

Ethiopian Village Studies

(Designed and edited by Philippa Bevan and Alula Pankhurst)

Yetmen

Enemay

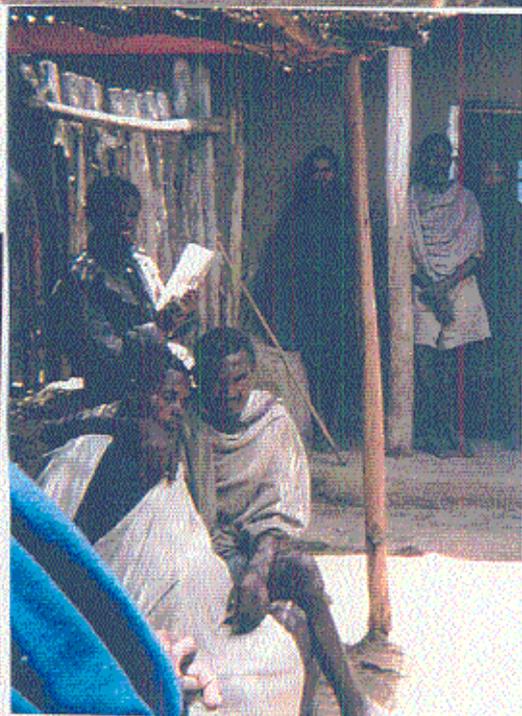
Gojjam

researched by

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

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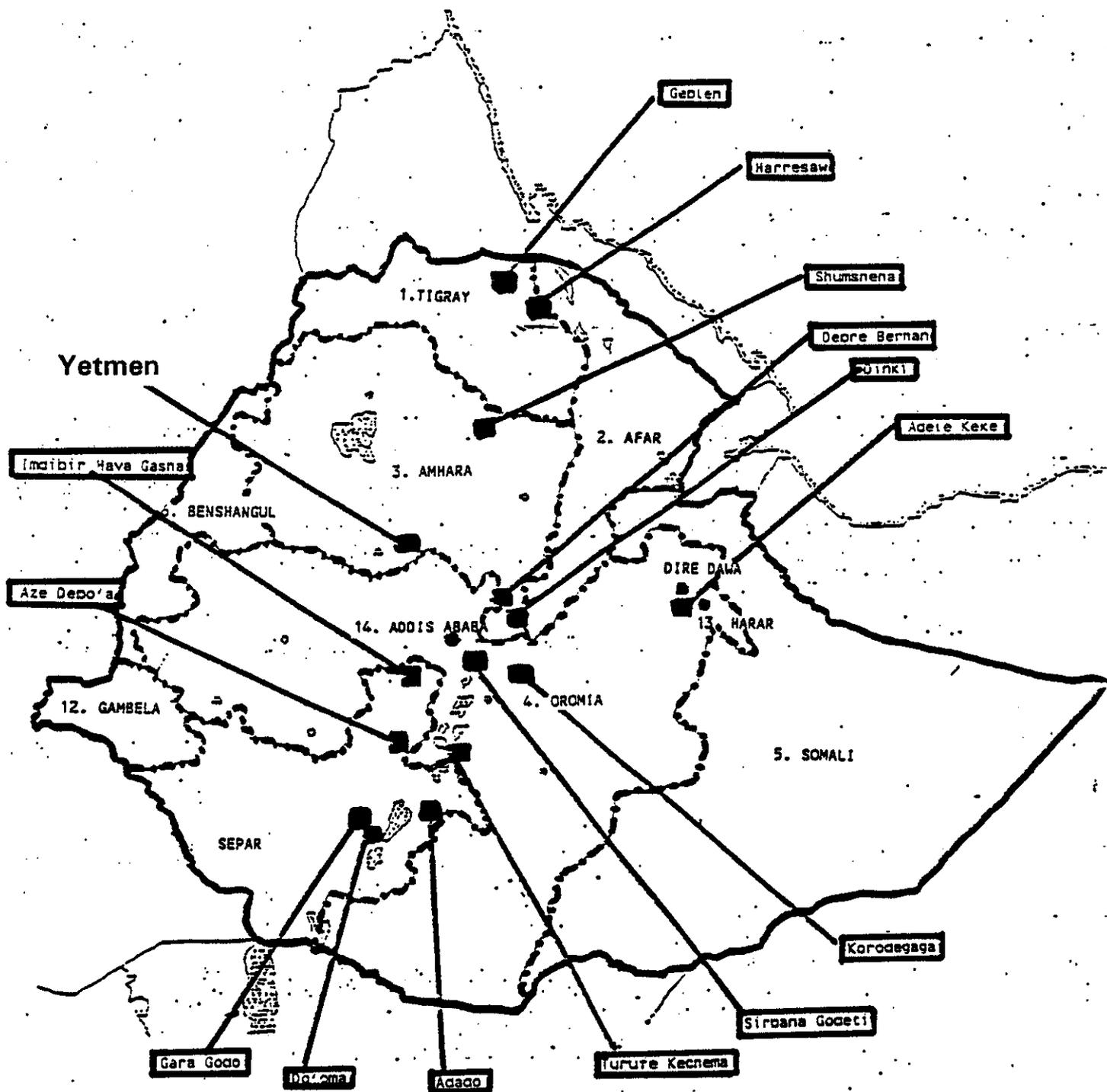
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Geben

Harresaw

Shumsnena

Debre Bernan

Bunkl

Adele Keke

Yetmen

Imbibir Hava Gasna

Aze Debo'ra

1. TIGRAY

2. AFAR

3. AMHARA

6. BENSANGUL

12. GAMBELA

14. ADDIS ABABA

4. OROMIA

DIRE DAWA

13. HARAR

5. SOMALI

SEPAR

Korodagaga

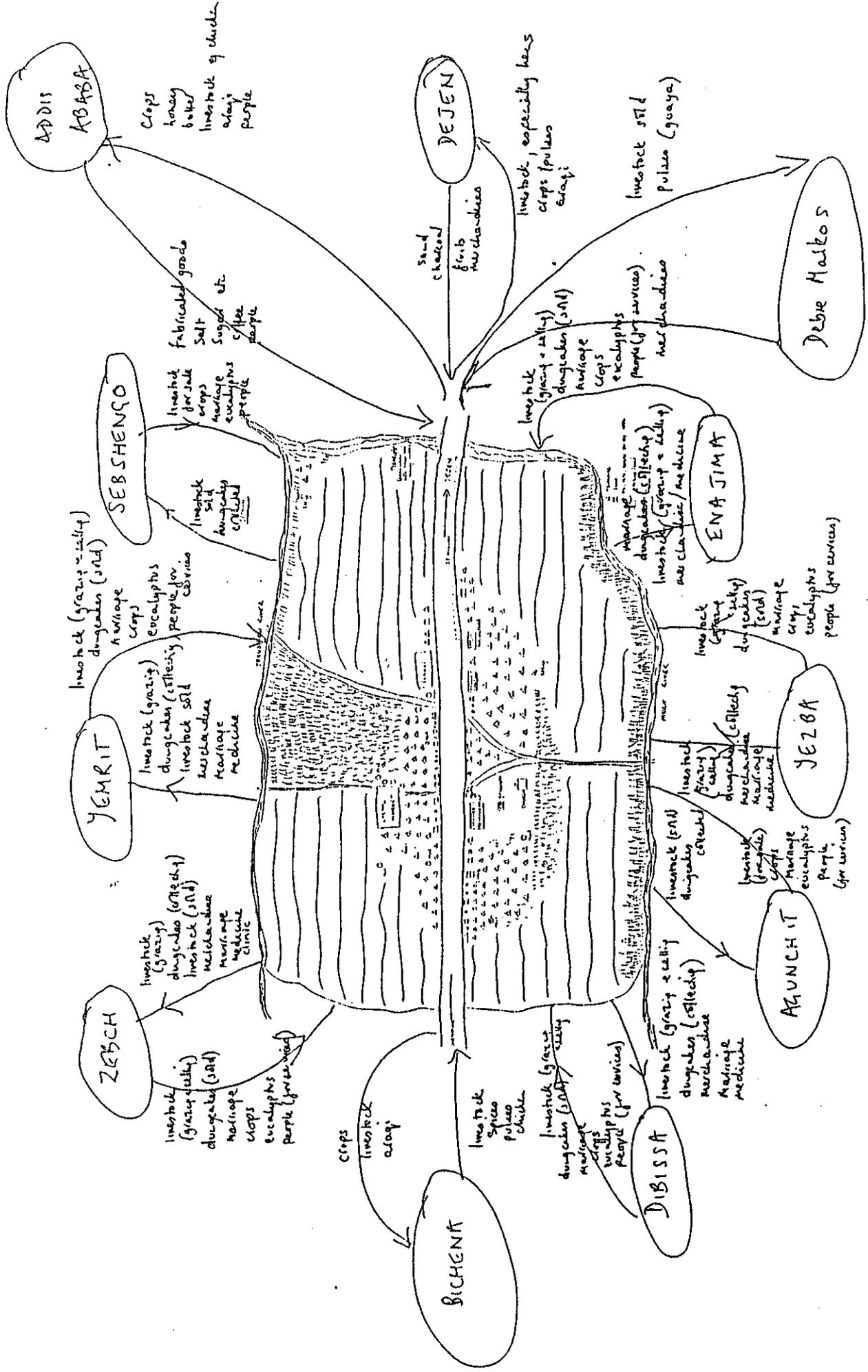
Sirbana Gocti

Gara Godo

Indoloma

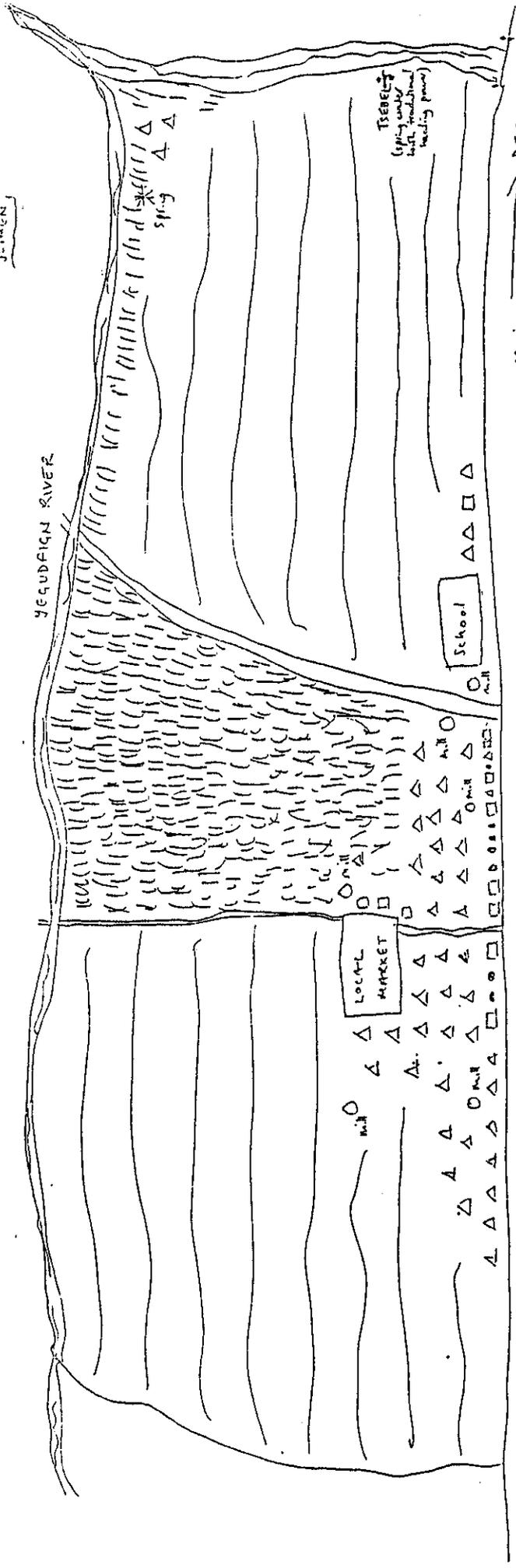
Adado

Kurute Kechema



Jordan

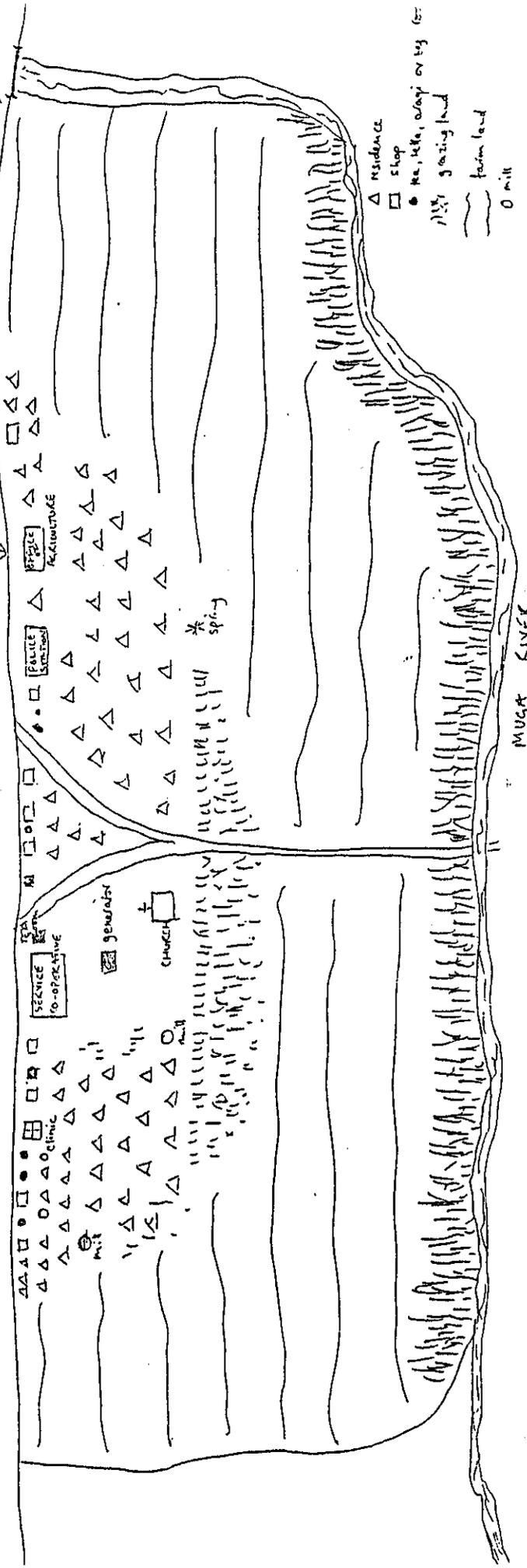
YECUDAIQIN RIVER



DEGEN

28 minutes

CHENA



MUGA RIVER

- △ residence
- shop
- me, table, dairy or by (or)
- ||||| grazing land
- ~~~~~ farm land
- mill

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1. Locating the Site in Space and Time

Geography and Population

Yetmen Peasant Association and Yetmen *kebele* (a small town on the territory of the larger Yetmen PA) are situated at the southern end of Enemay *Woreda* in East Gojjam Zone, an administrative unit in what has recently become *Killil* (Region) Three. Enemay is one of the four *woreda* of Bichena which is one of the seven *awraja* of Gojjam. It is bordered in the north by Motta; in the east and south east by Wollo and North Shewa administrative regions and in the west by Kolla Dega Damot. Yetmen is treated as an urban centre in the 1984 Housing and Population Census. This is because of the definition of the census that stated "all administrative capitals and localities in which urban dwellers' associations were established were considered as urban centres, irrespective of the population size" (1990:2). As a result, Yetmen is the second urban centre of Enemay *woreda*. Yetmen is located about 248 kms north west of Addis Ababa between the towns of Dejen and Bichena. Dejen is 17 kms south of the PA and Bichena is 15 kms north of Yetmen. Yetmen is situated in an area suitable for agriculture. There are two rivers surrounding the PA: *Muga* is perennial while *Yegudfin* exists only in the wet season.

The 1984 Housing and Population Census estimated the total population of Gojjam to be 3,273,524 with the majority (92.1 %) living in rural areas (1990: 2 and 29). The total population of Bichena town was estimated to be 7,951 while the population of Yetmen town was estimated to be 562 of which 226 are male and 336 female. At the end of the reproductive period a Gojjam rural woman produced an average of 5.8 children and an urban woman 4.6 children. A considerable proportion of women had between 4 and 8 births. The estimated total fertility rate for the region was 7.89 children per woman. The corresponding rates for rural and urban areas were 7.98 and 6.96 respectively. The gross reproduction rate was 3.90 and the respective figures for rural and urban areas were 3.94 and 3.41. The peak reproduction period begins in the early 20's and continues through the mid-30's. The estimated mean age at child bearing was 27.66 for the region as a whole, while these were 27.61 for rural and 28.44 for urban areas.

Amhara is the most prominent group in the region comprising 87.4% of the total population. As can be expected from the ethnic composition of the population, *Amarigna* was the single most important language which was spoken at home by 95.5% of the total population. "*Agewigna*" occupied the second position and was spoken by 8.1%. About 95% of the population were Christians and only 4% were Moslems. The traditional religious groups accounted for only 1.2% of the total population. Among the urban centres, the highest concentration of Orthodox Christians is to be found in Debre Work (98.4%), followed by Debre Markos (97%) and Finote Selam (93.1%). The Muslims account for 41.6% of Motta, 39.8% of Bichena towns, and 35.9% of Dejen town (1990:33).

Table 1: Population of Yetmen

<i>Age</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
<7	256	307	563
8-14	230	345	575
15-20	230	115	345
21-30	77	269	346
31-45	192	154	346
46-65	115	77	192
>65	77	38	115
Total	1177	1305	2482

Source: the *Woreda* Agricultural Office

The total area of Yetmen PA is estimated to be 9,300,000 sq metres of which about 87% is under cultivation and about 9.2% is communal grazing land. None of the land is forested or uncultivable. An unofficial, but probably accurate, estimate gives the total population of Yetmen PA in 1995 as 2,491, over 52% of whom are women. Table 1 gives the age and gender distribution of the population.

Climate

The altitude of the Amhara settlement in general is between 1,800m and 3,500m and above, which include the three local altitudinal zones, namely *wurch* the coldest highlands; *dega*, the cool highlands and *weyna dega*, the warm lands. The whole plateau of the Amhara region experiences almost uniformly on average an annual temperature of between 15°C and 18°C. The warm months, March through May, come before the big rainy season which starts from June and continues through the end of September. There is actually one long rainy season, from March to mid-September, with maximum precipitation between June and August. In Yetmen there are scanty rains that occasionally fall from January up to April. The rains reach their peak between early June and mid-September; a period locally known as *Kiremt*. According to the rainfall records of 1993, the minimum and maximum rainfalls range between 11.2 - 39.0 mm respectively. The coldest season comes between early October and early December. Since wheat is sown in early August, and since it is periodically cold in September, this crop is rarely affected by frost. In general, there is no significant problem in the village that is caused by heat or cold. On the basis of the temperature record of the year 1993 (except the months of September, October, November and December for which there are no records since the thermometer has been stolen), the minimum and the maximum temperatures have been 5°C and 25°C respectively.

Infrastructure

Medical treatment, a grinding mill, shops, and other services are found in Yetmen *kebele*, the small town at the centre of the PA. The people in the PA are expecting to get access to clean drinking water and electricity in the near future. Currently construction of plumbing and electricity are under way in and around the area.

Yetmen PA is located on an all weather-road to major towns of region 3. Hence, it is not cut off from any major towns during the rainy season.

Production

The Amhara, in most general terms, are characterized as a sedentary, predominantly agricultural people. A common form of plough cultivation is practised in the production of all staples. The principal subsistence crops grown in this region include maize, pearl millet, sorghum, several varieties of wheat, *tef* and numerous varieties of barley, broad beans, grey beans, lentils, onions, garlic, red peppers, potatoes, chickpeas, peas and cabbage. In addition to these crops a number of pulses, oilseeds, vegetables and spices are grown in most parts of Gojjam. In the extreme low-lands, there is a little sugar cane, banana, peach trees and lemon trees. There is considerable inter-regional trade in cereals and as a result the diet of most families is not strictly limited to the local crops. Most of the crops are grown in the *meher* season with secondary crops planted in February or March before the *belg* rains. For the major season the time of planting varies from the beginning of June to the end of September depending on altitude, drainage, the crop, and yearly variations in the beginning of the rains. Harvesting begins in mid-September and continues until after Christmas.

In Yetmen people grow *tef* and wheat, much of which is transported to the markets in Addis Ababa. They grow maize for home consumption, and pulses and oil seed such as lentils, chickling pea, chickpeas and niger seed. They also use niger seed as a spice. In Yetmen *meher* is the major harvesting season during which all crops except maize are grown. Maize is the only annual crop grown during the

belg season. Agriculture is currently rain-fed despite a great potential for irrigation.

Social Structure

All the people of Yetmen belong to the Amhara linguistic group. The overwhelming majority of them are peasants practising traditional farming. Even though there are some artisans in the community, each peasant is expected to build his own dwelling following commonly known technology and house designs. The majority of the houses found in the community are tin-roofed but some of them are *tukul*. Cooperation for certain activities such as building houses, farming activities and the like is a common cultural practice of the PA. Members of the community share values, customs and beliefs.

Since there are no people from other ethnic groups in the village, no ethnic conflict has arisen. However, due to ethnic conflicts created elsewhere some people who lived in other parts of the country have returned to this region. The majority of them are ex-soldiers. Most of the returnees have obtained land to cultivate, others have become wage earners and a few others have become dependents.

History

The town was founded around 1968 with the establishment of a Swedish-built elementary school which was later upgraded to a junior high school. According to elders, many peasants started settling around the school with the hope that it would bring some new changes in their lives.

In 1957 the main road was built;

In 1970 the school was built;

In 1976 a service cooperative was established; fertilizer was introduced; and agricultural extension services were extended;

In 1978 the national literacy programme started;

In 1979 veterinary services were provided;

In 1982 the producer cooperative was established; and a new type of agricultural implement locally known as *mensh* (equipment for cleaning when threshing) and a new *tef* variety were introduced;

In 1991 a clinic was constructed; a new variety of *guaya* chickling pea was introduced for animal feed; and the village was connected to electricity;

The earlier land tenure pattern, which was based on the *rist* system, was replaced by "land to the tiller" in 1975. The *rist* system provided equal access for individuals in receiving plots of land by tracing descent to their ancestors. Members of the community fought with the *Derg* regime to preserve the customary land tenure system. However, they gradually accepted what was imposed. They were organized in a peasant association and later on established a co-operative society through which they obtained some advantages such as basic literacy, improved agricultural techniques and inputs, and a shop in the town. Notwithstanding these advantages, the peasants disliked working for the cooperative because it involved hard labour and they had to work from dawn to dusk, disregarding their individual responsibilities.

The peasants in the area were happy that the Transitional Government (TGE) helped them in getting rid of the *Derg* regime. However, they are currently showing strong signs of discontent with the following political and economic measures of the government:

1. The TGE is forcing them to pay the debt that the Producers' Cooperative incurred for agricultural inputs. (When the PC was disbanded all the property was distributed among members). Because of this all the people in Yetmen are forbidden to get any credit facility from the MoA. Other government organizations provide for the purchase of agricultural inputs. The villagers suggest that this was contrary to the initial promise of the EPRDF to write off the debt. In addition, they

consider that the TGE betrayed them by breaking the promise. They believe that the promise was simply a pretext for getting popular support in that critical time when they were coming into power.

2. The tax for a plot of land has been increased from 7 *birr* to 20 *birr* per holding.
3. The propaganda of alleging that the Amhara were responsible for past bad deeds and turning the traditionally praised name *Neftenya* into a nickname for them, and the ethnic politics that is being followed by the TGE, are resented by the villagers.
4. Some of the peasants of the community are being interrogated, harassed and imprisoned on the pretext that they support the opposition forces.

The PA officials served the community in collaboration with local elders until they were imprisoned (1994). At this time the PA officials have not been replaced.

No-one has suffered from considerable hardship during the last 10 years with the exception of a few individuals who were reduced to eating chickling peas instead of *tef* during the drought of 1985.

2. Seasonal Activities and Events

Calendars can be found in the Appendix. There are no specific seasons of sickness and treatment among members of the community. Water is fetched at any time from the various wells found in the community.

Credit is not recognised as very important. Nonetheless, some people who have no farming equipment tend to borrow money around late April and May in order to be able to buy the necessary items for cultivating the land in June. This is the duty of men.

There is no specific time for breeding livestock. As to when it rains, it has been mentioned under the sub-topic of climate. Around late August and September, pests sometimes appear. The agricultural extension agents usually give the necessary advice as to how to use agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, herbicides and pesticide. Thus, pests are not usually a major problem.

More fuel is needed during June, July, August and October since these are the coldest months. The commonly used fuel is *kubet*, animal manure, and small amounts of firewood.

Since the people of Yetmen are Orthodox Christians, there are festivals on all major Christian holidays of the country like *Meskel* (the day for the commemoration of the founding of the True Cross), *Timket* (Epiphany), *Ganna* (Christmas), *Fasika* (Easter), etc.

3. Farm Economy

Crops

In Yetmen crop cultivation is the dominant activity and source of livelihood. Closely linked with agricultural activity, livestock, petty cash grain trading, and collecting and selling dung also play a vital role in the area. The principal crops grown in Yetmen are *tef* (mostly white *tef*), wheat, chickpeas, *guaya* (vetch), and maize. The two principal crops are *tef* and wheat, which together take up roughly 55% of the total area under cultivation (source: MoA office). These are the only crops on which fertilizer is used. Among the various factors which diversely affect agriculture the most conspicuous is scarcity of land.

This year's (1994) *belg* season (March to May) has not been suitable for growing crops because of a shortage of rainfall. This condition might impede the growth of weeds in June, July and August (the season for ploughing, sowing and weeding), and thus the *meher* harvest is expected to be better than usual.

Last year's *meher* harvest was satisfactory. This is because around August the rain was very scanty

and since the land absorbed sufficient amount of water during June and July, the crops received proper conditions.

There has not been any serious crop disaster during the past ten years in the area. Frost usually causes significant harm to crops in October.

Livestock

The principal livestock reared in this region include cattle (the short-horned zebu type being the most respected); mules; donkeys; horses; chickens; sheep; goat; and bees. Cats and dogs are found everywhere. Sheep and horses predominate on the grassy highlands of Gojjam, while goats thrive in the lower country. In addition to their use as a source of food, the hides and skins of cattle and sheep are used in making leather products. Sheep's wool is woven into blankets, *bernos* (cloaks), and rugs. Horses, mules, and donkeys are raised mainly for transport. In former times, horses were used almost exclusively in warfare, each local chief commanding his own personal cavalry. In more peaceful pursuits, a well-bred mule represents a mark of status for those who ride them. But the most important animals for the Amhara, since they are subsistence farmers, are cattle, without which a man cannot cultivate his land. Herds are usually small. An ordinary man who has two pairs of oxen and three or four cows is considered wealthy in cattle in Gojjam.

The common livestock found in the village are oxen (farming assets), cows (milk), sheep (meat), donkeys and horses. Mules and goats are rare. Though crop cultivation is the pivotal activity of Yetmen's economy, livestock are closely linked with agriculture and play an important role in the economic activity of the society. The importance of raising livestock lies in its use as a source of oxen (for ploughing), pack animals (for transportation), dung (the major source of fuel), dairy products, meat and hides and skins.

The following table gives an estimate of the livestock holdings in Yetmen in 1994.

Table 2: Livestock in Yetmen

<i>Type of livestock</i>	<i>Number</i>
oxen	589
cows	624
heifers	115
young bulls	209
calves	312
horses	6
mules	1
donkeys	290
sheep	940
goats	35
hens	844

Source: MoA local office

The total livestock population is very small compared with 15 to 20 years ago. This is because an enormous part of communal grazing land has been taken for cultivation. The other problems affecting livestock holdings are shortage of feed, drought and animal diseases. Given the dominance of crop cultivation, ploughing, which is the pivotal productive activity, gives oxen a central role. This means that in the area oxen are one of the major attributes of wealth. Table 3 shows the approximate distribution of oxen by households in Yetmen in 1994.

There have not been changes in livestock holdings since there is no new system in breeding

livestock. Vaccination services are provided every year by the Ministry of Agriculture. There are no regular major livestock disease outbreaks, although there is often some sickness during September when cattle eat the grass called *magatt*. Cross-breeding is not practised in the community. There has never been any time when a lot of people had to sell their livestock because of drought. However, considerable numbers of livestock died during the 1985 drought, and livestock trading was profitable for a brief period immediately after the drought of 1985 as a result of high prices. There is a normal practice of buying and selling of livestock in the PA, especially oxen for farming and other livestock to overcome financial hardship. Some people keep livestock in their houses. Those peasants who have a large number of livestock build barns for them. All the local grass in the village and the sediment of *tella* are fed to animals. Manure is used only to fertilize crops in the backyard, *gesho* and eucalyptus.

Table 3: Oxen in Yetmen

<i>No of oxen owned by household</i>	<i>No of households</i>
0	85
1	104
2	218
3	15
4	2
4+	0

Source: interview with a key informant

Land

Before 1974, land was allocated following the *rist* system. In the *rist* system, an individual received a lot of land by tracing descent to an ancestor who owned a certain amount of land holdings. This system was replaced by the government declaration of "land for the tiller" in 1975. Since then, the peasants has had land use rights. There were two types of land rights before the revolution: *gult* and *rist*.

Gult (fief) rights provided economic and political support for the elite and in their territorial aspect constituted the framework for the administration of the peasantry. *Rist* (land-use) rights, on the other hand, played an important role in the social and economic organization of the local community. Hoben further explained these tenure systems as follows:

Gult rights over land were given to members of the ruling elite as a reward for loyal service to their lords, and to religious institution endowments. The individual or institutions that held land as *gult* had the right to collect taxes from those who farmed it and also had judicial and administrative authority over those who lived on it. *Gult* rights were thus far more than just a type of land tenure. They were an integral part of the Amhara feudal polity; they represented the granting away by a regional ruler of an important part of his taxing, judicial, and administrative authority. Virtually all arable and inhabited land was held by someone or some institution as *gult*. There was "no land without a master".

Rist rights in contrast to *gult* rights, were land-use rights. In principle they were hereditary and could be held by lord and peasant alike. *Rist* and *gult* are not different types of land but distinct and complementary types of land rights. Usually they extended over the same land.

"A single rate of *gwilt* comprising a few square miles, included within its boundaries strip fields held as *rist* by scores or even hundreds of farmers. The *gwilt*-holder might also hold some fields as *rist* within his estate of *gwilt* land" (Hoben, 1973:6).

But the *rist* system, which an Amhara used to describe his membership in a descent group and its

consequent rights, was of central importance to the social organization of the Amhara community (Hoben 1963:106; 1973:7). In its most general sense, *rist* referred to "the supposedly inalienable rights that accrue to every living descendant of the chief father of a maximal house". When an individual referred to his *rist* in this general sense, he referred to all the lands which he felt he must have rights in by virtue of his many ancestral affiliations, most of which he would admit that he himself could not trace. In this sense, *rist* remained for most people more of a value than an economic or political possibility. By contrast, in a more limited sense, *rist* referred to primary land divisions where his known ancestors in recent generations had exercised their land use rights. Therefore, here *rist* referred to the "land over which an individual has effective control by virtue of his recognized claim to membership in the appropriate ambilineal descent group" (Hoben, 1963:107).

Therefore, the most immediate meaning of *rist* is land over which an individual has effective control by virtue of his recognized claim to membership in the appropriate ambilineal descent group. As Hoben stated, though *rist* rights were held by both men and women, men performed almost all of the work on the land and thought of their wives' *rist* along with their own. Thus the Amhara speak of three categories of *rist*; namely father's *rist*, mother's *rist*, and child's *rist*. The third type refers to the rights that a man had to use his wife or ex-wife's *rist* if he has children by her who are living with him (1963:107-112).

Dessalegn also explained that under the *rist* land tenure system each member of the society was assured a piece of land, however small it was, since any legitimate member's claims were always considered. This had led some to argue that the system minimized landlessness, for "it was effective in allocating land to people and people to land". Because of the practice of such a land tenure system, tenancy was not widespread in Gojjam and other northern Amhara regions. However, a small percentage of tenants did exist in the Amhara society and in Gojjam they were estimated to be 13%. It is important to note here that the extent of tenancy varied from region to region as well as within regions and localities, although detailed studies on various regions are not available (Dessalegn, 1984).

This land tenure system society was practised until the 1974 social revolution. The land tenure system was especially affected by the land reform proclamation of 1975, which is, according to Dessalegn, the first and central legislation which set off the process of land distribution and the organization of peasants in peasant associations. In James McCann's words the proclamation:

"ended landlord-tenant relations, restricted private landholding to ten hectares, and forbade the hiring of agricultural labour within the private sector. Large private concessionary farms became state farms, and the marketing of grain by private traders was curtailed in favour of a national marketing parastatal. Land distribution and judiciary powers below the subdistrict level devolved to peasant associations, which elected their own leadership and took on many of the duties previously held by local *chiqashums* and *balabats* (McCann, 1987).

The provisions of the proclamation were implemented by PAs which were organized on an area of 800 hectares of land. Initially the major function of these PAs was to implement the land reform. But they were also given a wide range of functions and responsibilities, including the administration of public property, the establishment of judicial tribunals which are autonomous rural courts dealing with disputes among peasants, the establishments of service co-operatives, and the building of schools and clinics, and since 1985 also villagisation programmes. In Dessalegn's view "in the *rist* areas, the abolition of recurrent land claims and therefore of the 'corporate' family system... is bound to have profound social and familial implication..." (1984: 39). The first act of implementation of the reform was the organization of peasant associations and the distribution of land within each PA area (i.e 20 *gasha* or 800 hectares). But the method of land distribution, and the criteria used varied not only from one locality to another but also within each locality as well. As a result, as Dessalegn indicated in his statement about the condition in Adet (a district of Gojjam) the implementation of land reform was slow. According to Dessalegn, "...it was only in 1980 and 1981 that some form of land distribution was carried out. This is true of the *rist* areas, in some of which actual large-scale land distribution had not

taken place by 1981..." (1984: 46-47). The land allotment adopted in the *rist* tenure areas was made on the basis of family size and the quality of land. Each household receiving land had a share from both the good as well as the poor land available for distribution. And also a minimum ceiling of a unit of land was set for a household, and any addition over this was based on the number of household members (Dessalegn, 1984: 47).

Every household, except those formed since the last land distribution, is entitled to at least 1,000 sq metres of land at the backyard of each house. This land is mostly used for growing *gesho*, eucalyptus, maize and vegetables. It is enclosed by a fence and trees. Those who were not in the Producers' Cooperative and who had no land before the recent land redistribution still have no land.

Sons who want to get married must show their strength and capability in ploughing land. Since land has never been sold in Yetmen, or in Gojjam in general, we cannot know the price of an average holding. There are some women divorcees and widows who own a piece of land. The villagers prefer to resolve disputes through the local institution of *Shimgilina* (council of elders) rather than going to government courts.

Labour

The allocation of labour in the area is usually determined by the composition of the household. Gender and age are the major determinants of the division of labour. Ploughing (*kocha*) is a male activity. Men are also expected to lead the daily activities of the household. Other agricultural activities such as weeding, harvesting, and transporting crops, and livestock activities are usually held communally within the household and can be done by men or women. Activities solely performed or managed by women include processing of grain, preparation of food, rearing of children and other domestic activities. Boys/girls of age 6 to 12/10 are locally called *leffo/ligoch* and are involved in herding of livestock and in helping parents with domestic work. Boys of 13 or more usually help with farm work, while girls of 10 and above assist with domestic work and the collection of dung.

Apart from household labour, there is also traditional wage labour and labour sharing, in the area. If it rains during harvest farmers cannot use the traditional work group methods since it is vital to get the harvest in as soon as possible. In this situation they use wage labour. There are different type of jobs for which wages are paid. The nature of these jobs are varied, in that some are short-term and casual or seasonal, while others are long-term. Wages are largely paid in kind in the form of grain. Labour is hired for herding, ploughing, harvesting and building. There are other activities like baby-minding, well-digging and wood chopping which wage labour attends to. The table shows an estimate of the % of households employing wage labour in the last 12 months:

Table 4: Wage labour in Yetmen

<i>activity</i>	<i>% of households employing</i>	<i>time</i>
ploughing	3%	mostly July
harvesting	25%	December and January
carpentry/building	6%	March-May/Oct-Nov
farm servant	50%	March/April
babyminder	2%	
herder	20%	May/June
well-digging	15%	Dec/May
wood chopping	12%	March/April

Source: interviews

There is a shortage of labour for harvesting in January and February, and for ploughing in July. There are migrant workers coming from neighbouring PAs to perform these activities (except ploughing). People in Yetmen also migrate to the neighbouring PAs for wage labour. Hard work, trustworthiness and responsibility are the principal criteria used in the area to identify the right person for the job.

Agricultural wage labour is known locally as "labour for crop". It takes a number of forms as described below:

1. *Be-kurt*: this is an arrangement whereby *bale kurt arash* (the farm servant) works for an individual landholder at a predetermined wage. In this arrangement the farm servant (*arash*) lives with the employer's household and is provided with food and a sleeping place. The hired tiller is requested to perform other activities over and above the farmwork. Payment for this kind of work currently ranges from 15 to 20 *dirib* (5 *dirib* = approx 100kg) of crop per year, in addition to board and lodging.
2. *Siso* (one-third), *ke-arat* (one-fourth), and *ke-amist* (one-fifth) are also arrangements for wage labour. Under these arrangements all the necessary inputs except labour are provided by the plot owner. Unlike the *be-kurt* arrangement the hired tiller does not live and eat with the household and does not perform any other activity other than farm tasks. The wage payment is determined by the yield on the plot. The yield is divided in the ratio 1:3, 1:4, or 1:5 in favour of the landholders: ie they take $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{4}{5}$.

Labour sharing is the other major form of pooling of labour in the area. There are different forms of labour sharing, viz. *debo*, *wonfel*, and *gulma*. *Debo*, another name of which is *jige*, involves the labour of many people on the land of an individual villager, who has good relationships with the would-be participants, usually for ploughing and harvesting. *Debo* is usually called when the peasants are exposed to natural, social or political disasters and need enough additional labour at the right time. The one who calls *debo* usually prepares food and drink for the participants.

Other group activities are carried out through another form of collaboration called *wonfel*. This is an arrangement whereby an individual owner of land and an ox gets a partner of similar ownership status. They combine their oxen and their labour and work equal amounts on each landholding. Obligations are reciprocal. *Wonfel* is usually formed by individuals who are related to one another either by consanguinity or affinity. Food and drinks may be provided by the person who has the work to be done in cooperation.

Gulma is another form of labour-sharing, usually used to help elderly and disabled people. This is usually practised among relatives. The farmer does all the farm activities and other tasks without any kind of payment.

Interlinkages

It is a tradition in Yetmen to share labour, oxen, and different farm implements among the residents. Sharing and borrowing is also common in the non-agricultural life of the community.

With regard to agriculture the following arrangements are common:

1. labour for crop (described above under *Labour*)
2. labour sharing (described above)
3. labour for oxen
4. *mekanajo* - oxen sharing
5. sharecropping (*abel* or *yeikul ihil*)
6. *arata*

Labour for oxen: under this arrangement the individual holder of land works for those who own oxen in exchange for the use of the oxen to cultivate his land. An individual should work for 2 days for the oxen-owner in order to use a pair of oxen on his land for one day.

Mekanajo: this is an ox-sharing agreement whereby an individual farmer working only a single ox pairs

it with another farmer owning an ox and they work their respective fields taking turns.

Abel or *yeikul ersha*: this is a sharecropping arrangement under which an individual farmer cultivates the farm of another and they share the products on the basis of their agreement. People who have a plot but do not have farm implements and oxen enter into an agreement with those who have them. Those with the implements may cover the expenses of fertilizer, seed, herbicide and fulfil whatever is required to produce the crop. If the arrangement is *yeikul ihil* they share the yield equally.

Arata: this is a traditional form of credit. The word *arata* signifies the amount of interest an individual has to pay for a certain amount of borrowed money or grain. In Yetmen repayment of the loan (principal plus interest) is often in the form of grain. For example, for borrowing 100 *birr* someone will pay 100kg of *tef*. Hence the interest payment varies with fluctuations in the price of *tef*.

Due to the fear that disputes may arise between relatives, most interlinkages are not based on kinship relations. The main criterion for interlinkages is the will of both parties to enter into an agreement. The employer has to supply the necessary farming materials while the individual to be hired should be energetic and has to fulfil the agreement.

Technology

The peasants, who are always males, use the ox-plough farming technique. The farm implements involved in the preparation of land includes *maresha* (plough head), *mofer* (plough beam) and *kenber* (yoke), combined and pulled by two oxen, and manual implements such as *mekotkocha* (forked hoe) (MoA, 1984:19). They use sickles and forks and spades made of wood during the harvest season. Women produce edible oil which is locally known as *kiba-nug*.

The harvesting of grain, which is principally men's work, is carried out with farming implements for cutting such as *machid* (sickle). Women and children assist by collecting the tied bundles of cut grains in the field and transporting them to a threshing ground (an earthen floor usually polished with cow-dung). Threshing is either done by beating with sticks or continuously riding a team of several oxen (or other animals) on the harvest. Winnowing is done by tossing the grain into the air using a *mensh* (a three tined wooden or metal pitch fork) or *layda* (a wooden spatula or shovel).

There are different kinds of storage facilities. Among these, the following are important in grain storage.

- (1) *gotera* is a grain store kept outside the living rooms of the farmers, big in size, mostly made of wooden frames and plastered with mud.
- (2) *dibignit* has a similar shape to *gotera*, but is smaller in size and usually kept inside the living rooms. It is usually made of mud only.
- (3) *gudguad* is a pit dug underground; and
- (4) *gota* is like *dibignit* in size but made with similar construction materials as *gotera*.

Grain is transported to this store by donkey and human labour. The villagers contend that they are very careful not to lose grain. That they value it highly is shown by the saying *ihil nigus new* ("grain is a king"). However, most individuals do not have enough containers for transporting the yield and have to borrow *akmada* (sack-like containers) from fellow villagers. Since these containers may be torn, considerable amounts of grain may be lost on the way from the threshing field to the store. There is also a loss of grain in the process of winnowing it from the husks.

Women often bake *injera* and bread and prepare *wot* and other food items. They are also known for their basket (*sifet*) weaving. They make baskets for different household purposes including *lantika* (for decoration), *massobe-work*, *saffed*, and *wonfit*. One of the units of measurement known as *dirib* is a container made by women. Also, women spin cotton and give it to the weavers to make *shemma* out of it. A woman who is good at spinning is accorded respect; and her daughter is given a praised appellation known as *yebalemoya lij* (a daughter of capable woman) and she will get a chance to marry

a respected and rich husband.

Dried animal manure is the main source of fuel. Wood is also used as a fuel but it is mostly used for constructing houses. It is transported by donkeys. There are many donkeys in the community and some horses. Mules are very rare. All these animals are used for transportation. There are no carts at all. An all-weather road links the PA with the nearest town. It costs 2 *birr* to get there by car. It takes about 4 hours to walk.

During the last *meher* the MoA gave fertilizer on credit to farmers in different PAs, except Yetmen and Zebeh. These were forbidden credit because of an outstanding debt to the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank given to the Producer Cooperative in 1989.

Innovations

The following innovations were introduced in the community:

1. *Tef*: A new variety of *tef* was introduced in 1983 in order to increase production and productivity. The new variety was proposed and introduced by the development agents and was tried first by the Producers' Cooperatives. This variety of *tef* was successful and copied by all the peasants. The long term effect of the new variety is good.
2. *Guaya*: It was first introduced in 1992 to substitute for the other pulses growing in the area, (horsebeans and cowpeas) which were not doing well. It was introduced by the development workers from the Ministry of Agriculture and the best farmers tried it first. It was not so successful and copied by about half of the farmers in the area. Some farmers opted for producing *tef* which gets a higher price rather than wasting their resources on producing *guaya* which sells for low prices. The long run effects were not good. The land has not been very suitable and farmers have not got as much harvest as expected.
3. *Fertilizer*: The soil has been losing its fertility over time and the farmers were looking for solutions. Fertilizer was introduced in 1969 in order to improve soil fertility and increase yield. Development agents proposed it and the farmers who could afford to tried it first. It was not successful when it was tried first. It was not suitable to the crop varieties grown then. It was copied by relatively richer farmers who could afford to buy it. The long run effects are both good and bad. Good because now it gives good yields; bad because the land is getting used to it and cannot give any yield without the use of fertilizers.
4. *Trade*: Farmers were not used to trading 10 years ago. It was introduced when most of the agricultural land was taken by Producers' Cooperatives and the landholdings of each household became less and less. It was begun by farmers whose land was taken by the cooperatives. It was profitable before more people were engaged in it: now about a quarter of the people in the area are involved in trade, including farmers and unemployed high school dropouts. The two groups who have failed to participate are those who are rich and those who are too poor because of lack of capital. The long run effect is good, in that the profit can be used for household expenditure rather than selling stock.
5. *Mensh* (three-tined fork; made of metal): the *mensh* which was in use before was made of wood. The metallic one was introduced in 1983 as it is more durable, and good to handle and use. It was proposed by development agents and tried by the Producer Cooperatives first. It was better than the previous one. About a quarter of the farmers in Yetmen copied it. Farmers who were not producing pulses did not copy it for it is most useful for pulses. The long run effects are good.

Common Property Resources

Compared with 20-30 years ago about 50% of the common grazing land and all the forest land has been taken into cultivation. There is now about 15 hectares of common grazing land. The use of the common grazing land may be banned during the wet season if there is too much waterlogging. Drought has affected the growth of grass and the land has been overgrazed. This has caused a lot of cattle to die every year. There is one cooperative shop that supplies commodities to all members of the community at fair prices. There is also one diesel engine for generating electricity that serves the centre of the village. There are problems of livestock theft. Since 1975 the size of the community land has not been reduced; however, individual holdings have been reduced due to population increase.

Environment

There is an insignificant amount of erosion, since Yetmen is located on a plain. The site is suitable for agriculture. Soils have varying fertility. Soils of the Blue Nile valley are said to be extremely fertile while soils are less fertile in the lava plateau. The soils of the Bichena region are of three major types, namely sandy in the lowlands, black soil found scattered here and there and red soil characterizing most of the region.

The fertility of the soil seems to have been decreasing. Therefore, the peasants use fertilizer and crop rotation to get a better amount and quality of output. Most of the peasants do not use dung as a fertilizer for big farms but only for horticulture (*yeguario atikilt*) planted around homesteads.

Until the late 1930s about 25% of the land was covered with trees. Yetmen is the only local PA with no communal forest. Small amounts of eucalyptus trees are found in the centre of the village, otherwise people buy wood from surrounding PAs.

4. Off-farm Activities

Within the community

Almost all peasants of the village construct houses and make fences. Some are engaged in selling crops in the village and supply major towns like Addis Ababa occasionally.

Some women in Yetmen town sell local drinks like *areki* (anise), *tella*, *birz* and *tej*. Women in the rural part of Yetmen make *areki* and sell it either in the market or to the women who sell it in the town. Women in the PA are also engaged in petty cash trading and in collecting and selling dungcakes. Poor households play an active role in these activities. They spend the profit they earn for household purposes. However, their husbands might instruct them on how to spend it.

Occupational Structure

The people of Yetmen are predominantly peasants, but there are other specialized occupations to be found in Yetmen town. The following occupational titles are found in the PA including the town: peasant, trader, blacksmith, artisan (for building houses), weaver, mason, potter, tanner, diesel engine operator for generating electric light, flour mill operator, agricultural extension agent, elementary and junior high school teachers.

Women's occupations are limited to teaching and pottery. There are 23 teachers of whom 9 are women. There are many school drop-outs in the PA. Two peasants have completed high school. One individual who graduated from the Awasa College of Agriculture is employed under his father in trading grain on a larger scale than anyone else in the community.

Migration

There is a pattern of occasional migration to Addis Ababa and other major towns which involves both men and women. Some people from the PA may go to other places for seasonal wage labour. Small numbers of villagers normally migrate to major towns like to Addis Ababa due to the apparently glamorous town life.

5. Reproductive Activity

House Management

The people of Yetmen have a division of labour on the bases of gender and age. Tasks are shown in the table in the Appendix.

Fuel and Lighting

People of the community often use dried animal manure and relatively small amounts of charcoal and firewood for cooking and heating purposes. Crop residue is rarely used, as it is usually used for animal feed. Occasionally during ceremonies, wood is used. There is no forest in the PA. For lighting most people use oil lamps and a diesel engine generates electric light for the centre of the village.

Water

There are two rivers surrounding the PA (*Muga* and *Yegudfin*). The former is perennial; whereas the latter exists only in the wet season. There used to be plenty of springs but the drought dried them up. There is no problem of water availability in the PA since there are plenty of water wells, though they are not purified. They also dry up during hot summers and crumble. When some of the wells dry up during dry seasons, the villagers fetch water from other wells further away and people who live near the river *Muga* fetch water from it. Waterworks to bring piped drinking water are underway.

Sanitation

There are some latrines used by enlightened people. However the villagers, for the most part, do not use latrines. It is estimated that there are about 15 latrines in the PA. The importance of the latrine was taught by the elementary and junior high school of the village. The usage and building of latrines was effected by the now dissolved cooperative society with the educational support of the previous government.

Fertility

The fertility rate is high. However, the death rate is very low in the PA. Contraceptives and family planning are not used by the villagers. However, a few prostitutes who sell alcoholic drinks, coffee and tea in the so-called Tea houses, do use contraceptives. Infertile women are despised because such individuals are considered to be cursed. There is no identified individual infertile man in the community. The popular treatment for infertility is *tsebel* (holy water).

Childbirth and Childcare

Most pregnant women do not receive any care; they work till they give birth. After giving birth they

stop work for 40 days. This is because it is believed that evil spirits may cause harm to the woman and the newly born baby if they go out of the home within 40 days. The woman is expected to resume her usual tasks after this time.

Socialization

Qualities considered desirable in men include intelligence, good leadership qualities, and being a hard worker, generous and decent. Some people are born with these qualities and others learn them from their families and the society. Children are socialized to be hard workers, honest, heroes, etc. They are expected to respect their elders. A male elder is referred to as *gashe* by younger persons; or this term may be added to his name as a prefix. Similarly, for female elders the term *itiye* is used. For older people *aya* is used as a polite designation.

Since guests are highly respected, sons or daughters have the moral obligation to wash the feet of visitors. They would be appreciated and blessed; which is called *mirikat*. A son or a daughter who does not behave properly will be cursed, which is known as *irgiman*. The villagers believe that this will create misfortune in the violators' future lives. It is believed that children, including young people who are socialized in this manner, will be good members of the community. They are also expected to resolve disputes through the institution called *Shimgilina* (local council of elders) and they will be given priority in participating in *equb* (local saving and credit association) and *idir* (burial club). These duties are left to males.

According to a group of women qualities desirable in women include being good with their hands, a hard worker, and good at house management, respecting their husbands by engaging in some kind of income-earning activity, decency, cleverness, kindness, generosity, obedience, sociability and agreeableness and loving her husband, home and children. Girls should help their mothers by performing household tasks. They have to learn everything such as cooking various dishes, cotton spinning, brewing local drinks, particularly *tella*, how to take care of children, etc. An adolescent girl who fails to fulfil these duties may not get married; and she will be given the nickname *geltu*.

A successful farmer is a hard worker. Education also helps some to be successful. The most respected technical skills are carpentry, tailoring, building, blacksmithing and weaving.

The qualities that are not desirable in men are drinking, scolding, backbiting, stealing, lying, cheating, being self-centred, and lacking respect for elders. In the case of boys undesirable traits include crying, lying, stealing, quarrelling with other boys, not attending school regularly and not obeying orders. Qualities that are not desirable in women include, fornication, backbiting, quarrelling with neighbours, and not respecting her husband and her work. In girls the undesirable qualities are not assisting the mother in domestic work, and not being interested to learn how to be a good wife or woman.

A group of men and women said it is important to be able to read, write and do sums to be a successful farmer. It enables people to engage in off-farm activities. The skills most respected are those of the lawyer and orator. At primary school, children learn Amharic, English, mathematics, social sciences, physical education, agriculture, technology, geography, art, handicraft, music and home economics. At the church school they learn the Amharic alphabet, *Dawit*, *Ge'ez*, *Tsomedegua*, *Kinnie*, *Kidassie*, *Meraf*, *Digua*, *Zimarie*, and *Akuakuam*.

School is useful for being a better farmer. It makes a difference to stay longer at school but not in the same class. An informal education, and learning by doing, help to be a successful farmer's wife. The successful farmer's wife has good house management skills. The most respected technical skills for women are making good baskets and spinning. According to the women, education does not help to become a successful farmer's wife, or to engage in off-farm income. About 20% of the children are at school. The elementary and junior high school found in the PA plays a tremendous role in socializing students by inculcating societal norms including national values. A boy or a girl who is able to easily learn the expected roles described earlier is considered as intelligent. Individuals who go to school and who achieve higher educational levels and those who are good at dispute settlements are regarded as

intelligent.

Deceitfulness, dishonesty, theft and other distasteful things are labelled as wicked deeds and are highly frowned upon.

Education

An active boy or a girl starting from the age of 5 is sent to *ye kess timihirt bet* (local priest school). After the completion of this education, he or she is sent to elementary school. Those sons or daughters who do not show competence and who are considered as passive will not be sent to either of the schools. They remain at home and herd livestock; and when they grow older they will become peasants. There is an elementary and junior school in Yetmen. The Table shows some details. Of the 263 of pupils in Grades 1-6, 132 were girls. There were 20 teachers for grades 1-6. The nearest secondary school is in Dejen. It has a total of 564 pupils in grades 9-12 and 27 teachers (1 female).

Table 5: Numbers in Yetmen school

	<i>grade 1</i>	<i>grade 2</i>	<i>grade 3</i>	<i>grade 4</i>	<i>grade 5</i>	<i>grade 6</i>	<i>grade 7</i>	<i>grade 8</i>
pupils	108	45	32	25	24	28	41	34
teachers 13	8	8	7	6	8	20	6	
classes	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: field interviews

In Yetmen, there are unemployed school leavers. For instance, out of the 27 high school graduates (15 females and 12 males), only 1 individual is employed in a government organization while 2 of them are employed in farming. There are 4 persons who graduated from universities and colleges. Except for one individual, a diploma graduate of the Awassa Agricultural College who is employed under his father as a fully-fledged grain trader, the others are government employees.

Four males and one female graduated from the teachers training institute. While three of them are serving as teachers, one of them died this year.

Currently, four community members are attending higher education in the Ethiopian universities and in an European institute. These days, it has become common for students of the PA to become school drop-outs because today many graduates are unemployed.

Training

Four years ago, at the time of the cooperative services, two peasants were trained as tractor operators and used their training for two years until the cooperative society was dissolved in 1991. Four peasants were trained at the Agarfa Peasant Training Centre (in Bale province) in general agricultural techniques including proper use of land, modern animal husbandry, bee-keeping and the like. It is believed that these people now use their training for their personal agricultural activities.

Health

The nearest clinic is in the neighbouring PA of Zeben, and is a walk of 3kms from the middle of the village. An initial consulting fee of 0.50 *birr* is charged, except that children and pregnant women are not charged. The cost of a course of antibiotics is 15.95 *birr*, while treatment for malaria costs 1 *birr*. The clinic lacks the necessary drugs or the drugs have expired. It does have a regular supply of

antibiotics and malaria treatment. There is no doctor or nurse. It is open 24 hours a day. The clinic has equipment to sterilize needles and cooling storage with backup. It does not have a minimum supply of bandages and sterile needles.

The nearest hospital is in Debre Markos, a distance of 72 km. It costs 5.70 *birr* for transport. The initial consulting fee for an adult is 1 *birr*, and for a child it is free. There is a doctor in Debre Markos who charges 10 *birr* for the initial consultation. There is a traditional nurse in Yetmen who does not charge.

The villagers used to get modern medicines from a drug shop owned by a retired health assistant. Currently, the shop is closed by the local TGE officials because the man has no licence to sell medicines. This private clinic had a regular supply of antibiotics, but irregular supplies of malaria drugs (although it is not a malaria area). It had a minimum supply of bandages and needles. There was no initial charge. A course of antibiotics cost 30 *birr*, and malaria treatment cost 6 *birr*. The overwhelming majority of the PA use traditional medicines.

A group of men ranked diseases as problems as follows: typhus; TB; haemorrhoids; rubella; FUD (unknown fever); venereal diseases; gastritis; anthrax; meningitis; diarrhoea; trachoma; arthritis; infection; elephantiasis; and leprosy.

A group of women ranked diseases as problems as follows: TB; breast cancer; haemorrhoids; typhus; FUD; VD; trachoma; arthritis; gastritis; rabies; rubella; anthrax.

Children's diseases ranked as problems by a group of women, included: diarrhoea; rubella; ascaris; amoeba; teething (gum problem); FUD; typhus; and trachoma.

People in the community listed the following causes of diseases and treatment:

- (1) *Typhus*: It is caused by "demons" and infection. Typhus is prevented from spreading by segregating those who are infected and a ritual (traditional ceremony) with the intention to pay the demon his due so that he will not harm the family. Some traditional medicines are also used to prevent the disease from spreading. Treatments used for typhus include treatment by witch doctors, prayer by the church, and visit to the hospital as a last resort.
- (2) *Tuberculosis* (TB): TB is caused by cold, alcoholic beverages, and infection. It can be prevented by not being exposed to cold, not drinking much, and avoiding contact with infected people. TB is treated by traditional medicine, visiting a health clinic and also the use of *tsebel*. The traditional medicine includes a mixture of tea, honey, garlic and fenugreek drunk together.
- (3) *Yettut beshita* (breast disease): It is caused by undressing outside while it is hot and can be prevented by taking care when getting undressed and doing it only in the house. It is treated mainly by traditional medicine and going to the doctor if it does not get any better. *Tsebel* is also used.
- (4) *Haemorrhoids*: These are caused by infection, using *plantago* and using leaves from young eucalyptus, etc. for cleaning after going to the toilet in the bush, and sitting on warm stones. It can be prevented by not using some leaves and not sitting on warm things. Treatment for haemorrhoids includes mainly traditional medicine combined with *tsebel*. Witch doctor's treatment will also be used if they do not heal. They rarely visit the health clinic for this disease.
- (5) *Rubella*: This is caused by demons. It used to be prevented by vaccination. But nowadays, it is cannot be prevented. The group of men believe that everybody sooner or later will pass through such a disease and no prevention method will stop it, since it is the power of the devil. It is treated traditionally.
- (6) *FUD*: This is a new disease and nobody knows its cause or the prevention mechanism. This does not give any time to go to a doctor or any other facility. It is treated traditionally.

- (7) *Diarrhoea*: It is caused by dirt and can be prevented by avoiding dirt. It is treated by traditional medicine, drinking a lot of water, and visiting a doctor if these do not work.
- (8) *Wosfat* (ascaris): The cause is eating sweet foods and bread made of wheat. It can be prevented by not eating too much sweet food, especially sugar and candy. It is treated by traditional medicine and sometimes by visiting the health clinic.
- (9) *Amoeba*: It is caused by drinking dirty water. Amoeba can be prevented by drinking clean or boiled water. Children can be treated by traditional doctors or visiting the health clinic if they do not get better.
- (10) *GIG*: They do not know the cause and can not prevent it. *GIG* is treated by traditional medicine and visiting the doctor if it does not get better.

There are a number of traditional medical practitioners who prepare medicines for some illnesses. They describe the main diseases as follows:

- (1) *Shiwta* or *mich*: This illness may correspond to the English terms influenza or catarrh. A person who suffers from this illness should drink a sip which is prepared from leaves of a plant known as *yehareg-iressa*.
- (2) *Yebudda-beshitta* (evil eye caused disease): A plant root which is known by very few individuals is blended by mixing it with another plant leaf known as *tenadam* and garlic to make a medicine for this illness. The medicine is put inside a piece of new cloth and worn around the neck like a necklace. There is also another treatment for *yebudda-beshitta*: the victim is immersed in holy water.
- (3) *Yewoff-beshitta* (hepatitis): Since this disease is believed to be caused by a bat, the victim should eat a bat's flesh which is cooked with *wat* (stew) to get well. The other treatment of this disease is drinking a sip prepared from a plant leaf known as *senssel*.
- (4) *Chiffe* (rash): This is a skin disease which can be cured by rubbing on a cream-like substance prepared from a plant seed known as *yedegga-aballo*.
- (5) *Yekolla-kussl* (tropic ulcer): The medicine for this disease is prepared from a plant found in a *tef* farm known as *gortteb*. After drying and crushing it with its seed, it is mixed with butter so as to make a cream-like substance. Then the medicine is rubbed on the affected skin of the patient.
- (6) *Ibittet* (*iktiyal*): The symptom of this disease is a swollen spot at some part of the patient's body. After drying and crushing a plant root known as *nech-merech* which looks like a potato and which is found at the gorge of the river Abay it is mixed with butter to make a cream-like substance. The swollen spot of the patient is rubbed with this substance.
- (7) *Yejjorro-memgel beshitta* (ear disease): For this disease, an ear drop is prepared from the leaf of a grape vine.
- (8) *Ye-kosso till* (tapeworm): This parasite is obliterated from the host by drinking a liquid medicine prepared from a plant seed known as *inkokko*. The patient should not eat any food for ½ a day or so.

We think that there are also many other traditional medicines which the practitioners are not willing to

tell to anyone. The above ones were described only after strong persuasion.

6. Consumption

Food and Other Day-to-Day Activities

There are no emergency crops as such; but the least valued pulse, the chickling pea was eaten during the drought of 1985 by some individuals. There has been no drought in the PA for 30 years, except for the 1985 drought which affected the community to a minor extent as compared with other parts of the country. Almost all the people eat at the same meal time, except on fasting days. Elders, youngsters and children eat together with their age groups.

Saving and Investment

Peasants save money. They invest the largest portion in purchasing agricultural inputs and other commodities and they keep a little as a reserve. Compared to traders, who take part in wholesale activities, retail in the village and build bigger zinc-roofed houses, savings and investments among the peasants are modest.

Housing

The type of houses found in the PA are tin-roofed and *tukul* varying in size. 55% of the houses of the PA are tin-roofed, while the remaining 45% are *tukul*. The most fascinating brick-built house in the community has 5 modern rooms with a tiled floor, ceiling, shower room, bedrooms and other facilities. This house cost about 30,000 *birr*. To build an ordinary zinc-roofed house, which would have 40 sheets of tin, would cost about 4,000 *birr*.

To build a big *tukul* may cost up to 8,000 *birr*. Whereas to build a small one costs around 500 *birr*. A *tukul* lasts for 10 years; and a tin-roofed house excluding the special one may last for 30 years.

Household Assets

The following household assets are seen in a wealthy household in Yetmen town: 2 big tables, 2 smaller tables, 6 big chairs, 2 dishes made of clay, 3 tin dishes, 11 glasses, 4 plastic plates, 3 tin plates, 3 big trays and various baskets made from reeds, etc. Wealthy households in the rural parts of the PA would not have such household assets. In poor household, we may find a dish made of clay, 2 or 3 *medeb* (traditional mud seats) and other household goods made from reeds.

Local Services

There are 16 shops in the PA which normally stock the various commodities found in major towns. The Ministry of Agriculture has assigned one extension agent to work for the PA. The peasants go to his office to consult him. This extension agent often visits farms. There is no *kalicha* in the PA. The nearest one is found about 10 kms from the village. There are 3 traditional birth attendants in the community.

The following other amenities are found in Yetmen *kebele*:

1. Telecommunication station (it has been out of service since the EPRDF held power)
2. Community-owned diesel generator for electric light (owned by the *kebele* association not the PA)
3. Elementary & Junior High Schools

4. Private fertilizer shops which are 8 in number
5. Police sub-station

7. Local Institutions and Organizations

Household

The basic unit of Amhara social life is the household (*beteseb*). The term *beteseb* also stands for family. A family consists of parents, children, and others such as adopted children who reside in the house and ex-members who are no longer resident. To be a member of a household through adoption is very rare. The dwelling unit of the Amhara, the homestead (*bet*), consists of one or more circular wattle and daub, thatched huts called *gojjo* and perhaps one or two grain storage bins (*gotera*). Usually the homestead comprises only one house which serves as living quarters for the entire household, kitchen and shelters for the family livestock. For Gojjam Amhara before villagization, single homesteads normally stood alone separated from one another by between 20 yards and half a mile. Homesteads ranged from units of one or two wattle and daub or stone huts containing a single nuclear family to hamlets of a dozen or more structures containing a few related families with their servants and retainers.

The Amhara household has two distinguishing characteristics: members are expected to carry out specific tasks allocated according to sex and other criteria, and they are all under the authority of a single senior male. Men are assigned such tasks as ploughing, sowing, harvesting, threshing, cattle and grain trading, slaughtering, herding, driving pack animals, building houses, and cutting wood. Women are responsible for cooking, making butter, carding and spinning, cutting hops, and carrying water and wood.

Members of a household eat together according to their age, with the exception of the particularly demanding times during the agricultural calendar. For instance, when the father is in the field for *kocha* (ploughing from dawn to dusk) he eats alone in the field. Normally, parents and their elder sons or daughters dine together; while children eat together. Sometimes, all members of a household eat together, when their individual tasks are finished in time or when it is not important to finish them quickly.

The husband or the father is responsible for the household budget which all the members have the right to share in.

Marriage

For Amhara society in general, marriage is a contractual agreement between a man and a woman, involving the pooling of their labour and their property in order to establish a new household and raise children. In principle either partner can institute divorce, which involves the separation of property merged through marriage. Hoben distinguished four types of union, three of which (equal partners, communion, and pay marriage) are considered fully legitimate forms of marriage by the Amhara (Hoben, 1963:112-113). The most common type is *balakkul* (equal partners). Though the bans of such a marriage are announced in the parish church and at the actual wedding ceremony a blessing is given by a priest, the marriage is secular. *Qurban* (communion marriage) is identical to *balakkul* except that it is sanctified by a church ceremony during which the couple take communion together. Since it is a sacrament of the church it is considered indissoluble. The third type of legal marriage is *damoz* (pay marriage). This is a contractual agreement between a man and a woman, never arranged by parents, whereby the man undertakes to pay the woman a fixed salary per month or per year in return for which the woman lives with him and performs all the tasks expected of a wife. The fourth type is not considered marriage but just living together.

For a first marriage, elders who are chosen by the parents of the prospective groom, are sent to the

parents of the prospective bride to request their consent to the marriage. If the parents of the woman agree, the date for the marriage is set immediately. The bride is expected to be a virgin. The society accords great value to virginity.

Except for a few individuals who have reached a higher educational level and hence who have the chance to choose their marriage partner, marriage is usually arranged by parents or relatives. There is no bridewealth in the community. Instead *tilosh*, special gifts, have to be presented by the bridegroom to the bride. The gifts vary depending on the wealth of the prospective husband. They are usually expected to consist of jewellery (necklaces, earrings and a ring made of gold) and dresses and shoes. Parents are also expected to give certain presents to the couple. The presents may be grain, a pair of oxen, or livestock, money and the like. The aim of the parents in presenting these items is to give the couple a good start (*kibibil*) so they can lead an independent life. The number of cattle given to the couple by one set of parents should be at least equal to what the other parents are willing to give. If the aspiring groom's family are unable to match what is demanded by the female's parents, the proposal is automatically refused. Either of the parents or both can give more cattle than the number negotiated; and two sheep will be given to the parents of the bride.

Food and various types of local drink are brewed for the wedding day. All the kin are involved in contributing money, grain, or cattle for the feast, according to their wishes. For the ritual, there are various types of songs to be sung.

The couple lives with the family of the husband until they build their own house. When they are ready to live on their own, they are given every support from parents of both sides. Over and above the things they were promised at the time of the wedding, they are given flour, salt, oil, butter, spices, pepper, tools and equipment for agricultural practices from the husband's parents and kitchen utensils (such as *ensira*, *mitad*, *sifed*, *mosseb*, calabash, etc.) from the wife's parents.

As to the age at marriage, the male has to reach a minimum of 17, while the female is about 14, under normal circumstances. Child marriage is also practised. This is arranged when the parents of the prospective couple want to make their relationship ever-lasting. Around the age of 4 or 5, a feast-like wedding is prepared. The children consider themselves as siblings to each other until they reach the age of maturity. The bad aspect of this type of marriage is that it may be cancelled if the parents of the couple quarrel or disagree, due to any personal clashes if and when the would-be partners still live with their respective parents. Polygyny is completely non-existent in the community.

Within the community those who are of a "noble birth" do not marry with families whose ancestors were slaves before the *Derg* regime, with herdsmen, tenants, or poor families.

Divorce

Divorce, which is considered as a misfortune, is rare. The traditional conventions and norms of the community are strong mechanisms that prevent divorce. Divorced women are despised and given the nickname *gallemota*. If divorce does occur, the land and any property are shared equally. If the partners have children, they live under the custody of one of their parents according to the decisions of elders. Mostly, the causes for divorce are infertility and infidelity. Even if the husband may be infertile, it is the woman who is blamed; she is labelled as *beklo* (mule).

If a girl is found to be deflowered prior to her marriage her husband immediately divorces her and she is humiliated and given a lower status. Some men even beat such a woman severely and break the contract. In this case, the woman has no right to share any property; she even has to leave her *tilosh* (gifts given to her) with her partner. This circumstance is also a humiliation to her parents since the people believe that the girl has not been properly brought up.

Inheritance

The rule of inheritance of the village is based on bilateral descent. That is, an individual inherits property from both his father and mother. If a deceased person has no daughter or son, his close

relatives inherit his property. Illegitimate children have no right to inherit unless they are given the chance to belong to the family of one of their parents. Illegitimate children are locally referred as *dikkala*.

Before the land reform land was inherited by all children equally. After the reform no-one had any right to inherit it. The house and livestock are inherited by sons and daughters equally. Sons are entitled to inherit their father's goods - eg gun, *akmada*, *silicha*, *mechagna*, plough, hoe, saddle, hammer, bed, *jendi*, *metegiua*, *gann*. Daughters inherit their mother's goods - eg jewellery, cooking materials, mill, *ensira*. Clothes are usually given to the poor, especially to beggars. If there is no son to inherit, a daughter can and vice versa.

Kinship

Kinship and descent are important aspects of Amhara life. Although kinsmen frequently live in different parishes, kin relations are salient in a few important circumstances, such as selection of marriage partners, blood feuds, and, in the past, land tenure.

Members of the PA trace kinship relationships up to the seventh degree of consanguinity. Kinship is traced through both father's and mother's lines. Customarily relatives help each other up to three degrees of blood relationship through both mother's and father's sides. Wealthier ones help those who are materially poor. For example, they may be provided with oxen, seeds, money and the like. The recipients may repay if they obtain sufficient amounts of products. Strong people help their weaker relatives physically, especially during the ploughing, sowing and harvesting seasons.

In the PA, there are also fictive relationships that are created through baptism. A man may be *yekirstna abat* (godfather) for a baby boy, and a woman *yekirstna inat* (godmother) for a baby girl. These individuals are co-parents creating blood-like relationships with the real parents of the children, including their relatives. Marriage is also prohibited between individuals who are related up to the seventh degree of fictive relationship, just like the prohibition of marriage between kin of up to the seventh degree of consanguinity. Any sexual mating between persons in fictive relationship up to seventh degree is considered to be covered by the incest taboo.

Noble families, including the poor, "slaves", tenants, and herdsmen, do not marry those who are weavers, black smiths, potters and *faki* (tanners).

Lineage

People of the PA trace their lineage through patrilineage (father's line) and matrilineage (mother's line), associating their ancestors with the names of their places of origin. The places of origins of ancestors used to name lineages are *Gubiya* and *Woudmit*. The majority of the villagers belong to the *Gubiya* lineage while the smaller portion of the people of the community belongs to the *Woudmit* lineage. As to the economic obligation of lineage, there is no special significance other than assistance given on the basis of kinship relationship noted under the sub title *Kinship*.

Clans

There is no conception of clan or tribe in the PA, except the notion that they belong to the Amhara ethnic group. Amhara refers both to their group and their religious identity; Orthodox Christianity. Amharas do not marry Oromos since they consider them as pagans. There is intermarriage with Tigrayans since they are considered Christians. There are only 3 Moslems in the area.

Age-grading, Life Cycle Changes and Rites of Passage

The villagers are simply grouped according to their ages as follows:

1. *Hitsanat* (children - up to about 6)
2. *Leffo/Ligoch* (boys and girls - 6-12)
3. *Wottatoch* (youth) which includes what they call *Goremssa* (male adolescents) and *Koreda* (female teenagers)
4. *Golmassa* (adults)
5. *Shimaglewoch* (old people).

Children are circumcised at the age of 7 days. There are no rites of passage and special indicators of age as there are among the Oromo and other ethnic groups.

Friendship

People of the PA are very friendly to each other and to strangers. There are friendly groups whose members establish a *mehber* or *equb*, but there are no individual friendship contracts such as those found, for example, among the Gurage. There are a number of widely practised forms of voluntary personal relationships, such as godparent-child, adoptive father-child, guarantor-guaranteed, confessor-confessee relations.

Citizenship

There is a notion of citizenship in the PA based on region. The villagers consider themselves as *Gojjame*, the adjective derived from Gojjam province. In addition they refer to themselves as *Yeyetimen Sew* (a man from Yetmen). But the most important citizenship identity for them is being an Ethiopian.

Markets

In the market of the PA, there are standardized and traditional measurements for grains as described earlier; eg *dirib*. There is also a traditional weight for selling cotton. Otherwise the other measurements are modern ones, which are small and big weights. As to controlling prices and measurements, there is a sort of inspection of the market every 6 months by government professional controllers from the Ministry of Internal Trade. However, there is no local controlling mechanism of the market.

Credit and Social Security

Rich farmers and traders lend money. 100 *birr* must be repaid with 100kg of *tef* (which cost 218 *birr* on the day of the interview). Anyone needing credit must provide a guarantor whose wealth position should enable him to settle the debt if necessary. It is preferred if the lender is cultivating the land of the debtor under a share-cropping agreement. Then, if the debtor fails to repay the debt, the lender can decrease the share of the harvest provided to the debtor. Typical reasons for a loan are to buy fertilizer, to buy an ox, or for seed, consumption, ceremonial expenditure or medical expenses.

In Yetmen, as in the other parts of the country, the role of *equb*, *idir* and *mehber* is tremendous. *Equb* are established on the basis of (1) friendship (2) *idir* and (3) *mehber*. There are several *equb* in the village. One *equb* has 50 members in which each of them contributes 200 *birr*. Another one has 38 members and each of them contributes 30 *birr*. 20 *birr* is contributed by each member in an *equb* with 35 members. In addition, there are many *equb* in which members' contributions are below 20 *birr*. There are 6 *idir* in the village. The names of the *idir* are associated with the names of saints. The number of members in each *idir* and monthly contributions are indicated as follows. Even though members of the Michael *idir* contribute more money than people in the other *idir*, there is no discrimination in being a member of any *idir*. That is, members may be poor or rich. The exact number of *mehber* is not known but it is believed to be an average number.

Table 6: *Idir* in Yetmen

<i>Names of idir</i>	<i>No of members</i>	<i>Contributions (birr per month)</i>
Michael	401	2
<i>Bale-egiziabher</i>	45	1
Mariam	33	1
Abo	25	1
Yohannes	20	1
Gebriel	23	1

Some wealthy persons of the village lend money to those who are facing financial hardship. Generous villagers lend money without interest to persons whom they trust. However, individual lenders lend money with interest. This takes 2 forms. In the first type of agreement a borrower pays 1 quintal of *tef* for 100 *birr*. The price for 1 quintal of *tef* is currently 120 *birr*. In the second type, the borrower pays interest of 10 *birr* per 100 *birr*.

If someone's house catches fire, everyone in the area will go to the rescue of life and property, by helping to put the fire out and removing everything possible. If the house burns down neighbours, friends and relatives will help the household to reconstruct the house by providing materials and labour. They also give the household crops if the stock is destroyed, in the form of a gift, or a loan to be repaid during the next harvest.

If livestock are lost or stolen friends, neighbours and relatives search for them. If they are not found they will help by providing oxen for ploughing until the household head gets his own back. They will also contribute money so he can buy replacements. If someone is unable to get enough labour at the right time relatives, members of *mehber*, neighbours and friends will work on his land as *debo*. During famines rich people will help those who are more vulnerable.

Community Decision Making

Disputes within households are usually resolved by neighbours. Most disputes are settled at this level. However, if neighbours cannot solve the problem, relatives get involved in arbitration. If the dispute is between husband and wife, the arbitrators are the relatives of both parties. If this level also fails the elders of the community get involved; a dispute between husband and wife will next be dealt with the marriage committee (persons, usually father figures, who initially attended the marriage settlement).

Disputes between households are first considered by neighbours and relatives of the two opponents and then by elders of the community. The villagers have local dispute settlement mechanisms. They are called *shimgilina* and *Fird-Shengo*. The institution of *shimgilina* is a traditional council that comprises respected elders who analyze complaints and reach decisions. Elders are respected and their decisions are considered to be just and moral. The *Fird-Shengo* is elected by the community to settle disputes in accordance with societal norms and traditional principles. It operates in compliance with government regulations.

Arbitrators at all levels are usually respected, honourable and elderly people. The police are involved in cases that the community is unable, or does not want, to deal with, especially when violence and serious offences such as murder are involved.

Bewitching also has an important role to play in resolving conflicts in the community. First one of the disputants will report the dispute to the sorcerer/ess, usually the victim. The other party will be sent

a summons to appear before the sorcerer/ess for mediation. When both appear they will be put under oath to tell the truth and will come to terms on conditions the sorcerer/ess decides, having sworn not to break up the mediation and to keep their allegiance to him/her. If the offender then does not follow instructions, the witch, using magic powers, inflicts a death penalty on him or her and the families. Usually the family is inflicted with diseases which are said to be insoluble and incurable by any means and die one by one after unbearable suffering.

Anyone who breaks local rules is fined and warned. If he or she continues to err he/she will be renounced and segregated from the community. Eventual repentance and requests to the community for mercy will be decided upon by the community.

Taxes are paid to the government by the villagers. Peasants are required to pay 20 *birr* per holding as are all other peasants. Traders pay taxes that are imposed by the government according to their income. Grain and money are contributed to those who serve the Church, as salaries.

Wealth is measured by the following items of property:

- the number of livestock
- the number of beehives
- the amount of grain produced which is measured in *chan* at the threshing field

People feel that the taxation is not fair. This is because the tax for a holding was increased from 7 *birr* to 20 *birr*. The relationship between leaders of government institutions and traditional leaders is not positive. According to the informants, the elected PA officials and some other people were imprisoned during the time of the research in 1994.

Redistributive Mechanisms

There are feasts involving sacrifices during major Orthodox Christian holidays. These major holidays are: *Kidus Yohannes* (new year commemoration), *Meskel* (the day for the commemoration of the founding of the True Cross), *Timket* (Epiphany), *Genna*, (Christmas), and *Fasika* (Easter).

People slaughter animals for feasts in the belief that it will create happiness and joy. In all holiday feasts everybody is invited. Few people slaughter animals in the months of January and June which are referred to as *Yetir-dem* and *Yesene-dem*. This is linked with animistic beliefs which the overwhelming majority look down upon. They call it *Amlko-baad*. People who practice *Amlko-baad* rub the blood around their faces. The flesh of the slaughtered animal is only eaten by kin. Non-kin are not invited. During the major Christian holidays, the rich invite the poor to celebrate with them. In addition, food is redistributed to beggars at the Abo Church found in the PA.

8. Beliefs and Values

Land

People of the community are buried in the compound of the Church. The villagers prefer burial sites to be near their ancestors. This is because they feel that kinship bonds can be maintained this way until the life after. The people regard land as sacred. This is chiefly because they produce grain from land and they are buried in the land. Also, people believe that human beings are created out of mud. People of the community want to possess land privately.

Religion

Each Amhara household has obligations to the local church. The focal point of parish life is the Ark of the Covenant (*tabot*). Each household in a parish is obliged to contribute a certain amount of grain each

year and supply labour and materials as needed for the construction and repair of church buildings. Parishioners baptize their children and bury their dead at the local church.

The villagers are devoted Christians even though there are a few individuals who practice remnant beliefs of animism as well. They believe that God is the creator of the world and every living and non-living thing. God is named as *Egziabher*, denoting that He is everything and He is Omnipresent and Omnipotent. People of Yetmen consider that God is close to the clergy. Each of them has a religious father (a priest). They obey whatever this priest orders. When a person feels that he or she has committed a sin, he or she reports to his or her religious father to be redeemed from the sin.

They attribute all natural calamities (eg plant and livestock diseases, drought, heavy frost, storms, etc) to God's wrath against sinners. For instance, it is believed that a peasant who cultivates crops on holidays will have his crops destroyed. In times of such crisis the priests summon the community to hold a communion with God in prayer for his forgiveness. In addition the people of Yetmen believe that various saints protect them from troubles. Hence, each villager has a Christian name that is associated with the name of one of these sacred figures.

People of the community go on pilgrimages to the following churches: Lalibela, Gishen, Ziquala Abo, Jirr Gabriel, Bahir Dar, Kristos Samra, and Dima Giorgis. These pilgrimage places are between 50 and 350 kms from the PA. Some go on pilgrimages to these churches on foot and others by car; the latter is obviously expensive.

In times of crisis the Orthodox Church organises and leads the community in solving the problems. The clergy also teach the commands of God and entreat people to obey the law. They make and enforce rules for the proper regulation of the community. Excommunication from the community and church is the final punishment of the community.

Explanations of Misfortune and Illness

The people link sorcery with the work of the Devil and frown upon it. They think that the sorcerer communicates with the devil, who is locally called *Saytan* or *Aganint*, to cause someone to become ill or to experience misfortune. They also regard witchcraft or the evil eye as caused by a curse. An evil-eyed person is known as *buda*. They say that an individual *buda* turns into a hyena in the night to eat whatever a real hyena eats. They also believe that a *buda* person rides a hyena in the night to get whatever a hyena eats. Their belief in spirits is associated with the Devil. The Devil is a spirit which interferes in one's life and causes wicked deeds e.g. homicide.

Sorcerers/esses can cure diseases, tell fortunes, make fortunes, and punish the disloyal. There are also *debtera*. They can control rain, make heavy falls of snow, and are capable of causing trouble for anybody who opposes them. For example, they can get pieces of furniture to rise and kick each other, they can fill people's houses with horrible smells, insects and worms, and they can make people sicken and die.

There is no ancestor worship. But in their prayers, they speak of *Yeabate amlak chigir indaygetmegn irdagn* (may the lord of my father protect me from facing trouble).

Community Values

Ritual ceremonies and giving offerings to *Kolle* and *Adbar* are on the verge of extinction. When a member of a community dies, the mourning does not last more than a week. The mourning tent will not be taken down until the 8th day. Members of the *idir* spend their time in the tent and escort the relatives of the deceased person who go to church to mourn for a week. The mourners wear sack clothes for between 6 months and a year to demonstrate their affection for the deceased person.

The people do not reconcile traditional and modern beliefs. They do not accept the harmfulness of such practices as female circumcision. But, because their importance has been proved they are using fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, etc.

The villagers are willing to answer questions such as those in the economic survey. On the whole,

they give accurate responses if one persuades them respectfully. Questions asked in this manner would not be answered wrongly. They think that the economic survey may result in some changes like increasing the size of land holding, decreasing the prices of inputs and taxes, giving new or better employment opportunities for the unemployed and the underemployed and cancelling the debt borrowed from a government bank.

Political Beliefs and Attitudes

As one would expect political beliefs vary. So one respondent claims that no-one can tell what people think of current policies since the community is not interested in discussing political issues. Most people do not want to share their views with regard to regionalization. However, some, especially the rich and religious elite and the younger generation, think that regionalization will bring about disunity among the Ethiopian people.

Another respondent suggested the people have negative attitudes towards the current elections and constitutional exercises. They regard the TG as favouring the people of one ethnic group. During the research time (1994) some of the villagers reported that they were harassed, interrogated and imprisoned. If the government is to be accountable, it must be popular, and institutions like the police sub-station and the local administration of the PA should not be mechanisms for reinforcing and promoting a one party government's ideology. The villagers are anxious to get pumped water and hydro-electric supplies, a clinic, job opportunities for school drop-outs, etc. They think that these would be fulfilled by democratic government policies.

Members of the community are accountable to the local leaders who are now imprisoned. They would be happy if the size of land holdings was increased.

9. The Community

Community Organization

The community is tightly knit and orderly. There are a lot of social interactions among the members of the PA and neighbouring people. The people are densely associated with each other within the various activities like *idir*, *equb*, *mehber*, etc. During the harvest season, they undertake various tasks together in groups known as *debo* or *jige*. There is also cooperation through *wonfel*. This involves the lending of an ox or any thing important for farming.

A group in the community ranked local organizations in order of usefulness as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| (1) <i>senbetie</i> | (4) <i>idir</i> |
| (2) <i>mehber</i> | (5) <i>equb</i> |
| (3) <i>tsigie*</i> | |

Tsigie is a community-based religious festival held once in a year.

Politics

Due to the regionalization policy of the TG earlier members of the community who used to live in other parts of the country have been evicted. Hence, they have come back to their original place. The villagers resent this government policy.

Social Conflict

There are no social conflicts between groups in the community; the people live cohesively and peacefully. The community members seem to have one political stand; i.e. they seek democracy. The people complain that TG gunmen with unknown forces frighten them during evenings. There are no political factions. There is no unusual gender-based conflict in the community.

Poverty and Wealth

The wealthiest people in the community are the owners, traders, moneylenders and those with special skills such as weavers, potters, blacksmiths, tailors, carpenters, and masons (especially those who also own farmland). They have become wealthy through hard work, inheritance, craftsmanship, and good fortune. The wealthy are those people who have large amounts of livestock and who also have more than one *gotta* of grain in store.

The poor people are those who are hired to work for others for a daily wage. People with small amounts of livestock are relatively regarded as poor. They may be landless, descended from a poor family, labourers (especially farmworkers), handicraft men who own no land, widows, prostitutes, those who collect and sell firewood and dungcakes, those who make and sell *tella*, *areki*, *kollo*, bread, and those who are disabled and unable to work, especially old people with no-one to look after them. People are poor because they did not inherit anything, because of laziness, or through bad luck. It is possible for children of poor people to become rich if they get employment from a young age and save.

Poor people compare themselves with rich people, particularly with regard to the ability to make ceremonial expenses. eg for weddings and holidays.

During the *Derg* regime 13 people from the PA were imprisoned and their properties were confiscated. This was because they were rich and considered to be against socialism. As a result, some other individuals who were not rich got the opportunity to replace the former ones.

Social Mobility

Wealthy farmers tend to be children of wealthy farmers and poor farmers tend to be the children of the poor. There is no considerable change between generations in terms of wealth or social mobility. A poor peasant may be upwardly mobile if he undertakes off-farm activities like trading. Parents try to help their sons and daughters who are becoming poor by providing them with the necessary materials for their livelihood; i.e. farming.

In a wealth-ranking exercise three respondents sorted community members into three groups. Movement down from category 1 (wealthy) to 2 is not very frequent, while movement from 2 to 3 is frequent because households in category 2 are more vulnerable. One respondent ranked typical reasons for movement as follows:

from Category 1 to 2	recurrent death of livestock shortage of cultivable land an increase in the price of fertiliser
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from Category 2 to 3	unable to use fertilizer or failure to obtain money to buy it death of livestock large family shortage of land
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Other reasons given by other respondents included loss of land, recurrent ceremonies (especially weddings of children), old age, divorce, laziness, death of husband, illness, extravagance (eg drunkenness), sharecropping land out due to death of husband, lack of oxen, shortage of grazing land,

little availability of other income sources, lack of labour in the household.

Two respondents claimed movement up from category 2 to 1 was rare while the third reckoned movement up from 2 to 1 was greater than movement down from 1 to 2. While the first two respondents claimed movement from 3 to 2 was frequent, the third did not agree. One said that households moving from 3 to 2 tended to be recently married young households and the reasons included good provision at marriage by parents and kin, very hard working, saving money, managing well, and the absence of requirements for ceremonial expenses. He said that households in category 2 are mostly middle-aged households and at this level because of the problems of large families, ceremonial expenses, the problem of being physically older, and the loss of important labour and ploughing oxen through marriage, it is harder to be upwardly mobile. The ones that do tend to be upwardly mobile are those that are relatively young and strong, who do not incur much for ceremonial expenses, those who sharecrop much land and are able to use enough fertiliser, those who save, and those who lend. Additional reasons given by the other respondents were economizing and innovativeness.

Generally, people become wealthier through restricting family size and ceremonial expenditures, saving and lending money, sharecropping in as much land as possible, working very hard, inheritance or help or gift from rich parents, marrying into a rich family, good home management, a good wife, good cooperative children, good management of time, off-farm employment and business activities, and wise consumption including refraining from drinking.

People become poor through laziness, extravagance, poor home management, bad and/or extravagant wife and children, bad luck (eg sickness, regular death of livestock, land loss, death of husband) old age and helplessness, and the related inability to cultivate one's own land requiring it to be sharecropped out.

Status

The bases of status are occupation, wealth, age, war service and charisma. Elders, priests, rich people, development agents, health workers and teachers are respected. A hard working peasant is respected. Wealthy individuals like traders and money lenders have greater status as opposed to other commoners. Charismatic people who speak at public gatherings and who can convince others are given respect. Those people who gave war services in the earlier days who are generally called *neftenya* have titles. These are: *Hamssa-aleka* (Sergeant), *Meto-aleka* (Lieutenant), *Shamble* (Captain) and *Chaleka* (Major). Individuals with these ranks may not have modern military training; elders simply give them such positions.

In the PA, there are also "caste" groups; blacksmiths, potters, tanners, weavers and *barria* (the descendants of ex-slaves) who have become servants. The term *barria* has been replaced by a descent name called *agelgay* which simply means obedient and trustworthy servant. The poorest people have resorted to handicrafts such as weaving, pottery and blacksmithing and due to demand they have received a favourable income. The people despise these people and are envious of them because with their income they have been able to buy livestock and cultivate their own land.

As the village is increasing in size and new occupations are mushrooming, there are urban status symbols. But there are no luxury goods.

Social Stratification

The local elite are those who have wealth, education and are able to organize the people. Kinship plays a role in wealth. They include elders, committee members, the wealthy and priests. Wealth, status and power are highly correlated. There is some evidence of incipient class formation in the PA. Those people who have greater amounts of money are given higher status. Wealthier individuals are those who trade grain by supplying to major towns; especially to the capital. Hard working peasants who usually obtain good harvests also have greater status next to the fully-fledged grain traders. Then come

commodity traders who have greater status than other commoners (poor peasants and poor traders). Tanners, blacksmiths and weavers are considered as outcasts who have least or no status at all.

Wealthy people get additional income by becoming sharetenants. Poor people maintain their position by giving their land for credit.

One respondent argued that the elites will keep their position since they are being reasonable, decent, fair to everyone without discrimination, and respectful of customs, rules and principles accepted by the community. Another respondent said the elites are getting wealthier by being hardworking and because they can get either labour or material help from others whenever they want. Another respondent suggested the local elites are under the government and some are politically connected to the central government. They are not able to drive power, but they are able to help and be helped by their kin, as a result of the voting system.

Dissent

There was a clash between the *Derg* and EPRDF forces in April 1991. During the time of the research the people commented on the operation of the TG forces with contempt. Members of the PA complained that they were interrogated, harassed and imprisoned. There have been no signs of political dissent beyond this.

10. Relationship with Other Communities and the Wider Society

Clans and Tribes

Clans or tribal feelings are non-existent in the PA. Hence, they have no impact on the life of the villagers.

Villages and Regions

People of the surrounding PAs come to Yetmen for trade. They sell grain to the merchants of Yetmen and buy commodities in the shops and market of the village. The detail of relationships with surrounding PAs and towns is described in Map 2.

Relationship with wider Ethiopia

People of the PA have no traditional enemies. They have a positive relationship with the neighbouring PAs. The people consider themselves Ethiopian. Their commitment to Ethiopia is very high.

Effects of Government Policies

The current economic and social changes are affecting the poorest members of the community to a great extent. People are worse off, because unemployment has risen and some of the people in the farmers' association do not have land. The end of marketing boards has been advantageous for some peasants, because they have become able to sell grain to any one at unregulated prices. This is good for those with *tef* to sell but problematic for the poorest people. Due to the effects of the devaluation the villagers, especially the poor ones, are not able to buy day-to-day consumer goods because of their reduced purchasing power. Those individuals who make their daily bread by selling local drinks or daily wage labour are suffering from this problem. Generally, the economy of the community is highly affected. That is, the prices of food, inputs, crops, and the like have been increasing. The price of fertilizer from private merchants is much higher.

The dismissal of the party aristocracy is welcomed. Peace is better and in particular the return of

sons from the army is appreciated.

The community is better off because there is no AMC quota, price regulation or producers' cooperative and the price of *tef* has more than doubled since 1991. There is no contribution for different community and government organizations, and there is no forced requirement for military service

Many people in the Peasant Association did not think that productivity, crop yield, and innovation were either high or satisfactory during the time of the Producers' Cooperative. They believe that the Producers' Cooperative would have been good had it not been a means to attain political objectives. The unspeakable corruption which made life very difficult for the peasants is the other thing that obsesses people's minds and is associated with fear of anything associated with the idea of producers' cooperatives.

A number of respondents argued that people are better off because they work harder for themselves than they did for the producers' cooperative.

The present worst problem is the shortage of land. One consequence of this is that a lot of people (especially young ones) want to migrate to work but they fear other ethnic groups. Some people expect that land will be reallocated in the future.

Some respondents said that most people do not know much about regionalization but returned soldiers and those who are educated think it is a bad policy since it is resulting in ethnic conflicts. They also think there will not be any improvement since there is no longer mutual aid between regions and exchanges of knowledge between peoples of each region. Another respondent said that the people do know about regionalization, as they have heard about the problem from those who have been to other regions and described the restrictions imposed on them. Some people expect there will be conflict or war among the once-Ethiopian people.

Nobody knows much about the Constitution. They think it is just a kind of bureaucratic procedure regularly performed by this and the previous government. So they do not think that it will affect them much.

With regard to democracy, one respondent suggests that while most people know the word "democracy" they do not know its real meaning. The people have been hearing the word since the fall of Haile Selassie and they think it means to act in a dishonest way and to take advantage of the people. Another respondent said that people do not know what is meant by democracy except people who are educated. Those people know that one has the right to choose to be chosen and to nominate another to be chosen, and one has the right to do anything that does not affect other people's rights. Nowadays a man is more afraid to speak his mind at meetings than he was before Mengistu left.

One respondent said that there is no security problem at present. The worst security problem is cattle theft. Another said there is a security problem in the locality without exact information; people have been arrested.

Economic conditions are better but political conditions are much worse than before, particularly with regard to the law courts. Government policies give most attention to the remnants of the *Derg*. This policy has allowed the development of banditry, particularly robbers who steal farmers' cattle from their houses during the night, leading to conflict among the people.

Government Activities in the Community

A group of men ranked government activity in order of usefulness as follows:

- (1) agricultural extension advice
- (2) veterinary services
- (3) health services
- (4) teaching

Future

The major problem in the area is the shortage of land, which is a source of other problems too. Currently problems relating to access are being partially resolved by redistribution of already cultivable land and, though insignificant, turning part of communal land (grazing land) into farmland. There is an increasing number of landless people and others who have excess labour who are currently entering share-tenant arrangements or renting land for cash.

Landless households, and those capable of farming on their own but living with their parents as they are landless, do want land reallocation in the future. Landholders do not want any redistribution in the future because any reallocation is likely to be at their expense. There is no uncultivated land at present and the only alternative is the communal land which is already of minimal size.

Landless people resort to wage labour, and trading. The custom of migration is no longer followed.

If you have no oxen you must give land to the richest in a sharecropping agreement.

The problem is worse for old people. If they do not have a man in the household 1 *gemed* of land is taken. Then they become dependent or employed but with little work. Returned soldiers have taken land by sharecropping or have gone to urban centres in search of work.

There has also been a decrease in land fertility which means that people need more land to grow the same amount as earlier.

Yetmen has a great potential for growth and development and even more for poverty reduction if careful development programmes are introduced. While there are a wide range of possibilities one respondent suggested that the three most important are: a credit scheme; an irrigation scheme; and an afforestation programme. Another suggested that it is necessary to increase crop productivity; there should be special treatment for agriculture before everything.

Fertilizer is too expensive and the supply is untimely. More off-farm income opportunities are needed. The poor need oxen.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Akmada:</i>	Leather bag for grain transport.
<i>Araki:</i>	A distilled spirit.
<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>Debtera:</i>	A person with some religious training who may participate in church ceremonies or religious education.
<i>Gann:</i>	Large clay pot for brewing beer.
<i>Gult:</i>	System of land taxation under Haile Selassie.
<i>Injera:</i>	Ethiopian flat bread.

<i>Kalicha:</i>	Witch or witch doctor.
<i>Kollo:</i>	Roasted grain.
<i>Kubet:</i>	Animal manure used as a source of heat.
<i>Mechagna:</i>	Leather rope.
<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>Messob:</i>	A large basket on which food is served.
<i>Neftenya:</i>	Literally means gunman. Historically the name for those who settled the South of Ethiopia as landlords during the 19th and 20th centuries.
<i>Rist:</i>	A form of land holding.
<i>Safed:</i>	Basket.
<i>Senbete:</i>	A Sunday association which meets on the grounds of a church. Members take turns providing refreshments.
<i>Silicha:</i>	A leather bag made from the skin of a cow or ox and used as a saddle bag.
<i>Tef:</i>	A millet-like cereal.
<i>Tej:</i>	Alcoholic mead.
<i>Tukul:</i>	Traditional round hut with a thatched roof.
<i>Wonfit:</i>	Sieve.
<i>Woreda:</i>	An administrative division.
<i>Wot:</i>	Stew.

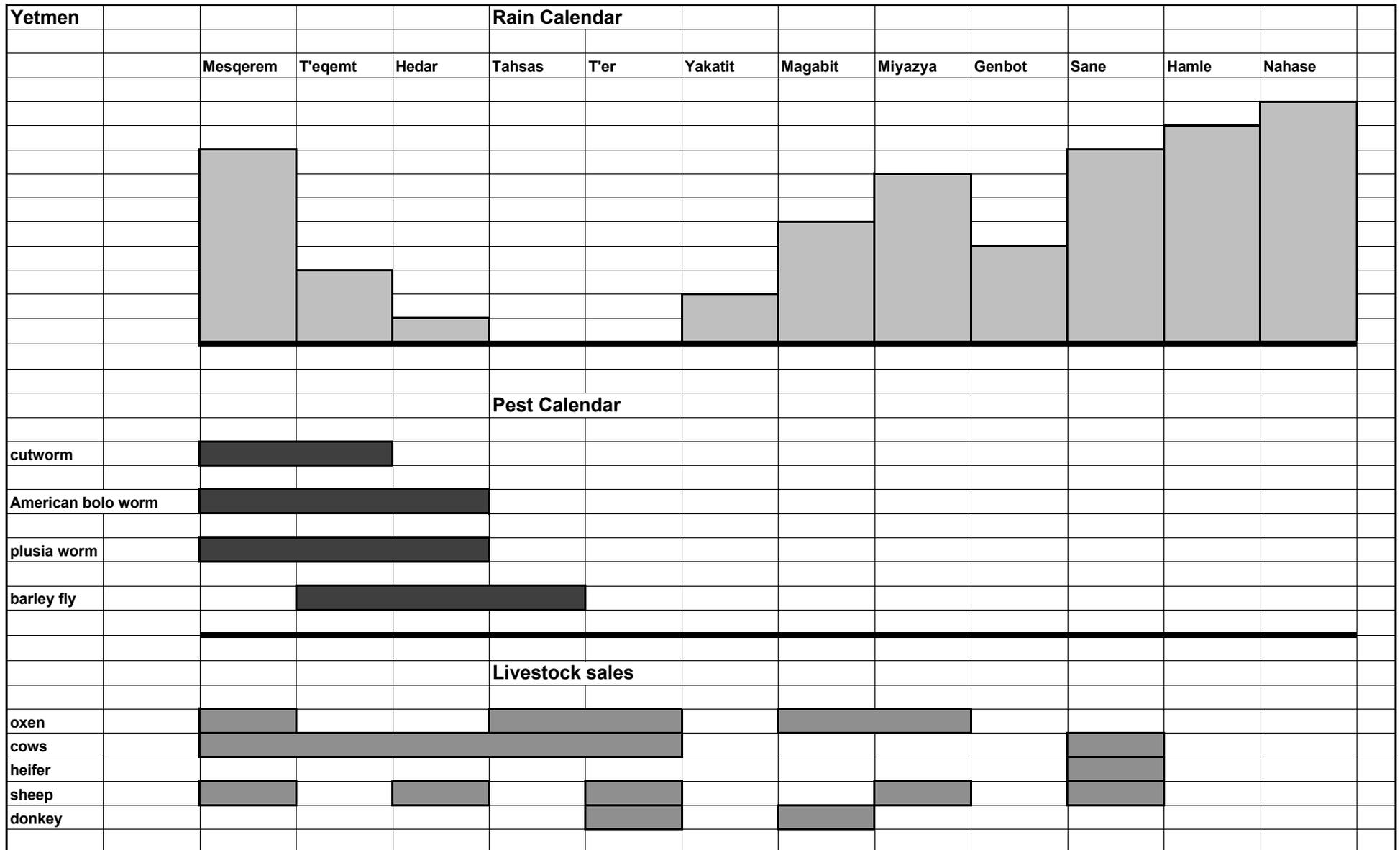
ACRONYMS

TGE:	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
MoA:	Ministry of Agriculture

Yetmen

Crops													
	Mesqerem	T'eqemt	Hedar	Tahsas	T'er	Yakatit	Magabit	Miyazya	Genbot	Sane	Hamle	Nahase	
teff	weeding	weeding	harvesting	threshing			ploughing			ploughing			
wheat	planting	weeding	harvesting		threshing		ploughing		ploughing				
chickpeas	planting	weeding	harvesting		threshing		ploughing		ploughing				
guaya	planting				harvesting	threshing	ploughing		ploughing				
maize	harvesting						ploughing	planting	planting			weeding	weeding
Men's Labour													
	other	planting	threshing			harvesting	threshing	ploughing	weeding			weeding	
	planting	weeding					harvesting	ploughing					
	weeding	weeding		harvesting		threshing	ploughing						
	ploughing	weeding	harvesting		harvesting	harvesting	ploughing		ploughing				
							threshing						

Yetmen



Yetmen

Children's Labour												
	Mesqere	T'eqemt	Hedar	Tahsas	T'er	Yakatit	Magabit	Miyazya	Genbot	Sane	Hamle	Nahase
Boys												
A whole working day	herding											
	farmwork											
Girls												
a whole working day	tiliff	fetching water										
	seffet	childcare										
	fuel collection											
School terms												
school	**	*	*		*	*	***	*				no school
* holidays												

