfortunes (especially for drought) and illness in the Dera-malo region. The professed belief runs like this: once up on a time the *Balabat* of Bonke and Dera-malo agreed to halt the raiding and the counter-raiding among their subjects. The Dera-Malo *balabat*, however, failed to keep his word so that the raiding continued unabated. And this infidelity became *Gome* for the Dera-Malo people when the *balabat* of Bonke condemned the region to be wrought with famine, drought, pestilence and illness. Since that *Gome* is not " made out ", (ritually cleansed) life could not be better in the region. Interestingly enough, people explain the failure of different projects in the region, including the grand settlement project in Womala in terms of this legend. Although to what extent this professed legend has actually affected behaviour is difficult to tell, it is not unwarranted to think in terms of the indirect impact on the notion of wealth. It is noteworthy that some of my informants aired a sense of desperation when asked about their future.

For the Orthodox Christians and the Protestants to be ill, cured or to die, are all in the will of God. But for pagans illness and accidents have different explanations. If they are ill they feel that they did not do what they should have done for that tree, river, or mountain or whatsoever they trust in. So they try to sacrifice something.

There is a belief in spirits in Do'oma and there are some witches in the area. They are believed to have the power of healing. For this purpose they usually undertake a healing ceremony. It is not unusual to see many sick people in their compounds. People also say that they can indicate where one's lost property is and who stole it. They can also tell where one should build a house, and where the door should be so that evil spirits will not come in. In all cases they take money from people. The ritual leader who is in charge of the various spirits is called *Demutta*. He lives in the nearby mountain called Kolle Kode. The *Demutta* commands the various spirits responsible for each and every crop, animal and human disease. For his service he is rewarded in terms of the sacrifices made in his name. He is also given money. In times of severe drought and crop failures people go to Kolle Kode to solicit his mercy. The *Demutta* is believed to possess only good spirits. The evil spirit is called *Billa*. People who are believed to possess the *Billa* usually attack men of ability and competence. A successful farmer is especially the *Billa*'s target.

There are also rainmakers who are widely believed to have the power of making or stopping rain. Many people take the first output of their crops to the rainmakers before they taste it at home.

### *Community Values*

Since the Do'oma PA is a drought-affected community most of the cultural values and belief systems explained in the foregoing discussions are largely fading. People are mainly engaged in coping with the demands of everyday life, and caught up in existential imperatives. However the cultural beliefs are still hovering in the background at the normative level. There is no *Huduga*, for instance, in contemporary Do'oma. However the longing is still there. To be a *Huduga* is still the Gamo's cultural desideratum.

The settler community in Do'oma appears to be receptive to innovation whenever and wherever

it promises to alleviate the standards of living. They have not reached a stage where the adoption of modern beliefs might create tensions or value conflicts. They were especially willing to respond to the fieldworker's interviews hoping that he might be an agent for forthcoming projects which they expect earnestly. This, of course, had its own positive and negative effects on the field work. On the plus side lies accessibility and patience regarding the questions showered up on them. On the other hand, there were a great deal of made-up stories in an attempt to build up images.

### *Political Beliefs and Attitudes*

Whatever politicization is going on in the area is the work of GGPDF, the Gamo and Gofa Peoples' Democratic Front, a political organization affiliated to the ruling EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front). There are two GGPDF's candidates from the neighbouring Zala PA for the constitutional Congress. When asked whether there was any candidate from Do'oma who campaigned for the same, informants felt a sense of inadequacy to assume such a "big" political role. In order to reach out to the people at the grassroots level, the government is supposed to operate hand-in-hand with local authorities like the PA and EC (Elders Council). At such a grass-root level there is an impressive tradition of accountability. Both offices are elective. From the random sampling made by the fieldworker, almost all favoured the existing landholding system, community-owned under the auspices of the PA.

## 9. The Community

### *Community Organization*

The community is tightly-knit and orderly, since all the inhabitants belong to the PA, and there are socio-cultural values which they share in common. There are community-based festivals like *Meskel* and various religious associations and labour arrangements. In fact, there is a strong complaint on the part of the people in Womala *Kebele*, who demand a separate administrative area rather than the "exploitative" affiliation with Do'oma proper.

Four villages share the irrigation water from the Masta river and 3 senior members from each of the 4 communities form an irrigation committee which decides on water offtake. There is a village-based committee which decides which farmers should have access to water. IFPRI reported that priority was given to those farmers whose crops were driest.

### *Politics*

The regionalization policy of the Transitional Government has implications for the political, legal, social and cultural affairs of the region. Politico-administratively, it meant the restoration of the *woreda* status for the Dera-Malo region within which Do'oma is one *Kebele* PA. And this in turn began to induce a budding urbanization in the capital Wacha where the government offices were being opened and the markets were expanding. This in turn created wider opportunities and a growing market for the neighbouring PAs, among which Do'oma is comparatively advantaged thanks to its proximity to the town of Wacha. However, as described earlier, the Government recently informed the people that Dara-Malo *woreda* will be abolished.

Currently, the new policy is double-edged. On the one hand, it is creating the opportunity for the Gamo language to develop since there is a plan to teach elementary schooling in Gamo in the years to come. On the other hand, it also means the revival of the rift from within. The notion of the so-called pure Gamo, which had for long been discouraged during the *Derg* regime in the name of cultural revolution and equality within and among nationalities, is coming again under the banner of cultural revival. This has the effect of re-marginalising the "caste" groups who are looked down upon. The

*Menna* informants (the potters) bitterly complained about the revival of discrimination by the so-called pure Gamos.

### *Social Conflict*

There are no major conflicts or serious tensions in the community despite the complaints of discrimination. There are no political factions. The only political group which is active in the area is the GGPDF. As far as gender is concerned, there are signs of inequalities which are enshrined in the tradition of bridewealth and the transference of rights it implies. However, cultural conditioning is too pervasive to allow anything like feminism to be expressed.

### *Poverty and Wealth*

Generally the agricultural community in the area are living under persistent attacks of drought and poverty. In relative terms the survey site is average compared with surrounding sites. The area is divided into varied geographical zones. Around half of the villages are on hills, which have been settled extensively, and where problems of land scarcity, mountain slopes and erosion are severe. The other part, where Do'oma is, lies to the West and is lowland and hotter. This part is richer in basic resources, although the potentialities have not been exploited in the least. Compared to other villages in the lowlands Do'oma is the poorest, whereas it is richer than many of the villages on the hills.

The majority of the people are poor. For one thing, the settlers were the most drought-affected people from the very beginning. To make matters even worse, they have experienced a series of droughts, crop failures, pests and livestock diseases in the new site. While all households in Do'oma are poor by any standard, some are wealthier than others. Differences between families can be explained in terms of ownership of valuable household assets and livestock. According to the IFPRI survey the range of total household asset values runs from nil to 313 *birr*, with an average of 38 *birr*. Animals are also unevenly distributed among the community.

The difference between families have to do with gender and the previous economic positions of individual families. The former well-to-do families (former landlords) still appear to be in a better position as compared to families with a weak economic background. Female-headed households are disadvantaged due to reduced access to oxen and shortage of time due to household chores. The economic differences between male and female headed households become pronounced during times of food crisis. Gender differences also determine access to credit, in the sense that male-headed household have a better chance of getting cash credits or food loans compared with female-headed. On top of this, the Gamo social discourse is such that women are not entitled to farm.

People who are said to be the wealthiest in the community are those who own more livestock and grain, and have more access to irrigated land. The source of their wealth is believed to be the effective utilization of land and the appropriate allocation of output. They produce a lot on their plots because they are good at their agricultural activities. They save the required amount. They sell at the appropriate time when prices are higher. They invest their money in livestock and their livestock increase from time to time.

The poorest are those who have no oxen and no land, or no irrigated land. A farmer who cannot plough because he has no oxen will not have grain to feed his family. Some became poor because they lost their livestock due to disease. Others are poor because they are from a poor family and had no livestock, and came too late to receive the livestock given by UNICEF.

No-one can be rich who does not have oxen. Inequality seems to be increasing since the first settlement.

### *Social Mobility*

It is very difficult for a child of a poor person to become rich. Either he has to be extraordinarily outstanding in his agricultural work, or he must be sociable and loyal so that he can obtain loans and do good business. The notion of fatalism, especially on matters of occupation, has an adverse effect on social mobility, inasmuch as it discourages complementary economic activities. A farmer, for instance, would never resort to pottery or smithing, since these professions are not meant for him.

### *Status*

The most respected people among the Gamo are the *Huduga* who are also the rich men. Since the deteriorating economic conditions, however, the institution of *Huduga* is declining. Other than the *Huduga*, the *Kalicha* also command awe and respect, for they are believed to possess the power to curse. Elders are also respected since, due to their age, it is believed that they are wiser. The PA chairman used to be respected during the *Derg* regime since he was vested with not only administrative power but also often affiliated to the ruling party.

Among the commoners, occupation is the most important status-defining criteria. To be a potter, a blacksmith or a tanner would automatically imply inferior social status. Within the so-called pure Gamos, wealth has began to be defined in terms of owning such status symbols as mules, horses, and, recently, urban symbols such as radios and tape recorders.

An observer said that there are those who are richer than others. They are usually older people who have worked hard in the past. They are community leaders and are getting richer. They coordinate community activities and are listened to by the people. Another observer said that local elites have strong relationships with political bodies and authorities and play some role in politicising the people. Another said that there are very few elites in the locality and they are not that wealthy or powerful.. They are only leaders because they have better ideas for their community. They derive power and influence from activities outside their community and impose these on their community.

### *Social Stratification*

There is a direct correlation between wealth, status and power. Wealth begets power and power is vested with status. The institution of *Huduga* is a very good case in point. In a rather strong anomaly, it is wealth which generates power and status among the Gamo. Likewise, in the institution of *Hadera*, wealth generates status.

On the whole, there is little social stratification on the basis of economic classes. Living standards are more or less similar. Most people are still haunted by the spectre of drought. Indeed, if we use the term class formation at all, it is in the sense of occupational differentiation. But even here, the caste groups are too few in number to constitute a distinct class. This does not mean that all the households are at the same level in their standard of living. In fact, there are some households which fare better than others. Entrepreneurship is also in the making among some households. One of my informants told me that he is seriously thinking of experimenting with cattle breeding for sale. In the years to come it is likely that some sections of the community will move in a cost-benefit and pragmatic line, while the "conformists" will continue to play the game of the *status quo* only if nature is sympathetic enough to allow a good harvest and something is done regarding the chronic transportation problem.

## 10. Relationships With Other Communities and the Wider Society

### *Clans and Tribes*

The people of Do'oma are related with the neighbouring clans and tribes in various ways. There is the sense of clanship which cuts across the administrative PAs. A person is not entitled to marry another person of the same clan even if he/she resides in another PA. Moreover, men of the same clan are expected to attend wedding and burial ceremonies of clan members. Of all the neighbouring regions, it is Zala which is most closely related with Do'oma, especially in marriage.

### *Relationships With Wider Ethiopia*

In his short stay among the Gamo of Do'oma and Wacha, the fieldworker could sense a sort of double identity among the Gamo: Gamonness and Ethiopianess. Ethiopianess is expressed in the love of Amharic national songs, the eagerness to learn the Amharic language and tolerance of other ethnic groups. There is nothing like the one-time budding ethnic-cleansing found in other parts of the country.

### *Effects of Government Policies*

This is one of the various south-western areas considered as more fertile land and selected to resettle families from problematic areas by the *Derg*. Do'oma PA is one of the two sites selected in this regard, the other being Masta Sheleko, a PA neighbouring Do'oma to the south. Most of the people currently in these two settlements are those who originally settled in them.

Around 70 men were conscripted from the site. Some have been reported dead. Many of the soldiers have been demobilized and returned. They were given a hoe and 50kg of wheat. Their land was not taken away from their families when they were conscripted.

The fieldworker said that most traditional societies are syncretic, such that it is long time before government policies affect their way of life, especially on economic issues. This is mainly due to the fact that most people live at the subsistence level. And the people of Do'oma are no exception. Recent government policies, such as devaluation and ending marketing boards, have not yet been felt that much. Of course, the abolition of the marketing board is welcomed by the peasants. With the passage of time and the improvement in the infrastructural facilities, government policies are more likely to affect the lives of the people at various levels.

One observer said that people claimed their economic position was better before Mengistu left. Economic changes are affecting everyone. The poor are getting poorer and there is hardship for everyone. Most members of the community do not know a lot about current economic and political policies. Those who understand recognise imposition. The rich do not care because they are not affected. People welcome regionalization as useful for their organization. They do not know much about the Constitution but support it. They support democracy although they have some reservations as they think it might have a negative effect on the morality of their community. There are no serious security problems in the area.

Another said the community is better off than after Mengistu because young people are no longer recruited for war service and people have the right to select and deselect their representatives. They are worse off because regionalization is stirring up trouble, the people in power lack training and education, and they do not approve of the government's liberal attitude towards the secession of nations.

Another said when Mengistu was in power brothers and sisters were divided by political views. However, unlike today, anyone could go to any region to work and live. Another said that people now are happy about the absence of the outside administrators who used to exploit them and impose their political wills. While people are not economically better off now, they feel positive about the future. Initially people did not support regionalization, but now people see the point. The problem is that the government is trying to dissolve the boundary of the area and the community is stirring up trouble.

There are no serious security problems in the area. There are some who have no jobs and spend their time drinking spirits and disturbing others.

Another said that the local community think that current economic and political policies are good for economic development because, unlike in Mengistu's period, resources are directed towards developing the economy and not to supporting war efforts. Changes are affecting the poorest members of the community because these people are not working on their land, as they have no farming tools.

Another said that farmers are better off in some ways. Things are more expensive now so they do not have enough food reserves. They produced a lot more before, because they were forced to do so in order to pay government fees and contributions. Farmers know nothing about current policies since there is no-one to explain them. People are happy about regionalization and self-determination since previous administrations have been oppressive. They do not know much about the Constitution but claim it is divisive. They do not know much about democracy, but think it is for those who have power; they have got nothing from it. Another said people support the policies of the present government because aid is delivered quickly now and they have rights to determine their own affairs. During Mengistu's period schools, irrigation dams and roads were built. Generally living conditions have not improved. They fully understand democracy and support it wholeheartedly because it gives them the power of self-determination. Another said the free market is hurting poor farmers and enriching the well-off. The living standard of the poor farmers will only improve if the free market business is stopped and these farmers receive free farm tools. Another said that the people do not know a lot about democracy. Those elected are not teaching them but instead are interested in a better life for themselves. Another view was that regionalization has prevented people from competing for work outside their community.

#### *Government Activities in the Community*

The government brought drought-affected people from different areas to Do'oma in 1985 to rehabilitate them. It gave them agricultural tools and there was a literacy programme and veterinary service. In 1986 the primary school was built and in 1989 agricultural services were started. A group from the community ranked the government activities in order of usefulness to the community as: the primary school; veterinary service; literacy programme; agricultural advice; and agricultural tools. Although Do'oma is a settlement founded in 1985, it was not part of the larger government initiative to move people from drought-prone regions in the north to the southern and western areas of the country. It was a spontaneous settlement encouraged by local administration and with support from UNICEF and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. The local administration allocated the virgin Do'oma land to people with the hope that they could make use of the 2 irrigable rivers for their betterment. However, given the hardships of reallocation, low food supplies, malaria, and the overwhelming failure of the 1985 harvest, settlers faced a critical food crisis. Consequently a feeding camp was set up by RRC and UNICEF in early 1986, although it was closed later that year when the crisis was attenuated.

There is an extension programme of the MoA which includes education about irrigation farming and other modern farming practices, use of artificial inputs, strengthening Service Cooperatives, and education concerning off-farm income-generating activities for women. The MoA also have experimental plots on which variety, moisture, weed control, intercropping, fertility and planting times are tried and a demonstration plot on which planting times, irrigation and total water consumption systems are demonstrated.

#### *NGO Activities in the Community*

The single NGO active in the area has been UNICEF. Beginning in January 1986, UNICEF provided households in Do'oma with cash (on a monthly basis), clothing, seeds, oxen and medicine. Oxen were given to the farmers with the aim of building the agricultural base of the community. The cash-for-food programme of UNICEF continued for two and half years saving many lives, though it did not provide

any lasting solution.

In 1987 UNICEF distributed oxen and clothing to all the farmers. It introduced bee-keeping and established a mill. In 1990 ditch digging for irrigation was introduced. Of course, the greatest UNICEF contribution for the settler community has been the irrigation scheme, though a lot remains to be desired in this direction so as to create a viable community.

A community group ranked UNICEF's activities in order of usefulness as follows:

1. ditch digging;
2. distribution of oxen;
3. construction of mill;
4. feeding camp;
5. bee-keeping;
6. distribution of food;
7. distribution of clothing.

At present an organization under the name of RIBS (Rural Integrated Basic Services) is providing credit for the purchase of oxen and other donations such as a grinding mill and small livestock. Another donor-financed project under the name of SOCODEF (Southern Region Cooperatives Development and Credit Project), with IFAD's support, is now at the stage of implementation. The project emphasises investment in remote and previously neglected areas. The main project zones are North Omo, South Omo, Kafficho, Bench and Shakicho. The principal objectives are providing a prototype for improvement of financial intermediary services, improving access to key locations, providing veterinarian drugs to minimize livestock health constraints, extending the scope of income-generating activities for women, and small enterprise development.

#### *Future Provision to the Community*

IFPRI suggested there is a need for greater investment in cows, pack animals and small ruminants, but there is also the problem of livestock diseases.

Do'oma is highly poverty-stricken and is poor in basic resources. The potential of agriculture, the mainstay of the people is limited by the erratic rainfall. The current irrigation scheme is restricted to a small area. Prospects of extending the current limited cultivation depend highly on the development of irrigation. The other matter of high priority in this regard is adaptive and site-specific agricultural research to develop new technologies and crop varieties suitable for the agro-ecological conditions of the area.

The revival of city life in Wacha is creating growing market opportunities for neighbouring PAs to sell their agrarian products. As the nearest PA to Wacha, Do'oma is in a position to take advantage of the new trend. It is to be noted that if two conditions are met, there is a great prospect for Do'oma to play a significant role in the overall Dera-Malo economy. The first is improvement and expansion of the irrigation scheme, and the second construction of a road and bridges to link Do'oma with the all-weather road from Shashemene to Gofa through Morka. This would enable Do'oma to gain access to sell its products to the towns of Gofa, Selamber, Sodo and Shashemene. This in turn could be an incentive for more production. These conditions have to be seriously considered before any project is designed in the area.

Another provision which would make a difference would be a mill in the village.

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### *Appendix*

#### Life History of the oldest man in Do'oma

Q. What is your name?

*I. Ato Tadesse Mulat*

Q. How old are you

*I. 67*

Q. When did you settle in Do'oma ? Where did you come from ?

*I. I settled in Do'oma in January 1985 as part of the UNICEF-sponsored rehabilitation of the drought-affected people. Prior to that, I lived in the neighbouring Zala region.*

Q. How were you making a living in Zala ?

*I. I started my career as a policeman in 1945. In 1952 I left my job because of sickness and the inconveniences in the system of salary payment. Then I resorted to farming. Farming was not rewarding either, given the constraints of the vagaries of nature such as drought and crop-failures. Hence, I had to complement my living by retail trading as a sort of moonlighting. Later on, I started to farm the balabat's land on contractual basis. On the eve of the revolution, I was economically in a good position by the standard of the average peasant. I owned some trees and farm land.*

Q. To what extent did the revolution affect your life ?

*I. I got no good from the revolution. I was confiscated all my trees under the guise of establishing a school. I happened to pay unfair tax, 40 birr as compared with the 25 during the period of Haile Selassie. My son was conscripted for a free service for a cotton plantation in the far-off Dubti (Afar) region.*

Q. Did any member of your family join the literacy campaign ?

*I. Only my youngest daughter joined but she did not continue because of illness.*

Q. Why did you leave Zala to settle in Do'oma?

*I. After I lost my farmland and all my trees I became poor. To make matters even worse, nature was unsympathetic to our suffering. Zala was affected by successive droughts. In a condition such as this, we could not pay the tax. The government repeatedly proposed our transference in to an irrigation accessible region. Its strategic position between the rivers Zage and Masta made Do'oma the ideal choice.*

Q. How was life in the early days of the settlement ? How demanding was the process of adaptation?

*I. The process of adaptation was made much the easier thanks to the assistance we got from UNICEF. Unfortunately, no longer than we saw the first harvest we were struck by drought. Things began to change for the better since the irrigation scheme was materialized.*

Q. How is life currently?

*I. I did not find Do'oma as promising as I expected it to be. A lot remains to be desired on the irrigation scheme. Nature also needs to be "lenient" before we fare better. These days I am not doing well. In 1991 my UNICEF-ox died. Last week I also lost another ox. I am paying 10 birr per day for the oxen I hire from my neighbours. To make matters even worse I am losing my vigour because of*

*old age. My sons are helping me but they are not full time farmers since they do some sort of moonlighting such as retail trading.*

Q. Which ethnic group do you belong to ?

*I. Although I came from the Gamo-speaking Zala region. I am an Amhara. My ancestors are Amharas who came to the region during Menelik's period. Indeed, through my mother's line I am a Gamo. However I am an Amhara not Gamo since we are used to patrilineal descent-reckoning.*

Q. How do you retrospectively feel about Do'oma now that a decade has elapsed since you settled?

*I. For most of my life I strived for the better. But all in vain. When I settled in Do'oma a decade before I was hopeful. But things turned out to be not as good as I wished them to be. Now it is too late. The only thing I can do is to make terms with the inevitable in the short years I am left with.*

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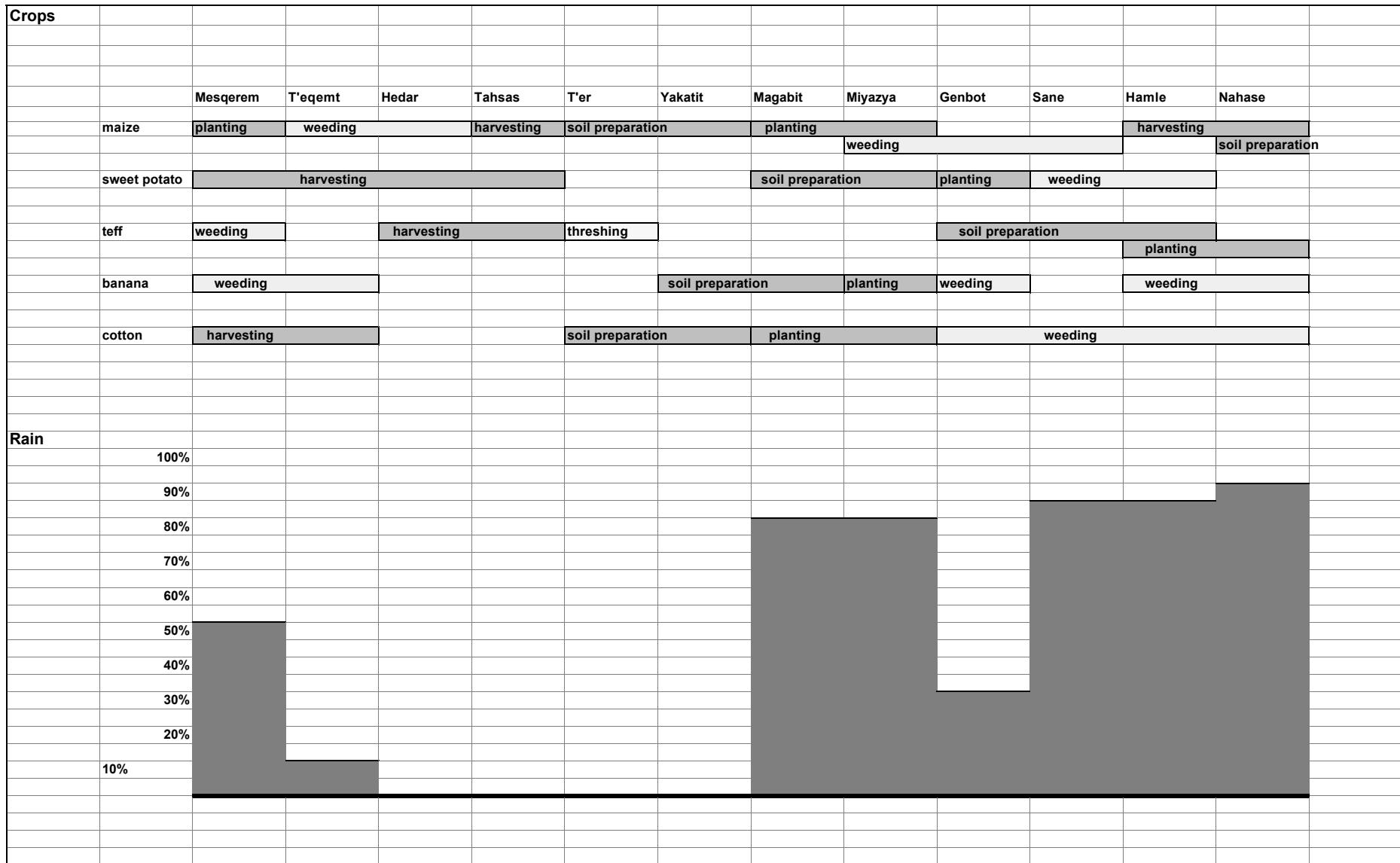
## GLOSSARY

<i>Areki:</i>	A distilled spirit.
<i>Awraja:</i>	An administrative division used before 1991.
<i>Belg:</i>	A short rainy season usually occurring during February/March/April. The harvest from this season takes place in July and August.
<i>Birr:</i>	The currency of Ethiopia (9 birr= approximately £1).
<i>Birz:</i>	Non-alcoholic mead.
<i>Derg:</i>	The name of the military government that ruled Ethiopia from the Revolution until 1991; Amharic for committee.
<i>Equb:</i>	A rotating savings and credit association.
<i>Idir:</i>	A burial society.
<i>Kebele:</i>	A political boundary marking a village, an association of villages or an urban dwellers' association
<i>Kegnazmach:</i>	A military title.
<i>Kolla:</i>	Lowland country.
<i>Maskal:</i>	The Feast of the Cross celebrated September 27th.
<i>Meher:</i>	The main rainy season - in most places from June to mid-September. Crops sown during this period are harvested from October to December.
<i>Shiferaw:</i>	'Cabbage-tree'
<i>Tella:</i>	Home-made beer.
<i>Tsebel:</i>	Holy water.
<i>Wonfel:</i>	Reciprocal labour agreement.
<i>Woreda:</i>	An administrative unit in the old administrative divisions until 1991.

## ACRONYMS

<i>CSA:</i>	Central Statistical Authority
<i>IFPRI:</i>	International Food Policy Research Institute
<i>MoA:</i>	Ministry of Agriculture
<i>RRC:</i>	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission

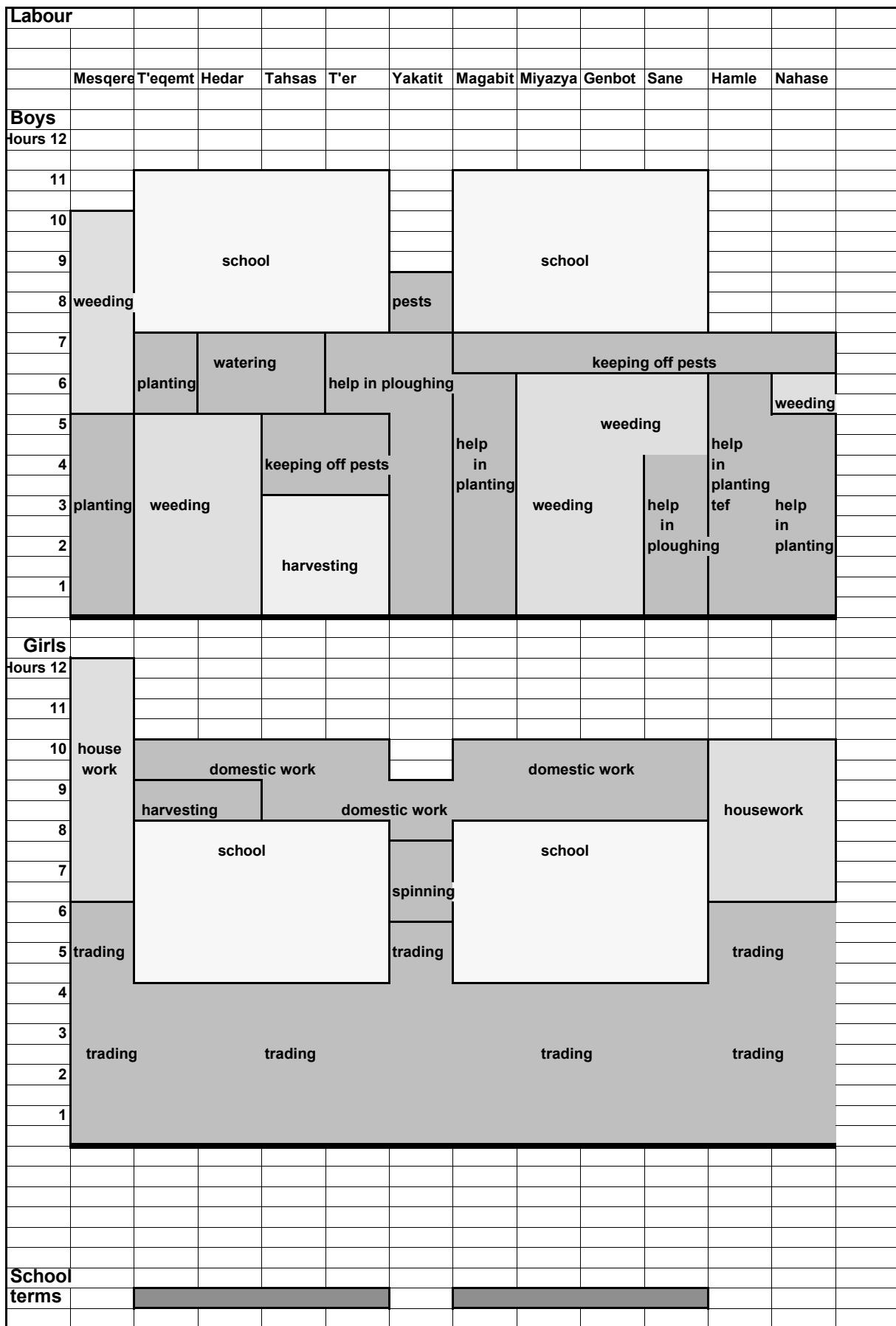
Do'oma



Do'oma

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## Do'oma

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**Do'oma**

