

Ethiopian Village Studies

(Designed and edited by Philippa Bevan and Alula Pankhurst)

Harresaw

Atsbi Woreda

Tigray

researched by

Assefa Tewodros and Yared Derbew
(Field managers: Bereket Kebede and Shukri Ahmed)

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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		

Further information about the profiles can be obtained from:

Dr Philippa Bevan
Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD)
ESRC Research Group
3 East 2.10
University of Bath
Bath, BA2 7AY
UK

Email: P.G.Bevan@bath.ac.uk

Dr Alula Pankhurst
Department of Anthropology and Sociology
Addis Ababa University; PO Box 1176,
Addis Ababa,
ETHIOPIA

Email: pankhurst@telecom.net.et

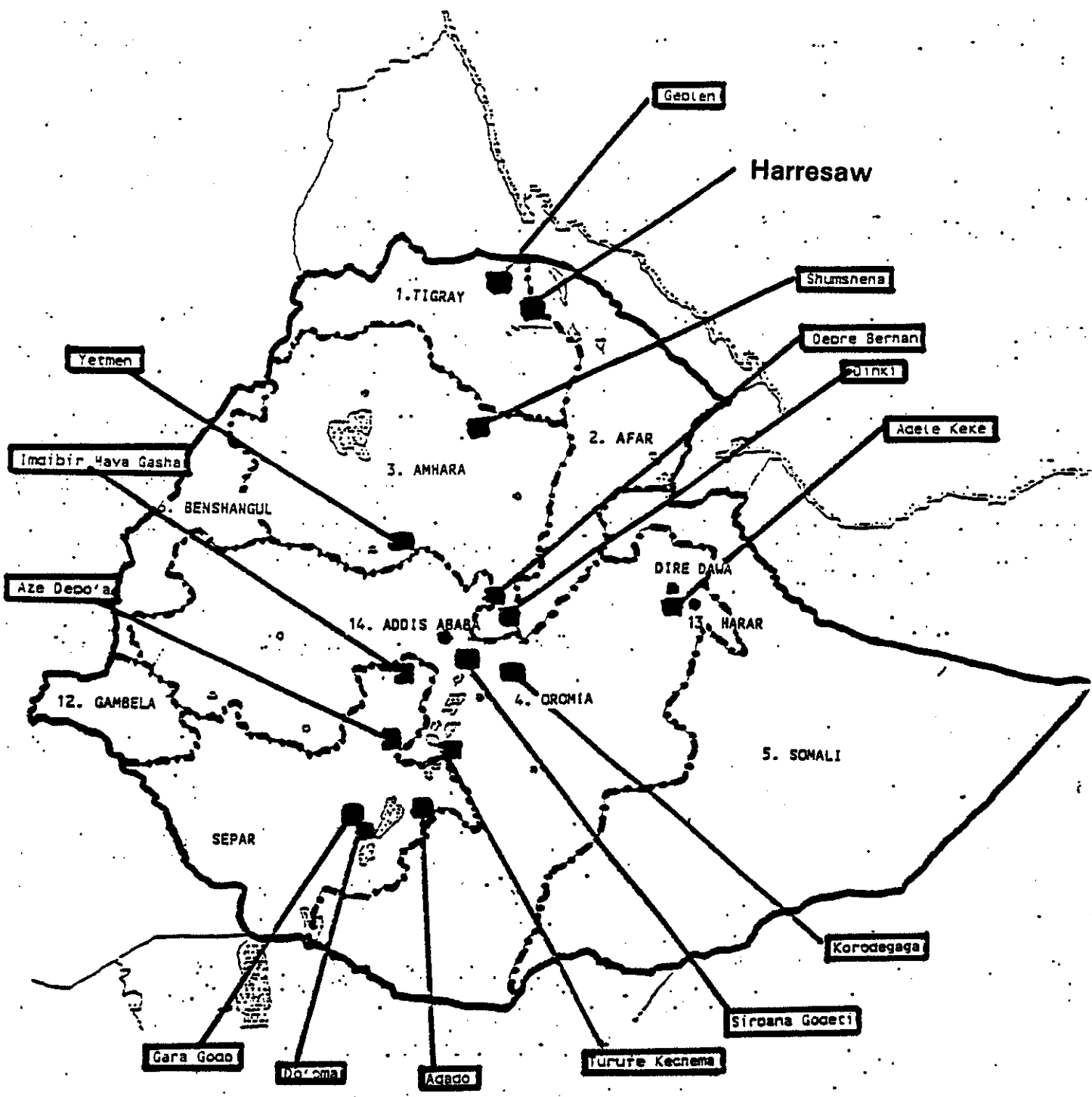
Further information about the household survey can be obtained from:

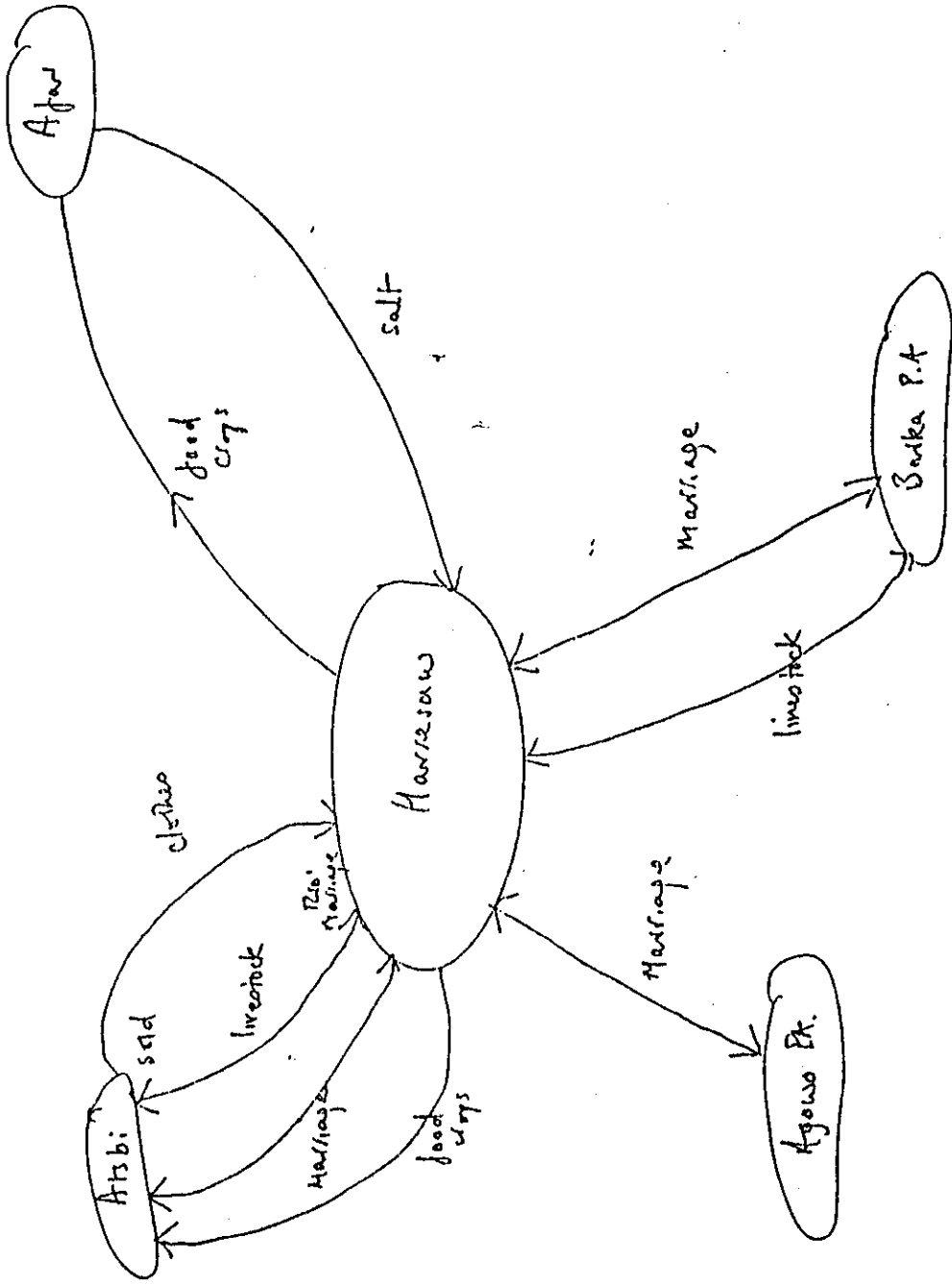
Bereket Kebede
Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD)
ESRC Research Group
3 East 2.10
University of Bath
Bath, BA2 7AY
UK

Email: B.Kebede@bath.ac.uk

Dr Stefan Dercon
Centre for the Study of African Economies
Oxford University, Economics Department
Manor Road Building
Manor Road
Oxford, OX1 3UQ
UK

Email: Stefan.dercon@economics.oxford.ac.uk





HARRISAW P.A.

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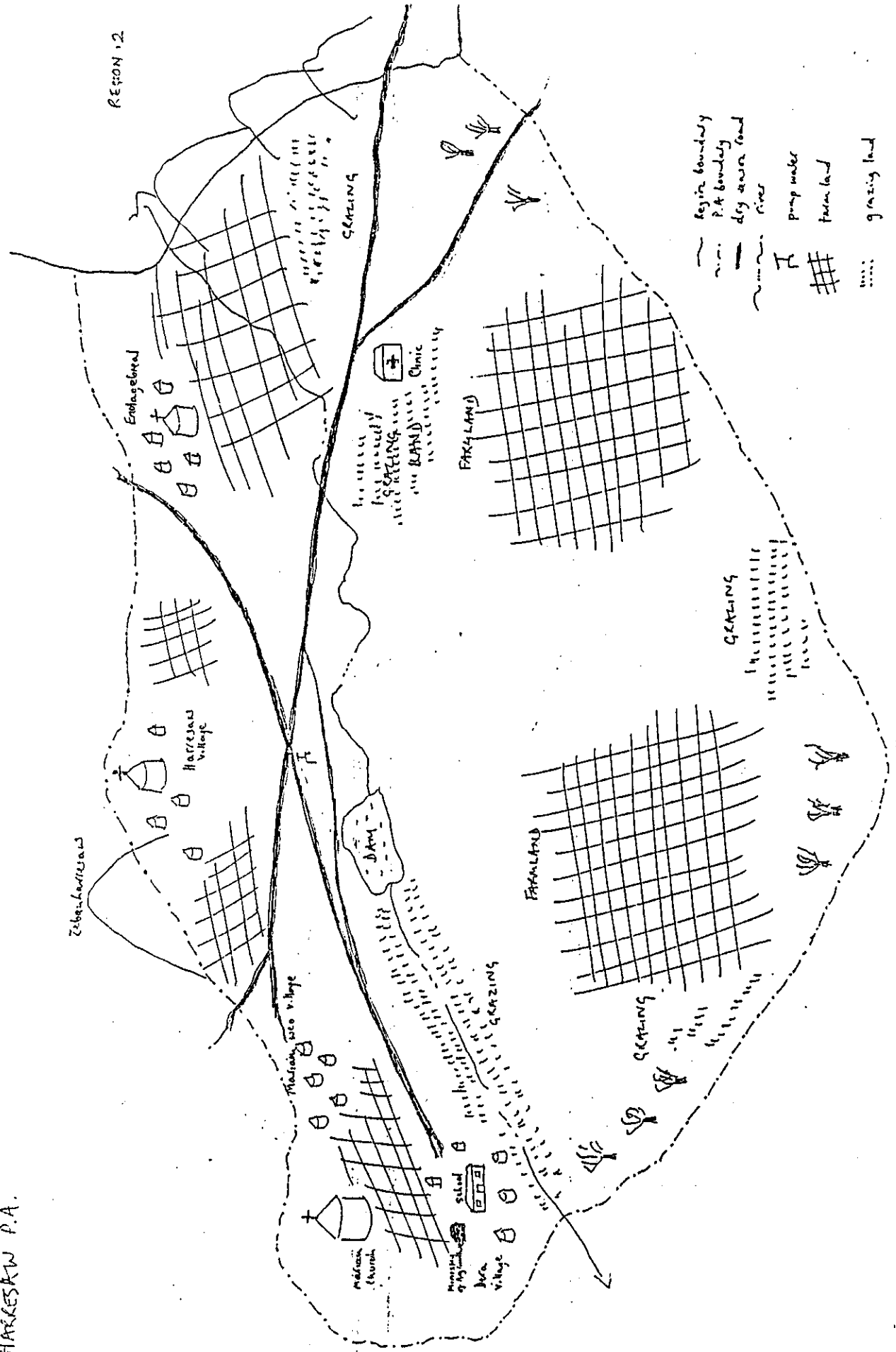


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1. Locating the Site in Time and Place

Geography and Population

Harresaw is situated in Tigray region, Eastern zone, Atsbi *woreda*. Atsbi *woreda* is one of 15 *woreda* found in Eastern zone (*Misrakawi Zoba*). In Atsbi *woreda* there are sixteen *tabia* (*kebele*) and Harresaw is one of the largest of these. The *tabia* are Tegahne, Quret, Zahraro, Barka, Harresaw, Agewo, Zarema, Gendet, Debreselam, Adi Kebero, Baatiero, Maimetanu, Awdesel, Hichen, Qalqalet and Endaselassie. The population of Atsbi *woreda* was estimated to be around 72,460 in 1994. This figure is the most recent and includes returnees from Eritrea and demobilized soldiers and TPLF fighters. The *woreda* capital is Atsbi town. A small town and market called Dera are located in Abiy Dera *Kushet*.

More than 80% of the population are estimated to be Tigrigna speakers and members of the Christian Orthodox church. The region has been under continuous cultivation for two thousand years or probably more. The altitude of the area is between 2,700 and 3,000 metres. Annual rainfall ranges between 350 and 500 mm. The topography of the area is full of ups and downs and there is considerable land degradation. There is no annual river. Rivers are seasonal and flow during rainy seasons. There is no lake but there are small streams and ponds. The area in general is affected by recurrent drought and good harvests can only be obtained about once in a decade. The type of soil is, by and large, white and sandy. The extent of degradation of the soil is serious and there is no forest land except in a few areas around the Afar escarpment where scattered forest is visible (Informant: Wolde Kiros). Irrigation is used in the few places where it is possible; the suitable sites are rare. On many slopes the soil is so highly eroded that even when rain falls only a small amount of moisture is retained by the soil. Consequently, yields of the main traditional crops - sorghum, maize, *tef* (indigenous grain), wheat and barley - have been falling steadily over many years (Peberdy 1985:16).

The Harresaw PA is situated about 17 kms to the north east of Atsbi. It is surrounded to the north-east by Barka, to the south and south-west by Agewo, and to the east by Guada, Afar region. The *tabia* is divided into 5 *kushet* (villages): Harresaw *Kushet*, Hehunta, Enda Gebriel, Enda Mariam Wuho, and Abiy Dera. The landscape is composed of big stones that look as if they have been beautifully laid out by an architect. There are about 1100 households in the PA. Among these about 600 are female-headed. The total population is around 4,000 out of which about 2,200 are female. There are about 100 landless people in the PA. All residents are Tigrayans. Tigrigna is the main language spoken in the area.

The settlement of people in the PA is densely concentrated because the number of residents and the size of land is unbalanced. The problem of shortage of land is aggravated by the existence of rivers, gorges and plateaux. The total land mass of the PA is estimated to be 3,048 hectare, out of which 2,077 hectares is farm land, 800 hectare is forest, 142.55 hectares is terracing, and 28 hectares is restricted land. All households are registered by the *tabia*.

Climate

There are theoretically two cropping seasons in the area, *belg* and *meher*, but the *belg* has failed since 1985 (except for 1993). The *belg* season would be between *Yakatit* (February) and *Genbot/Sane* (May/June) but the area has, generally speaking, a single rainy season from about mid-June to the first week of September. The rain falls in varying intensities. The intensity of the rain is usually high in July and becomes low in August. Internal travel is suspended and communication between neighbouring villages is reduced to the extent of total interruption. The cold season is from September to December. Harresaw is at 2,597m above sea-level and can be classified as a *dega* area. During the cold season frost is a big problem. It damages the skin of the residents of the area causing cracking and bleeding, and it also damages grain. Since the area is highland there is no hot season and there are no problems caused by heat. In fact from March to May is a relatively dry season. Generally speaking, from the beginning of September until the beginning of the rainy season the area becomes dry and

communication and social relations increase.

Production

The peasants of Harresaw, like other peasants of Atsbi woreda cultivate different types of cereal and legume. The major crop is, however, barley and the other principal crops are wheat, beans, peas, lentils, and flax. These crops are produced mainly for consumption and not as cash crops. In the PA there is no cash crop and peasants sell part of their produce to get money in order to buy manufactured products such as cloth, blades and other necessary goods. The peasants use only rain water for their crops and there is no irrigation in the area. Oxen are the most important domestic animals. Without an ox farming cannot be carried out. Cows are valued and their milk is used. However, they are primarily kept as a source of future oxen. Donkeys are bred for transporting goods and tools.

The water supply is short and unpredictable. The amount of rain that will fall on any given field is unpredictable because rain comes in the form of cloudbursts, leaving dry, often parched, fields on either side of a watered one. Should the rainfall fail to meet the requirements of a household's crops, not only will its members be short of food, but so will its oxen, and the chances that they will die are increased. Even if the oxen do not die, the household may be forced to sell them in order to obtain food. Either way, the household is likely to be deprived of its capital equipment.

The farmers of the region are aware of the risks in meeting their agricultural requirements and take rational steps to deal with them. This is evident in the kinds of decision they make. Heads of independent households choose their agricultural techniques so as to avert risk, which they achieve through a variety of choices about crops, soil types and field distribution. Choosing a large variety of crops each known for its capacity to grow under specific rainfall conditions, is one technique used to avoid risk (Bauer, 1973:61-62).

Households also trade fields with one another so that each has a chance to cultivate a variety of soil types known for their suitability for specific crops under specific rainfall conditions and so that each holds dispersed fields, enhancing the probability that in any given year some of the household's fields will receive desirable amounts of rain from passing storms.

One further measure used in reducing agricultural risk is the use of modern fertilizers or manure which lead to a good crop if rainfall is sustained. In fact the peasants have serious problems obtaining as much as fertilizer they need and at the time they want it (Wolde Kiros).

There was no *meher* harvest in 1994 because of the drought and there was no *belg* harvest either.

It is difficult to estimate the proportion of output sold by farmers. The major items sold are honey, eggs, and goats. Milk is not sold but butter is and so are some *beles*. Cattle cost between 500 and 600 *birr* in 1994.

Social Structure

The main ethnic groups in the area are the Agewo (Harresaw) and the Tigrayans. In the neighbouring PA of Barka there are Mendrehgsis Afar. According to one informant there has been some ethnic conflict in the area, while another says there has been none. There is no extensive inter-marriage between the Tigrayans and the Afar on account of their religion and way of life (sedentary vs nomadic) being different. The main languages spoken are Tigrigna and Afarigna. Amharic is spoken by some. Orthodox Christianity is the dominant religion in the area while about 20% are believed to be Muslims. There has been no religious conflict in the area.

There are a few people who have been affected by the ethnic conflicts which occurred in other parts of the country especially in the Oromia region. As a result two people, a man and a woman, have come back from around Illubabor, Oromia region, because of the ethnic conflicts which prevailed in the area in 1991-1992. These two people came back to Zarema, a neighbouring PA, to escape the attacks of OLF. After they came back to their area the man died because of disease while the woman married and changed her place of residence to another *tabia*. When the people came to the area they had no property. They came to the area in January 1992. In total 59 demobilized soldiers, 8 resettlers, and 26 returnees from Eritrea have come to the PA. All of them are landless people.

History

The history of Tigray is full of war, drought and famine. Tigray was the centre of a power struggle between different dynasties and rivalry between local chiefs. Since the late 19th century Tigray was a centre for the Ethiopian defence against foreign invaders: the Italians at Meqele in December 1895 and January 1896 and at Adwa in March 1896 and the whole region against the Italians in 1935 (Pankhurst 1963:151). The fighting of the last quarter of the 19th century had a devastating impact on the area. The Italian invasion of 1895-96 took place when the country had not fully recovered from the 1882-92 Great Ethiopian Famine, locally known as *Kifu Ken*, and thus the ravages of this war was felt over almost all parts of Tigray.

Besides the destruction caused by the invading forces, the large Ethiopian army was entirely dependent for its food on the local people. Menelik's force at Adwa was about 107,600 men. This army was sent to the north without provisions and was forced to live off the land. Peberdy writes "it has never been forgotten that more Tigrayans died defending their homes against Menelik's army than did Italians in the battle." [Peberdy 1985: 15].

The impact of wars can also be observed from the reduction of the population of the major settlement sites in Tigray. The Egyptian expeditions between 1870 and 1878 dramatically reduced the population of Adwa from 6,000 to 1,000; the population of Adigrat in 1830 was 1,200 while half a century later it was only 1,000. Mekelle was equally affected by the 1895-96 war which substantially reduced the population of 15,000 by a half. Human diseases increased; the most serious epidemic of the 19th century was small-pox. The worst outbreaks in Tigray were in 1811 at Axum where there was high mortality and at Adwa in 1886 where out of a population of 7,000 no less than 500 died, 300 of them children under the age of fourteen (*ibid*). Another problem was the locusts which were also the cause of famine and attacked the Tigray region repeatedly. In the second half of the 19th century Tigray was attacked each year for five consecutive years from 1864-1868.

The Great Ethiopian Famine which lasted for five years from 1887-92 started with the outbreak of cattle disease, perhaps rinderpest, in the north. This almost eliminated the cattle wealth of the area causing considerable poverty. The cattle disease was followed by a disastrous famine which affected the whole country. The next period of famine was during the first decade of the 20th century and was caused by repeated locust outbreaks which elongated the period of recovery. It is reported that in 1902 locusts appeared in larger numbers than previously observed. In the latter part of 1905 and 1906 large plagues of locusts also were reported. These were followed by an infestation of caterpillars which inflicted immense damage on crops in 1907.

When another famine occurred in 1913 and 1914 Tigray had not fully recovered from the disasters of the previous famine. These famine years were followed by another severe famine which occurred in 1928 and 1929, caused as previous famines by an outbreak of locusts (Mesfin:1986). The 1935-41 period of Italian occupation was also accompanied by famine caused by a combination of locusts, drought and war. After the Italian occupation, particularly in the years between the 1940's and 1960, Tigray again suffered from another severe famine which lasted for some twelve years. This period was remembered as one of the most devastating famines in Tigray's history. The magnitude of the damage was comparable to the famines of 1889-92, 1973-74 and 1984-85 (Perbedy 1985:17).

The famine of 1950-51, which inflicted immense damage on Tigrayan people, was caused by drought which was exacerbated by the subsequent outbreak of locusts and epidemics. This famine was different from previous famines mainly because relief assistance was provided to the victims. Four *woreda* of the Kilte Awlaleo *awraja* were among those ravaged by the famine. The actual number of deaths during this famine in Tigray was estimated to be at least 100,000 people and the total number of migrants outside the region was estimated to be at least 105,000 (RRC 1979:44). Some six years later in 1958 another devastating famine occurred. By the summer of 1958 the crisis was already two years old. People were dying in large numbers. Although the Governor-General of Tigray wrote a letter to the Ministry of Interior concerning the crisis, the Ministry requested further information after thousands of

people had already died. The central government was either reluctant or incapable of saving the lives of the famine victims. According to the report of the Ministry of Interior the famine-affected population was about one million. Although grain aid was eventually sent to Tigray, it was too late and arrived after at least 100,000 people had died. To make the situation worse, the famine coincided with epidemics of small-pox and typhus and outbreaks of measles and malaria, and was followed by locust invasion (Mesfin 1986:36).

When another famine occurred in 1965-67 Tigray has hardly recovered from the previous devastating famine. And in 1973-74 the well known famine which attacked mainly Wollo and Tigray inflicted severe damage on the already impoverished people (Peberdy:16). The failure of rain in 1980 obviously caused severe reduction of production. To make matters worse grain reserves were almost nil because farmers had hardly recovered from the 1974 famine, which was preceded by locust invasion and pests for five consecutive years. The damage was even worse in the lowlands where many livestock died. By 1981 more than half the livestock in the eastern lowlands had been destroyed. [Peberdy: 1985]

In 1982 the rains failed and the size of the drought-affected area increased significantly. 1983 was no better and the number of people migrating in different direction from the region to escape from famine-death become like a "flood". The number of migrants rose astronomically from 40,000 by March 1981 to 400,000 by early 1983. These figures include only those who migrated west to the Sudan. The famine became devastating and by 1984 tens of thousands of people and hundreds of thousands of livestock had died. In 1985 which was the period of climax 1,500 people were dying each day in Tigray alone (*ibid*).

One of the major consequences of the 1984-85 famine was the implementation of the resettlement programme of the *Derg* regime. Under this programme 86,049 people were forcibly moved from Tigray to the south-western parts of the country (RRC 1985:15). Although the *Derg* regime claimed that the resettlement programme was carried out to help famine victims, the TPLF has constantly argued that the resettlement programme was carried out as a political tactic to weaken the strength of the rebels, by depriving them of the support of the people (Peberdy 1985:154). In any case the forced implementation of the resettlement programme had negative consequences for the people of Tigray.

Moreover, the protracted civil war, which lasted for seventeen years and involved indiscriminate air raids, heavy artillery bombardments and ruthless damage by the infantry of the *Derg's* army, heavily devastated the area economically and ecologically, and socially compounded the natural calamities.

In May 1976 the *Derg* regime recruited about fifty youngsters from Harresaw PA for a military campaign launched in Eritrea which was known as Raza Zemecha. Out of these ten died and one was wounded, while the rest returned to the village. Then, in 1977, another campaign was carried out in the area and three youngsters were recruited from the PA while others defected and returned home.

In 1978 the EPRP occupied the area. Thieves from the area joined the EPRP and robbed the properties of local residents, using the political organization as a cover. They killed a man known as Hagos Tesfu. When the EPRP left, the robbers remained in the area. The *Derg* came to the area and ordered the people to launch a campaign against the robbers; every resident of the area was ordered to shout whenever he or she saw a robber. As a result two of them were caught by the peasants, while one fled to the Afar area after he had killed eight people. The two other robbers surrendered to the *Derg's* army. The people of the area followed one robber and finally killed him. Those robbers who were caught by the people were executed by the *Derg* in front of the people, while the people, through their *woreda* administrator, demanded the execution of the robbers who had surrendered to the government. As a result these two robbers were brought to Atsbi and executed in front of the people.

In 1980 the TPLF occupied the area. After that the *Derg's* army made frequent attempts to retake the area from TPLF fighters. This period was a hard time for the people since the *Derg's* army executed many people, accusing them of being supporters of the TPLF. Because of this, the people were forced to leave their houses whenever the *Derg's* army marched to their area. Even ,so many people were taken to the prisons of the *Derg* at Wuqro and Mekele suspected of being supporters of the TPLF. Some of them were executed without trial and others had their property confiscated. Moreover, the soldiers of the *Derg's* army slaughtered the cattle, goats and sheep of the peasants, and even raped married women of the area, including wives of priests, which is a big crime in the eyes of the society.

In 1988 the *Derg's* Air Force bombarded the people of the area while they were waiting to receive

aid at Wuqro. Once about 50 people were subject to forcible conscription after they were summoned to take aid at Wuqro.

Since the establishment of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, however, the people of the area are leading peaceful lives. There is no security problem. Movement of people from one place to another is now possible and car transport is available from the nearest town, Atsbi, to Wuqro. Since the coming of the Transitional Government the peasants of Harresaw have obtained some benefits which are described below under the heading *Government Activities in the Community*.

Those leaders of the PA who served during the *Derg's* regime were deposed and were replaced by a newly elected committee or *baito*.

2. Seasonal Activities and Events

The following calendars are included in the Appendix: crop activities (men and women; off-farm activities (men and women); labour (men, women, girls, boys); migration; credit needs (men and women); livestock sales; pests; rain and water availability; diseases; fuel availability; consumption; and festivals. Noticeable features are the children's coughs associated with cold in *Hamle* and *Nahase*, and the need women have for credit during the same months.

3. The Farm Economy

Crops

The main crop grown in the area is barley (*gebs*), wheat (*sende*), lentils (*bershin*) and *bakella* are also grown but not on a large scale. All the crops are used mainly for consumption and there is no cash crop as such. The site is currently a food deficit area in both crops and livestock but it used to be known as a better-off area. All the crops are cultivated during the *kiremt* season and are affected if the rain fails. The general quality of the land is *rekeek (lem-taf)* but there is also some *reguid (lem)* land. There are different types of crop diseases in the area.

Crop diseases

No.	Local Name	English Name	Cause & Effect
1	<i>Humedia</i>	Rust	Caused by climatic conditions this attacks mainly wheat and peas, especially at the flowering stage so they don't give seed, and causes heavy damage to the plant
2	<i>Harie-Ecre</i>	Smut	It attacks mainly barley
3	<i>Limtse</i>	Late blight	It attacks potato, barley and wheat and is a fungal disease caused by excessive moisture
4		Early blight	" "
5	<i>Afedes</i>		Caused by untimely rain i.e. when rain falls at the stage of seed. It attacks mainly the unselected seed
6	<i>Ashaita</i>	Frost	It damages any type of crop by making it unable to produce seeds

Insects which cause crop failure

No.	Local Name	English Name	Cause & Effect
1	<i>Haseka ater</i>	African bull worm	Attacks beans and other cereals
2	<i>Kubi</i>	Cut worm	Attacks barley, wheat, and other grass-type crops
3	<i>Kancha fahari</i>	Stock borer	Attacks mainly maize and other related types of crops
4	<i>Anchiwa</i>	Rat (rodents)	Attacks any type of crops at its early stage
5	<i>Locust</i>	Attacks any type of crop and causes heavy damage	Destroys crops entirely

The peasants of the area do not usually use inter-cropping because *dega* crops are not suitable for inter-cropping. However, the peasants occasionally grow cabbage (*hamli*) and maize together. In this year there was no *belg* (short) rain and last year's *meher* (main) rain was insufficient. There was a serious drought in the area which caused heavy damage to crops.

There have been serious crop disasters during several years in the last ten years. There was a recurrent drought between 1980 and 1984, and in 1984-85 there was a serious famine, caused by the serious drought of the preceding year, which inflicted heavy damage both on people and animals. The damage worsened with the outbreak of epidemic diseases along with the famine. Approximately 150 people died in Harresaw because of famine and epidemics.

Although there was recurrent drought from 1989-1993 there was no heavy damage as in previous droughts, because of effective government aid which prevented deaths due to famine.

The damage caused by failure of rain to crops is enormous. For instance, a peasant reported that, during times of good rain, he used to obtain up to fifty quintals of grain. However, during a drought he could lose forty-five quintals ending up with only five quintals of grain from his farm land. A survey which was carried out last year showed that peasants in the PA obtained almost nothing from their farm land because of drought.

There have been good years for the community in the last ten years. 1987 and 1989 were especially good years for the communities of the area. A peasant could harvest between 45-50 quintals of grain from his farm land. During these years there was a good harvest and as a result the price of grain decreased significantly. The price of one quintal of barley was fifty *birr*.

Livestock

The livestock of the area are oxen, cows, donkeys, mules, horses, sheep and goats. Oxen are used for ploughing while cows are used for breeding and milk. Donkeys, mules and horses are used for transporting people and goods. Cattle manure is used as a fertilizer for crops. Due to population pressure and the limited size of available grazing land, the number of livestock in the area is small. According to the 1992 census, there were 591 oxen, 383 cows, 185 heifers, 96 bulls, 29 calves, 1115 goats, 4568 sheep and 2 horses, 8 mules, 408 donkeys and 2383 hens. Livestock have been individually owned in the area since early times.

Oxen are the most important items of capital for the peasants and they are relatively expensive. Because grazing pasture and fodder are in short supply, supporting oxen is a problem. A village's communal pasturage is depleted long before the beginning of the planting season, and it is then that the greatest strain is placed upon the oxen. Additional fodder must be supplied out of the straw from the

previous year's crop, if it is available (Bauer 1977:59).

The main reason why supporting oxen presents such a problem lies in the relationship between the amount of land a household needs to support itself and the amount of land required to supply enough fodder to support a minimal number of oxen and cattle. Moreover, oxen have a working life expectancy of only about five years. To ensure a continued supply of oxen, a household must have enough cash in hand to replace oxen or must maintain a fertile cow at various stages of development. Cows place an additional burden on the household's already strained fodder supply (*ibid*).

There is only one cross-bred ox in the PA. This was given by the government for cross-breeding and there is no access for the cross breeding of other types of livestock.

The community lost a lot of livestock because of drought in 1984-85 when people were forced to sell all their livestock. As a result livestock prices fell considerably: the price of a cow was only 30 *birr*, of an ox 55 *birr*, and of a sheep between 12-15 *birr*. In 1988 similar conditions occurred. The only difference was that the community was not affected as heavily as in 1984 because of the assistance it received from the TPLF.

People do not keep their livestock in their houses but they prepare a separate compound with a fence which is locally known as *demba*.

There was a time when the peasants benefitted from the rise of livestock prices. The time was 1992-93. This was because the government was providing money to enable peasants to buy oxen through the rehabilitation programme for the area. As a result a peasant could sell an ox for 1000 *birr* to a peasant who had the money, and use the proceeds to buy a bull and heifer, adding some of his own money to the 1000 *birr*. Such peasants benefitted from the rise in prices. Since last year the price of sheep and goats has been rising significantly and obviously this benefits peasants.

Before the period of serious drought (1979-1983) there were peasants who owned 14 mules, some who had 4 oxen, and some with 150 sheep. However, since 1985 almost all livestock have been destroyed because of drought. There are peasants who do not have even one animal. Even those peasants who used to own 5 cows now have none. The reason is the recurrent drought. The community has lost about 95% of its livestock because of drought in the last few years. There have been no epidemics affecting livestock in the area.

There are different types of livestock diseases in the area.

Livestock Diseases

No.	Local Name	English Name	Symptoms	Treatment
1	<i>Obay</i>	Pastrolus	It attacks sheep and damages their intestines. It is transmitted to other animals.	Pastrolus vaccine or oxy-tetracycline
2	<i>Megerem</i>		The symptoms are similar to pastrolus. It causes the hair to stand on end and is transmitted to other animals.	Oxy-tetracycline
3	<i>Wogie/mendef</i>	Anthrax	It attacks donkeys and mules and can kill them in one day without treatment.	Procaine-penicillin
4	<i>Arey</i>		It attacks the legs of animals and prevents them from standing properly. It causes excess saliva so the animal can't graze as usual	
5	<i>Qunchi and hafew</i>		It attacks the hides of animals especially sheep and goats.	D.D.T. spray

There is no permanent vaccination programme in the PA and veterinary services are poor.

However, vaccination programmes have been carried out irregularly, whenever medicine is available. For instance in the years between 1990-1993 vaccination was provided about three times. However, vaccination has not been carried out according to a fixed regular programme.

Land

In the past, during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie and before, landholding was in the form of *rist*. There were landlords and tenants but it is difficult to estimate their numbers. The land was owned by individuals and passed on to children. Therefore, there were many disputes among people connected with land ownership, because a number of people could claim ownership of the same piece of land on the grounds that the land was the property of his ancestors. This situation ceased to exist with the land proclamation of 1975 and land allocation was made in the area on the basis of the proclamation. The 1975 land proclamation, however, did not bring about a fundamental change in places like Tigray where there was an intricate land tenure system. When the area became controlled by the TPLF in 1980 land distribution was carried out in the following way.

Each community elected an agrarian committee consisting of both the richer and poorer farmers. After discussions as to how land should be reallocated, a survey was conducted to agree upon the boundaries of the community, the number of families and the range of soil available. The land was then divided into two categories according to its closeness to the dwellings and into grades of fertility - fertile (*reguid*), medium (*mehakelay*) and poor (*rekeek*) - with an agreement as to how much poor land was equivalent to a unit of good land. When the land was fertile a unit was 1 *timad*, when it was average a unit was 1.5 *timad*, and when it was poor a unit was 2 *timad*. The criterion for reallocation was the number of mouths the family had to feed. A couple with two children received one unit; those with five to seven, one and a quarter units; unmarried, divorced or widowed people who were alone received half a unit. All the land became national property; but the farmers received its use free of charge (Peberdy 1985:48). Redistribution by the TPLF continued from 1990 to 1992 when it was stopped. Entrants since 1992 have not received any land.

The community remembered it this way. Recently, land distribution was carried out in a new way. A certain number of men were elected from each *kushet* and those elected members were combined and assigned to the different *kushet*. A person elected in one *kushet* distributed land in another *kushet*. The second step was preparing ropes of equal length. The number of people who were assigned to one *kushet* was five. These people started to give the land from the edge (border) to the centre of the *kushet* so that all the people who distributed land in the different *kushet* then met at the centre of the *tabia*. The rule for the allocation of land was as follows. A couple (i.e. husband and wife without children) could be allocated $\frac{1}{2}$ hectare of poor "thin" land, $\frac{1}{2}$ hectare, of medium land, and $\frac{1}{4}$ hectare of rich "thick" land. Land was allocated for children: for one or two $\frac{1}{4}$ hectare of "thin" land and for three children $\frac{1}{2}$ hectare. Land allocated for a couple was near their house (*hugua*), while for children, if there was vacant land near their house, priority was given to them. Otherwise they were given the land which remained after all the adults had received their share.

However, some members of the community remembered that, in practice, the land distribution was not made on an equal basis for all the members of the community. As a result, while a few members received fertile land, others were given poor land, and while some members obtained up to 3 hectares of land, others were given only $\frac{1}{2}$ hectare. Though the land proclamation granted equal rights for all there were problems in the implementation of the proclamation.

Today within the PA there are between 42 and 100 landless families. Some are people who were forcibly taken to resettle in other parts of the country in 1984-85, and others are demobilized soldiers who came to the area after the land allocation was carried out. These landless people live by receiving aid when it comes, as priority is given to them. Also, whenever jobs are available in the area, such as at nursery centres, dam construction (*dega*), road construction and the like, priority is given to these landless people.

The most significant change in land allocation has to do with women's securing access to land. Women can own and manage land themselves and are entitled to half the land on divorce and to all of it when widowed.

Young men, who want to marry must find out if there is a vacant plot of land within their PA. If there is vacant land registered by the *baito*, it forwards the case to the members of the PA. If the people decide to allocate the vacant land it is given to the applicants on the basis of a draw. However, since usually there is not adequate land for all adult boys who want to marry, they rely on their parents and plough the share which was given to their parents for them when they were children. Usually such men build their houses on their father's land, if there is space or share a room in their father's house and start their new lives there with their wives.

At present people have access to land through inheritance and there is no sale of land. Land rental for cash is not practised. Moreover, all women own their own land irrespective of their marital status. Most people feel that their landholding is too small.

If land disputes arise people go to the *baito* and the *baito* elects elders from both sides. If the case is a border dispute, the case is left for the elders to resolve. If the elders cannot resolve the case because of the disagreement of both sides, the *baito* itself decides on the case. Anyone who is dissatisfied with the decision of the *baito* can go to *tabia* and *woreda* administration but not to the court. However, such cases usually obtain a solution at the *baito* level.

Some people own land which they use solely for grazing. There is also communal grazing land controlled by the local *baito*.

Labour

A farming household's production tasks include two and sometimes three activities and revolve in four different cycles. First, there are the tasks involved in agriculture itself i.e, ploughing, sowing, weeding, harvesting and the like. Second, there are those involved in herding such as grazing, watering, fodder preparation, and storage. Third, there are off-farm activities such as salt transportation from Arho, mainly done by the head of the household, which sometimes includes other adult male members of the household. Fourth, are the activities mainly performed by women at home (Bauer 1977:68). Women participate in weeding and other agricultural activities as well as cooking, milling grain, fetching water, and buying supplies from the market.

Tasks begin at day-break. The animals spend the night in the house. Cows must be milked. While this is being done, breakfast, consisting of bread or leftovers from the dinner of the night before, is prepared. During breakfast the day's task are discussed. Grazing areas are decided upon. What labour will be needed for agricultural activities is discussed. After breakfast those animals to be grazed are taken first to be watered and then to the section of the village's pasture decided upon during breakfast. Animals to be used in ploughing or transport are watered and taken to the fields.

Farming is usually completed by two in the afternoon. Then, those who return home perform some tasks within the compound of their house such as repairing tools, fences and the like. If there is no such work they spent the time visiting, playing games or discussing social affairs.

Herding can be done by one person, often a young boy. Herding must be done daily regardless of weather or holiday. It varies little seasonally; fodder supplements grazing in the months of poor grazing preceding the rains, March or April until mid to late June. Otherwise variation is mostly a matter of distance and frequency of movement within the community's pasture (*ibid*:69).

Unlike with herding, the seasonal variation involved in agriculture is great. Between the harvest, which ends in early December, and ploughing and sowing which begins in early June there is no agricultural work and people are involved in other non-farming activities. However, June to December are filled with agricultural activities which begin with the onset of rainfall. Most crops have a very short optimal period, after which each day of delay in sowing increases the risk that the crop will fail because of insufficient amounts of rain.

Weeding of early fields begins before the sowing of later fields and thus the task overlaps with planting. Weeds become an increasing problem in each successive year after a field is brought out of fallow and are a major factor in the crop rotation cycle, crops that require the most weeding being relegated to an early position in the cycle.

Harvesting begins with the cutting of the first crop in early October and ends in late December. It is the phase in the annual agricultural cycle in which labour rather than oxen becomes important. The task

group required for agricultural activities varies somewhat from season to season. Planting may be accomplished by one man and a team of oxen. It is, however, greatly facilitated by the assistance of a second man, one man broadcasting seed and removing rocks while the other drives the oxen and guides the plough (*ibid*:70).

The amount of weeding done is not critical and depends on the available labour. All members of the household over the age of seven may participate in this task. The harvest requires the largest amount of labour at a single time. It is at this time that households tend to hire outside labour. The combination of cutting with sickles, threshing with oxen, and winnowing by throwing the grain up in the air with a forked stick requires about seven man-days per acre (*ibid*). Women participate in the gathering of cut grain from the fields. Earlier, women were prohibited from involvement in other harvest activities, especially threshing, because, according to the peasants, their presence would reduce the size of the harvest. However, nowadays these types of beliefs are withering away and consequently women are participating in all types of farming activity.

All able adult men are expected to perform non-farming activities such as house-building, fencing and other related types of work. Women mainly perform domestic activities inside the house such as cooking. In addition to fetching water and wood, they also participate in weeding, and buying and selling goods in the market, and, rarely, in harvesting. Boys herd cattle, help their parents in all agricultural activities and fetch water to help their mothers. Girls help their mothers in domestic work such as preparing food, herding cattle, and fetching water and wood. One interesting development in recent years is that women not only own land but some have learned to plough themselves, though this is not widely practised (Peberdy 1985).

Before 1974 about 50% of the labour requirement for agricultural production was provided by work groups (*wofera*). These now seem to be more frequent in surplus-producing areas, although it is practised by some farmers in Harresaw who provide food and drinks to farmers who help them. There was theoretically no wage labour during the *Derg* but wage labour is now recognised in the community. The payment is in cash and the wage-labourers are residents of the PA and neighbours and relatives. Anyone who want to hire labour asks his neighbour or his relative within the locality to work on the basis of an agreement about the payment. Usually it is women who do not have husbands who hire wage labour for both agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Earlier, i.e in 1977, the wage labour payment was 1.50 *birr* for a man and 1 *birr* for woman including lunch and dinner. Then in 1978 the payment rose to 3 *birr* for a man and 2 *birr* for the women. At present, a man and a woman are paid 8 and 5 *birr* respectively. Since the two individuals are almost similar in their economic and social status the one who hires labour does not look down upon the one who hired his labour.

People are involved in community development activities such as afforestation and dam construction during their spare time.

The major holidays are New Year and Easter. Non-working days (cultivation not allowed) are: Gebre-Menfeskidus (5th day of month), Selassie (7th day), Michael (12th day), Hawariat (17th day), Mariam (21st day), Medhane Alem (27th day), Balezabiher (29th day), Saturdays and Sundays.

Interlinkages

There are different types of interlinkage in the community. One form of agreement is that, if one individual has oxen while another does not have any, the latter works for the former providing his labour and in return he takes the oxen and ploughs his own farm land. The arrangement is that the labourer works two days for the owner of the oxen and one day for himself. This type of arrangement is locally known as *siso badim*. This, however, is not common at present, since the price of an ox has risen significantly and those who have two oxen are very rare.

Another form of arrangement is that, if an individual has only one ox, he makes an agreement to pair his ox with another individual who also has only one ox. The two individuals use the oxen equally i.e. if one uses the oxen for two days the other also uses them for two days. This type of arrangement is locally known as *lifinti*. This type of arrangement is common because only 2% of the community have two oxen.

This *lifinti* also works for exchanging wage labour. Two individuals agree to help each other with

their work. For instance if one helps the other while he is performing his agricultural activities such as harvesting or winnowing, the other one also does the same thing for the one who helps him. This type of arrangement is also widely practised. This type of arrangement is carried out primarily between relatives and neighbours.

There is no exchange of land for labour. However if an individual has oxen, he may plough and plant the land of a poor person who cannot use his land for lack of oxen and seed. The arrangement is that the rich person ploughs and plants the land of the poor person, covering all expenses. Then at the time of harvest the rich man takes the equivalent amount of grain which he used as seed during planting, then they share the harvest equally. This is locally known as *mehelaw*. Or sometimes, if the poor person uses his own land and seed and only the oxen of the rich person, the former gives a small part of his land called (*kets'o*) to the latter to plough and plant for himself.

In general, there are no group labour activities because the land is too small for the peasant to need the help of a group.

Technology

The community have used ploughs and sickles to carry out their farming activities for a long period of time. The ploughs are built with interchangeable tips and come in a variety of shaft lengths, to accommodate different soil consistencies and to cut to a variety of depths. The plough is drawn by two animals, most of the time, by two oxen. When only one ox is available a cow, mule or donkey is substituted for the oxen (Bauer 1972:17). Recently the Ministry of Agriculture introduced a modified type of plough which is pulled by only one ox. This type of plough is small in size, sharp-tipped and easily pulled by one ox. However, the plough is not commonly used in the community at present, probably because the Ministry of Agriculture did not give the necessary training as to how to use it.

The type of local stove used by women for cooking has been wasting large amounts of wood and the smoke creates problem for women while they are preparing food. Recently a new type of stove was introduced which only needs a small amount of wood and which forces the smoke out through a separate opening. This modified type of stove minimizes wood consumption and avoids the problem of smoke, enabling women to prepare food without much difficulty. Women can also bake *injera* and cook *tsebhi* at the same time using the new type of stove. This stove is now accepted by the community and most of the women are using it.

Another type of stove is mobile and was designed for those women who cannot buy the modern mobile charcoal stove. The mobile newly made stove is made of mud. Women are also taught to buy and use the modern type of charcoal-saving stove which is known as *lakech* but this is not commonly used.

Usually food crops are stored in a special place prepared for storing crops inside the house known as *ma'eken*. Some members of the community also use *godo* which is a granary prepared out of wood and animal dung and placed inside the house.

The storage mechanism in most cases exposes the crop to wastage. For instance, up to 20% of crops such as beans is lost, while for other types of crops such as barley and wheat losses are 5% due to pests. However, at present there is not too much wastage of crops during storage, since there is little surplus production of crops.

Crops are transported using donkeys and human labour during harvest from the place of harvest to the house and nothing is lost during transportation.

The community uses only wood as fuel for cooking. This is transported mainly using donkeys and human labour. Since there is a shortage of wood in the area, the community purchases wood from the market. However, some members of the community collect wood from the nearby areas.

Horses, mules and donkeys are used for transporting people and goods. There are no carts pulled by pack animals or people. There is a road which connects Harresaw with the nearby town, Atsbi. This is a dry weather road only usable during the dry season. The cars which come to the area are government or organizational and not public transport. Therefore, there is no vehicle transport from Atsbi to Harresaw. It takes two hours and thirty minutes on foot from Atsbi to the centre of the PA.

Innovations

The following technologies have been introduced into the community:

1. barley (c1914)
2. new varieties of wheat (c1994): these were red with a small kernel size. It was a very good variety for resisting drought, introduced by the government in 1994 since the farmers did not have seed. All farmers planted it; the wheat grew very well but later was damaged by frost.
3. bunding: this is a border constructed from stone or mud and must be completed before the onset of the rains. It was introduced by the government in 1974 in order to prevent erosion. Because of the acute erosion in the area everybody in the community tried it and it is very useful if done properly. Everyone still constructs bunds because of their success in controlling erosion.
4. planting to conserve soil (c1974); this was proposed and demonstrated in the area by the government. It was successful and is still being used. All have copied it.
5. the use of dung fertilizer: the use of cow dung started long ago. It is an innovation acquired from ancestors. Dung is a good fertilizer where the soil accepts it and it is used by everyone in the community. It is as successful as the commercial fertilizers distributed by the government. Dung cakes are useful and give a higher yield when they are applied in the wet season. It can damage the crops if applied in the dry season.

Fertilizers are available and distributed by the MoA. Last year's price for 1 quintal of DAP was 107.60 *birr*. This year's price is 144 *birr* (1994).

There is an earth-fill dam under construction in Harresaw *tabia*, which is expected to cover 130 hectares. World Vision and the MNRDEP have mobilized the residents for completion of the dam next year.

Common Property Resources

In the area the common property resources are water, terraced land, forest, and grazing land which can only be used at times of drought. These resources are controlled and protected by different government and mass organizations. Water springs are protected by all members of the community, while the terraced areas are controlled by development agents of the Ministry of Development of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. Forests and grazing areas are controlled by development agents of the Ministry of Agriculture. The protected grazing land is locally known as *hiza'eti*. It is opened for grazing when the community request it, if this is accepted by the development agent and leaders of the PA. Each member of the community has an equal right of access to these common property resources so long as he or she respects the rules and regulations set forth concerning their use.

However, a few members of the community illegally cut trees from the prohibited areas and let their cattle graze in the *hiza'eti*. If these people are caught red-handed or detected they are punished by the *baito* for violating the rules. Within the PA there are 800 hectares of forest, 142.55 hectares of terraced area, and 28 hectares of *hiza'eti*. Every member of the community has equal access to these common property resources irrespective of their distance from these resources.

In the last ten years, because of the rise of population in the area, during land allocation land was given to some members of the community after it was subtracted from the land which was formerly grazing land.

There was no service cooperative in the PA.

Environment

There is a serious problem of erosion in the area and as a result about 95% of the grazing land has been eroded. In order to reduce erosion the community builds terracing to conserve the soil. About 85 percent of the farm land is terraced and the current problem is to protect the grazing land from erosion.

Before 1947 nearly all the land was covered with trees. However, a large part of it has been cleared by the community and now the area covered with forest is very small. The problem was aggravated by the former civil war which exposed the natural resources to improper utilization since there was no government agent to protect these resources. Now, there is only about 5% forest scattered around the Afar escarpment. There has been a tree planting activity since 1974.

The fertility of the land has been greatly declining. The community use manure as fertilizer and make great efforts to control soil erosion using stone and soil bunds. Most members of the community, however, do not use fertilizer because of financial problems. Although the community has knowledge of crop rotation, because of recurrent drought and soil degradation people prefer to plant barley continuously from year to year because it produces better than other types of crop.

The MoA and MNRDEP are engaged in terracing, bunding, and other protection works to reduce soil erosion in the area. The community has been mobilized to participate in these activities. There is a problem of deforestation in the area. Recently a forest fire broke out destroying a substantial area covered by trees in a neighbouring *tabia*. MNRDEP are involved in an afforestation programme.

4. Off-farm Income Activities

Within the Community

Income from agricultural produce is not sufficient because of recurrent drought and the subsequent decline in productivity. Therefore members of the community engage in different types of income-generating activity to support themselves and their families. Migrating to different areas for labour and to Reged (Arho) to bring and sell salt are the major off-farm income-generating activities. In addition, some members of the community supplement their income by performing other forms of off-farm activities such as weaving, spinning, carpentry, food-selling, trade and selling their labour within their PA.

Within the PA about 300 people are involved in off-farm income-generating activities. Among these are one blacksmith who makes and mends ploughs, 10 weavers, 15 hairdressers for women, one carpenter, about 20 masons and 2 plasterers.

A few women are involved in basketry, and pottery and get money by selling these items. Usually women use the money they earn for themselves, with the agreement of their husbands, or they use it to buy goods for their family as a whole, such as coffee, fuel for lighting, etc.

Migration

Migration is an important means of risk management. to avoid possible failure of agricultural productivity, shortage of land and taxation. As a result seasonal labour migration is common. Every year on average about 150 men and women leave their area to be look for work. Most are hired as daily labourers, at hotels or as house servants. Most of these seasonal migrants go to Eritrea. A few go to Adigrat, about 6 go to Jizan in Saudi Arabia, and some go to Afar areas to be hired to do different activities such as ploughing, building houses and fences. The duration of migration for those who go to Eritrea is up to two years, while those who go to Afar land stay up to two months. In most cases the migrants are young men and, rarely, young women. Earnings are used to buy cattle if the income is good, to buy clothing, to pay debts, and for marriage and other social obligations.

5. Reproductive Activity

House Management

A husband usually leads the management of the household and washes his own clothes, while the wife bakes *injera*, cooks *tsebhi* and carries out other types of domestic activities. However, a husband and a wife help each other in most agricultural and non-agricultural activities. The wife helps her husband while he is building his house, strengthening his fence and the like. On average they spend about half a day managing household affairs.

Fuel and Lighting

The main source of lighting is naphtha lamps (*kuraz*). People use wood and dried animal dung (*akor*) for fuel. They usually use wood for heat to warm the house. There is no hope of getting electricity. There is no all-weather road which passes through the PA.

Water

There are a few seasonal rivers which flow during rainy seasons. Small streams and ponds are found here and there. The main water source in Harresaw is a waterpump (installed by World Vision in 1993) which is a 10 minute walk from the centre of the village and a dam which is a 30 minute walk. Two out of the five *kushet* have a problem of water and the residents have to walk for more than 2km to fetch it.

Sanitation

There are no latrines within the PA. For the future there is a plan by the government to construct a ventilated improved pit latrine in the village, with the help of World Vision.

Fertility

The average number of children a woman has is eight. In most cases infertile women are vulnerable to divorce. They suffer a lot in search of a solution to their infertility. They go to churches and sites where there is holy water. They also go to different spirit-possessed individuals, and buy different types of clothes and slaughter sheep of different colours, (white, black, etc), according to the orders they are given. This, therefore, forces them to waste a large amount of money. They spend a large amount of money on these activities.

Men whose wives are infertile take them to hospitals and sites with holy water (*tsebel*). If a wife fail to become fertile however, the husband will marry another wife in order to have children. In this case the first wife does not create a problem for her husband because she considers the problem happened because of her failure to have children.

Since recent times women have had access to family planning, although they do not consider birth control as a good practice. Although they believe in family planning, they do not want to take pills to control unplanned pregnancy. This is because taking pills of any kind is not commonly practised in rural areas. Only about 5% of men believe in family planning and using contraceptives while the remaining 95 percent want to have as many children as they can and say "children are wealth".

Families prefer to have sons, though this does not necessarily imply that they dislike having daughters. There are different reasons for the preference for sons. First, a daughter is lost because of marriage. The family will eventually lose both her presence and her labour. If the child is a boy he will bring a wife to supplement the family's labour. Second, there is a belief in the area that boys can defend their family, so that it is prestigious to have a large number of boys. Third, since the boy does not leave his area because of marriage he can provide labour and other support to the family. Fourth, the family

must provide a dowry for a girl at marriage. If the child is a boy there is no need to pay a dowry (Wolde Kiros).

Childbirth and Child Care

Women do not receive special care during pregnancy and may receive little care in childbirth. There is now a World Vision health centre employing traditional birth attendants in the village. In the area women resume working in the house fifteen days after their delivery. They even fetch water and wood and participate in weeding. They do not get enough time to rest after delivery. During the fifteen days of rest it is usually a female relative who performs the domestic activities.

There are cultural practices which ensure that a woman returns to work. On the twelfth day after delivery the woman's mother and sisters make her carry *mekubaeti*, a special container made of basketry, on her head and tie a cloth round her back and stomach. Then she carries her baby and goes outside her house in the direction of the sunrise and she walks in the compound of her house. At this time she is accompanied by a group of women who are her nearest relatives. The women make a special type of joy cry (ululation) which manifests their happiness. After this the mother goes back to her house and resumes housework.

Socialization

Qualities considered desirable in men by a group in the PA included being hardworking, kind, clever and good at arguing. Some men are born with these qualities. Boys are taught them when assisting their fathers. Undesirable characteristics in men include quarrelling without sufficient reason and not learning from past mistakes. A successful farmer is one who performs all farm activities at their required time. He wakes early in the morning, ploughs his fields on time, weeds on time and harvests on time. The most respected skills are weaving, woodworking and iron smithing.

The men's group agreed that it is important to read, write and do sums since it helps to know everything faster. The most respected social skills are good conduct and being good with hands. At primary school children learn different subjects such as mathematics, science, geography, Tigrigna, Amharic etc. There is no church school in the area. Education is important for being a better farmer and for succeeding in off-farm activity. Schooling enables people to seek and get information. The number of years at school also matter in that those who spend longer at school will be more successful and will be able to lead a relatively better life.

A group of women listed desirable qualities as good leadership skills, being willing to work hard, and obedience. These qualities could be acquired from their surroundings and own experience. The family, and especially mothers, play a leading role in the socialization of their children. However, the society is also responsible for some aspects. Children are expected to show good behaviour, particularly to respect the elders in their society. In addition they are also expected to support their families in production activities and other work. Undesirable traits include fighting between boys over girls and fighting between women over minor things, for example, over fights between their children.

A successful farmer's wife is good at managing her home and obeys her husband. She keeps her house clean, cooks good *tsebhi* and is good at making *tuhulo* which involves grinding barley, mixing the flour with a certain proportion of water, cooking it and preparing a suitable type of *wat* to accompany it. The women's group believed it was important for children to be able to read, write and calculate because it leads to specific fields of study which they can use to help themselves and their country. At elementary school children learn 6 academic subjects: science, geography, mathematics, Amharic, Tigrigna, and English. They are also taught technical subjects. While there is no church school there is religious teaching and they have a year schedule. There are about 7 days of special teaching.

The women's group agreed that education helps in becoming a better farmer's wife. The educated wife can support the husband in every aspect of life including trading. Since they learn mathematics they can easily calculate the cost and return in off-farm income-generating activities. The number of years at school makes a difference. Those who manage to stay longer will be more knowledgeable. The

group said that many families send 3 or 4 children to school. As a result 1087 boys and 250 girls are attending primary school at present. They do not know how many are going to secondary school.

Education

There is a primary school in Harresaw. The headteacher said there are 1339 students in school currently out of which 700 are supported by World Vision International. The NGO covers all their expenses. There is no possibility of passing to secondary school as the nearest one is 40km away in Wukro. The school has grades 1 to 5. Parents are expected to pay 6 *birr* per child.

Previously parents did not send their children to school. Only a few members of the community sent one or two of their children to school because child labour is very important and most farmers preferred their children to work for them rather than to go to school. At present, however, parents might send the eldest child in most cases the boy, to school and make the younger children look after cattle. In other instances, however, they send the weakest child, who cannot perform activities properly, while the active children stay at home to look after cattle and perform other domestic and farming activities. If a family has a boy and a girl, it usually sends the boy to school and the girl stays at home to help her mother with housework and look after the goats and sheep.

Within the PA there are not many unemployed school leavers. There is no one who has been to college or university from the PA.

Training

There are many members of the PA who have been on training programmes. Among them 20 became agricultural cadres and were trained in the development of natural resources and agriculture, the construction of dams and the importance of irrigation, animal breeding, using demonstration sites, and the importance of using selected seeds. In addition other members of the community also received training in soil and water conservation, environmental sanitation, the importance of going to clinics, and family planning and birth control. Training was also given in the use of irrigation, controlling pests, modern farming methods and using fertilizer, animal health and controlling the spreading of AIDS. These different kinds of training were offered by the government and the World Vision agents. As a result some members of the community are using the knowledge they obtained from training.

Health

At the health centre they said that TB and scabies (contributing to malnutrition) are the most common diseases at the site. Meningitis, diarrhoea, and whooping cough (*tiktik*) are also common. The World Vision health centre employs TBAs and CSAs. The nearest hospital is in Wukro and the next one in Mekelle. World Vision also runs a child sponsorship programme which occasionally provides supplementary food, clothing and school materials for children in Dera.

One respondent said that people used to treat their illnesses themselves. Some of the treatments have been cutting the ill part of the body with a blade to make it bleed, going to holy water sites, and smoking the leaves and roots of different types of plants. This respondent said that at present only a few members of the community follow such practices and most members of the community go to clinics and health centres and even hospitals when they are sick.

In the last ten years different epidemics broke out in the area. In 1984 and 1987 there was an outbreak of typhoid as a result of which 112 and 127 people died respectively. In 1991 there was an outbreak of polio which killed 80 children. Because of the epidemic in 1984, 112 people died and in 1987, 75 adults and 52 children (in total 127 people) died. In 1991 because of the epidemic there were parents who lost three out of their four children. The losses in the epidemics were enormous.

There is one health clinic in Harresaw which has a lot of problems. It usually does not have medicines except some antibiotics. The clinic is run with little provision and knowledge. Staff only provide first aid. The clinic does not offer any preventive programmes. A typical visit costs 0.50 cents. The people have to pay for treatment and many cannot afford it. This leaves them with no option but to

visit traditional healers. There are a few traditional healers in the area treating illnesses like TB etc. Within the PA there are two *kaleecha*, one man and one woman. There is also a traditional bonesetter, who deals particularly with children. The nearest traditional doctor for adults does not live in the PA, but at Dera which is about five kilometres from the centre of the *tabia*. There are traditional birth attendants within the PA.

A group of men in Harresaw ranked local disease problems as follows: childbirth problems; back pain; fever; coughing/difficulty breathing; measles. The cough and difficulty in breathing becomes more widespread in December and January.

A group of women ranked diseases as follows: coldness; coughing; fever. Although they exist throughout the year the "coldness" and coughing become more prominent in July and August. Fever infects more in February and March. The group ranked children's diseases as follows: measles; cough; fever. Measles infection is worst in January, coughs in July and August, and fever in February and March.

The following causes of illnesses were identified:

1. *childbirth* problems: these are caused by complications during pregnancy. There is no hospital around Harresaw. About 75% of women with problems are treated by traditional healers. If traditional methods fail they will be taken to the nearby clinic and then to hospital.
2. *coughs*: in all cases these are caused by wind. They do not know how to prevent them. When coughing starts they go to the clinic, but if they do not get better they try to keep warm in their homes.
3. *fever*: The cause of fever is coughing. It cannot be prevented but keeping warm and drinking hot drinks are the ways to treat fever. If it does not get better they go to the clinic.
4. *measles*: this is a contagious disease which is transmitted through the air. It can be prevented through vaccination. Measles is easily treated traditionally by brewing coffee in a ceremonious way and drinking *tella*.
5. *back pain*: this is results from travelling long distances and also from wind. It can be prevented by wearing warm cloth, mainly made of fur, while travelling or during the cold season. Back pain is largely treated by traditional healers who cut the flesh with a razor blade and suck the blood with a horn. A horn cut from an ox is preferable. If this does not help they go to the health clinic. A very small proportion of people go to hospital.
6. *coldness*: The cause of this is lack of proper clothing. It can be prevented by putting on warm clothes and drinking warm drinks.

6. Consumption

Food and Other Day-to-day Goods

The people of the area have considerable experience of crop failure and have suffered a lot because of recurrent droughts and subsequent famines. There is an emergency crop in the area known as *sa'esa'a* (a type of barley). The people also eat wild fruits and roots of local plants such as *beles*, *tebeb*, *hamle* (local cabbage), *egam*, *angwa*, *shafa*, *daero* (fig), *awhe* (cordia), and *mengoloe*.

In the last ten years, there were serious famines in 1984 and 1987 which caused death and migration. Since 1987 there has been no famine though there was drought.

At present people eat the same kind of food. Since nearly all members of the community receive aid in the form of wheat, all eat wheat though they prepare it in different ways. Earlier, different families ate different types of food depending on their wealth.

In most cases all members of a family irrespective of their age differences eat from the same plate at the same time. Children eat the left-overs of their parents if a guest is invited to their house because children are not allowed to eat with a guest from the same plate. The people of the area usually eat once a day.

The following local measurement units are used:

1 <i>menilik</i>	= 0.75kg
1 <i>kunna</i>	= 5 <i>menilik</i>
1 <i>gan</i>	= 100 litres
1 <i>timad</i>	= ¼ hectare
1 <i>kend</i>	= 0.25m
1 <i>gemed</i>	= 500m

Housing

Almost all houses are built using stone and mud. The only difference is in size, number of rooms and the type of roof. Since there is a shortage of wood, and there is plenty of stone in the area, there are almost no houses made of wood. The largest house in the area has four rooms. One is a wide room which is known as *adarash* and used to receive guests. The ground floor contains a store and a main bedroom for the head of the household. The fourth room is used as a kitchen. In addition, there is an additional separate room for animals known as *demba*. This type of large house is classified by the community as the house of a rich person. There is not a single house with a corrugated sheet roof. There are also no grass-roofed houses. The roofs of all the houses are made of wood and soil and known as *hidmo*.

The average cost of a large house is about 500 *birr*, though, if the owner has enough of his own wood, it may cost about 300 *birr*. To complete one house the average time needed is four months without interruption and the house may last for many years i.e. more than five decades.

Household Assets

The household assets of a wealthy family consist of a radio, iron bed, big box, cupboard, large numbers of drinking vessels (*berete*) and glasses, carpets, high quality blankets, two or three chairs, big pots for preparing local drinks, a barrel and pitcher. The assets of a poor household includes a traditional skin mat (*maesi*), blankets of lower quality (*wocho*), and pottery cups.

Local Services

There is no shop within the PA. The nearest shop is found at Atsbi town which is 17 kilometres from Harresaw. The shop normally stocks all necessary manufactured and local products for the community. The nearest drug shop is also in Atsbi town. The agricultural extension agent visits the members of the community based on his own programme. He asks the members of the PA if they have problems. Usually he comes monthly to every *kushet* because there are peasants who learn agricultural techniques at every *kushet*. He mainly visits model peasants who are better able to use fertilizer, or have better farming skills, then he visits peasants who face problems. He does not visit each member of the community. As described above there are some traditional health practitioners but otherwise there are no other services in the PA.

7. Local Institutions and Organizations

Households

The term household (*beteseb/sedra*) is usually used to refer to a husband and wife, their children, wives

of migrants, grandchildren and parents of the spouses, who live in a house in which they eat, work and sleep together. Any person who lives in a household, whether he is a blood relative or not, is considered as member of the *beteseb*. However, individuals who temporarily reside in the house or are hired as servants or shepherds are not considered as members of the household, though they eat and live together with other members of the family. Migrants and soldiers whose wives and children have stayed behind with the migrants' parents are considered as members of the household. The household and its surroundings, where the head of the *beteseb* lives with his family and all his descendants, is referred to as *addi* or *enda* which is usually followed by the name of the head of the family. And those who are descended from a certain *addi* trace their ancestral line from the head of the family.

An individual can trace his kinship equally through his father's and mother's side. He considers all his cousins as his brothers and sisters. Since marriage is strictly exogamous, ideally daughters leave their parents' households to live elsewhere with their husbands at marriage, and most sons set up independent households shortly after marriage, most of the time, near their parents' house. Residence is, therefore, expected to be patrilocal. Through marriage arrangements, a household with the sons gains both female labour and cattle simultaneously. The post-marriage residence pattern is mostly patrilocal unless the child grows up with his mother because of divorce or other reasons.

Authority is vested in the father - all persons in the *beteseb* are under his jurisdiction. A son with his wife may set up his own hut if he has land and money, but he will be in a subordinate position to his father. If a husband is away, older kin, usually his brother, will keep a close watch on the wife. Although previously the husband had complete authority in making decisions over the household income, at present the wife's participation in the affairs of the household is increasing. In the area adoption is not common but there are a few families who help children of their poor relatives.

The household is integrated into the wider community through a number of structural frameworks. Households, through their heads, are involved in various networks of social relations including the parish, wards, neighbourhoods and feasting associations.

All the households within the community have a relationship with all other households because of their common membership in the village. But it is only through the household head that such social relationships should be manifested. Moreover, the household ideally holds all the resources required for agricultural management (Bauer 1977:30)

Marriage

Previously all marriages were religious marriages and approved by the church. Currently, however, most marriages are civil marriages and are approved by the *baito*.

In the area there are two types of marriage. The first type is known as *qal kidan* which refers to a husband and wife who are married for the first time. In this type of marriage the bride is expected to be a virgin. Previously, the groom used to give a cow while the bride's family used to give two cows to the spouses (locally known as *gezmi*). Currently, however, the number of cows has been reduced to one. The groom is expected to buy a dress for the bride, a pair of shoes, *netsela*, earrings at least made of silver, a ring made of silver, and a necklace with a cross made of silver. He also gives presents to her family from the day of the betrothal until the day of the wedding. He takes wood and sheep at every holiday to her family and helps at times of ploughing and harvesting, but he does not give money. The family of the bride offer to the groom at least an ox at the time of betrothal. On the wedding day they also give him between 150-200 *birr* if the father of the bride is poor, and from 300-600 *birr* if he is rich. This is also known as *gezmi*.

The cost of the wedding feast is covered by the both families. The average cost is about 1,000 *birr*. The people who are invited to the feast pay in cash or in kind to the family of the spouses. Men usually give 1-5 *birr* while women give a few kilos of barley flour (*tihine*) and 10 *injera*. If the parents of the spouses are living in the same village they hold their respective wedding feasts on different days in order to allow residents of the village and their relatives to attend both feasts.

The marriage is arranged between two individuals who follow the same religion, and each family inquires about the others' family background before accepting the request of marriage, in order to avoid marriages between relatives and to keep their status.

The second type of marriage, known as *berkenet*, is made between a man and a woman who marry for the second or more time. In this type of marriage both individuals combine all their property and each has equal rights over the property. This type of marriage is commonly practised in the area.

Boys usually marry at about the age of 18 and girls marry at about 15, although there are rare cases where girls are married below 15 if their physical appearance appears mature.

Although polygyny is not common in the area there are about 50 men who have more than one wife. Most are Muslims but some are Orthodox Christians.

Divorce

Although divorce is condemned religiously and culturally, the current rate of divorce in the area is high. Divorce may happen for different reasons. The main ones are disagreements between the two spouses. One respondent said these usually arise when the wife of a man who is working hard becomes lazy and fails to help him in his efforts to support the family. Secondly, the man may marry another woman while still married to his first wife. Although there are cases which lead to divorce because of adultery committed by wives, they are rare and are not more than 1%.

At times of divorce the property of the spouses, including land, is distributed equally between them. The only problem the woman faces is the problem of housing because, since the house was built by her husband before their marriage, it remains his property and she is only given some money as compensation for leaving the house to the man. Therefore, she may have a housing problem until she builds her own house. In most cases a woman leaves her husband's village if they are divorced to avoid any disturbances which he might create.

Children are divided between the father and the mother. The distribution of children is made based on the choice of the children themselves, except for babies and young children. In most cases children prefer to be with their mother. The man is expected to give permanent help to his former wife to feed their children until they are able to support themselves.

Although divorce happens frequently in the area the process of divorce is not easy. The society and the *baito* want to discourage divorce and all possible efforts are made to resolve peacefully any conflict which may arise between two spouses. If they refuse to be reconciled a certain period of time is given for the spouses to think over their decision before the divorce is finalised.

Inheritance

Since descent is bilateral in the community, children have the right to inherit property from both father and mother, wherever it may be. The oldest son takes the responsibility for leading the family after the death of his father and performs the father's prescribed roles. The greater the number of children the higher the probability they will use the land jointly without dividing it among themselves. Land is eventually equally divided among all the children who used it in common under the supervision of the eldest brother. The first born has the right to take an extra share, including the house of his father, because of the leadership and responsibility he carries.

Illegitimate children have equal inheritance rights with those children who are legitimate.

Kinship

The kinship structure of the Tigray society is based on the bilateral descent system. Accordingly, children have equal membership in both their father's and mother's kin groups. They participate equally in ceremonies such as weddings or burials among their father's and mother's kin. They receive help from both kin groups. The father's and mother's brothers and sisters have equal relationships with the children.

In theory children have equal rights to inherit any type of property, wherever it is, from their father's and mother's line.

Members up to five generations of the same kin are known as *alyet*, below four generations kin are considered as brothers (*ahwat*) and marriage is only allowed above five generations.

There are neither clans nor any age-group system in the area.

Citizenship

The people of the area have a concept of citizenship and they expect to have equal rights to share in what their country and government offer them. They also expect their rights as citizens to be respected by the government. The people have no hatred towards non-citizens. Previously the people had a negative attitude towards Russians and Cubans since they supported the *Derg's* regime. Other than that the people have no xenophobic attitude towards any non-citizens.

Markets

There is a market in Dera held on Thursdays and a smaller market in Barka on Tuesdays. The nearest grain wholesale and livestock markets are in Atsbi, which is 17 kms away. People sometimes go to the market in Wukro, 42 kms from the area. There are weights and measures laws in the area. The people use standard weights and measures such as kilograms and litres. They also use local measurements such as the use of the hand or arm to measure cloth, and containers of different sizes to measure grain, honey and butter.

The market is controlled and supervised by the council of the town i.e. the municipality. The municipality collects taxes and maintains peace in the market.

Credit and Social Security

In times of personal crisis, people receive financial, material, labour or other help (depending on the type of crisis) from their kin, relatives and neighbours. One informant said that in Harresaw only one *kushet* (sub-tabia) has as an *idir*. Another said there are no *idir*. However the residents of the area belong to different *mehber*. The *mehber* are usually organized by interested members of the *tabia* and their purpose is to commemorate saints such as St Mary and St Michael. Members prepare food and drinks, turn by turn, in their houses, and members gather together to eat and drink in the name of the Saint. Such *mehber* are purely religious and do not have the financial capability to resolve the problems of their members at times of crisis, although members can contribute money and give their support in the name of the *mehber*.

There is no *equb* in the PA. Other organizations are mass organizations which are established mainly for political reasons such as Women's Associations.

There are no local money lenders in the PA. Members of the community can only borrow from their close relatives or friends and the amount of money an individual can lend is very small, and in most cases does not exceed fifty *birr*.

Community Decision Making

Both the PA and the elders of the community make community decisions. Decisions made by the PA and the elders concern mainly the social and economic problems of the community.

Decision-making elders are chosen on the basis of their age and influence in the community. Their main role is to resolve disputes within households and between households and individuals. At times of divorce elders are nominated by the two spouses.

The main local political institution which has important power in the community is the *baito*. The *baito* is responsible for keeping peace and order in the community and settling disputes which cannot be solved by the elders. The members of the *baito* are elected democratically by the community and serve freely without any salary.

The *baito* makes decisions regarding disputes which are presented to it. After making careful enquiries and collecting evidence, the *baito* finally judges and decides. Heavy crimes such as killings,

however, are directed to the *woreda* police and handled by the court.

Since there has been no taxation for the last fifteen years, no one is responsible for collecting taxes at present. In future, the *woreda* administration will assign responsibility to whoever is going to collect taxes.

Redistribution Mechanisms

Members of the community have big feasts where cattle are slaughtered for weddings, memorials for the deceased (*teskar*), and big religious anniversaries. Close relatives of members of the community from the nearby PAs, priests and beggars come to eat and drink at the feasts. Other than these there are no traditional rituals in the area.

If the feast is big, such as a wedding or *teskar*, all members of the community are welcomed, but if the feast is small only those invited are welcomed. Priests and beggars, however, are welcome at any feast, irrespective of its size.

There is no act of redistribution of food from the rich to the poor. Neither are there mechanisms which act as redistributive systems.

8. Beliefs and Values

Land

Land is not ceremonially blessed to increase yield and there is no association of land with ancestor worship. Men have never been buried on their farm land. They are only buried in the grounds of churches. Hence, the burial sites of ancestors are not important for ritual reasons. The people do not regard land as sacred. They do not want land to be owned privately and the community does not support the sale of land.

Religion

The only local religion is Orthodox Christianity and there are no followers of other religions in the community. There is no traditional religion as such in the area.

For Orthodox Christians, *Mesqal* (the finding of the true cross) and *Timket* (Ethiopian epiphany) are the most important festivals. People buy new clothes, exchange gifts and arrange big dancing parties. For annual anniversaries of Saints such as the Trinity, St. Michael, and St. Mary, people prepare feasts and do not work.

There are fasting rules for Christians. On Wednesdays and Fridays, and in the fasting months of the year, Orthodox Christians do not eat animal products (meat, milk, and eggs).

Some members of the community go on pilgrimages, especially to Aksum Tsion, Gishen Mariam in Wollo, and Debre Damo, to attend religious ceremonies. Since these places are far from the area, it is expensive to go on these pilgrimages. A few of them go on foot, not because of lack of money, but to get a blessing from God.

Explanations of Misfortune and Illness

In the area if an individual believes that there is a *tebib* (*buda* - evil eye) in his locality, he may attribute any illness he gets to it. Some members of the community believe that the *tebib* causes the illness by looking at the individual, while others believe the *tebib* causes the illness by twisting the root of a special plant.

There are a number of other causes of misfortune and illness, according to the beliefs of the community. An individual may bring misfortune on him or herself by working in the forest at an "unusual time" (at noon or at night), by washing his or her body at noon in the river, by sleeping in the field at noon, by going out of the house without eating food or by going to the field or outside without

drinking coffee. In such situations Satan can beat the individual and he or she can become ill as a result.

The people also believe in spirits and they treat some illnesses by buying new clothes produced to order, slaughtering hens and sheep of different colours, and spraying perfume on the patient. They believe that a person can become ill if the spirits of his father and mother are not happy with his deeds. The treatments are designed to reconcile the persons with the spirits of his parents, so they will forgive him and the illness will be cured.

At present, however, the people consider all these beliefs to be backward practices and as a result they are now rare in the area. People go to health centres, clinics and holy water sites when they are sick.

Community Values

Self-sufficiency is prized and people work hard to be self sufficient. Land is the most cherished possession and they will fight to retain their land and their independence.

Beliefs such as *zar* (spirit possession), magic, sending women away because of loss of virginity, disparaging women, and other former backward religious beliefs are now becoming rarer. However, the people still believe in spending large amounts on weddings and *teskar*, *mehber*, feasts, drinking alcohol and prostitution.

There are no new rituals other than the traditional religious rituals.

The people were willing to answer all the questions in the economic survey. However, the fieldworker did not think their answers were accurate all the time, especially when the question referred to economic issues. Such economic surveys are considered by the community to be carried out by the government in order to distribute aid or collect taxes. People do not give accurate answers, especially concerning questions which are directed to property and wealth, because they consider that such questions are asked by the government only for a certain purpose. They do not believe that data are collected purely for research purposes.

Political Beliefs and Attitudes

The community of the area considered the recent meetings regarding the Constitution as democratic and have had an active and direct participation in the discussion of the draft Constitution and in electing members of the Constitution Commission.

The PA and the *woreda* administration are considered as institutions which make the government accountable. The people feel their leaders are accountable because they know that they elected them. The people want the land to be the property of the people and the state and do not want private ownership of land. They feel that if land is privately owned they might sell it when they need money and become landless. For them there is no life without land. Therefore, they want a government which guarantees the collective ownership of land.

9. The Community

Community Organization

There are close kinship and economic ties of co-operation within villages related to cultivation, the use of grazing lands, the loaning of oxen, grain and other food, the rendering of service after births, mourning at death rituals and participation in village politics. Members of the community, especially relatives, neighbours and close friends, visit each other frequently and discuss recent events. The civil war which took place in the area for a long period of time made exchange of information and discussing current affairs very important.

The settlement pattern ensures that every household has at least a plot of land near its house. Every

PA member has equal rights to use common resources according to the rules set forth for the utilization of these resources. An individual can exploit any of these resources outside the set rules at the expense of others.

The community is wide and there is no tendency of people to mix in smaller circles.

Every member of the village has the right to use and inherit land and no household can dispose of its land to a non-resident of the village.

Politics

Leaders of the PA often meet to make economic and political decisions. Economic assemblies are less frequent and mainly concerned with the construction of dams, afforestation activities, distribution of aid, use of fertilizer and selected seed. Political assemblies are frequent because the people developed the habit of discussing the current affairs of their village and their country at large. This was the effect of the TPLF's active involvement in the area for the past fifteen years. People actively participate in all political affairs such as elections and the drafting of the Constitution. Women also actively participate in all discussions.

The people support the regionalization policy of the Transitional Government and they believe that, if the regionalization policy is effective, it will facilitate the fast development of the region and avoid war, since the rights of every citizen will be respected. The people of the area have not forgotten the protracted war that took place in the area and the suffering they faced because of the bombardments of the *Derg's* air force and army. They do not want such a war to be repeated in the future. They consider that regionalization is the only guarantee which can prevent civil war. They believe the regionalization policy will facilitate political, legal, social and cultural policies, since the people themselves have the chance to actively participate in the local accomplishments of these policies.

Social Conflict

Conflicts between groups in the community are not frequent but conflicts arise occasionally between *kushet*. One respondent described a recent instance: a conflict between two *kushet* because of the rights over an area of grazing land. The cause of the conflict was that during the recent land allocation one of the *kushet* lost part of its grassland which was given to the other which had previously a smaller amount of grassland. The *kushet* appealed for the return of its grass land but failed to regain it. Then after the establishment of the court in the *woreda*, the *kushet* demanded to be separated from the *tabia* and join another PA. However, the demand was refused by the court and the conflict was resolved by the decision of the *woreda* court. Other than this there has been no group conflict in the community.

An alternative version of this conflict was that it was over the redistribution of farmland. The cause of the conflict was that in 1993 it was decided to construct an irrigation dam at Enda Mariam Wuho *kushet*. At the time all members of the PA agreed to give land to those who lost their farmland because of the dam, through redistribution from other *kushet*. However, the construction of the dam was started before the redistribution of land was carried out and those peasants who lost their land demanded compensation. However, the residents of Enda Gebriel *kushet* refused to redistribute their land to the residents of Enda Mariam Wuho *kushet*. At this time a conflict arose between the two *kushet* and the residents of Enda Mariam Wuho decided not to allow the residents of Enda Gebriel to use water from the dam because the water is on their land and they did not get enough compensation. The conflict was resolved through the intervention of the *baito* and representatives of the *woreda* administration. The decision was that those peasants who lost their land were given equivalent land from other *kushet* and after that all were allowed to use the water from the dam. Since then there is no problem and they are living peacefully as before.

In the village there are no political factions, no rivalries of any kind and no conflicts based on gender. The TPLF's agitations and teaching played an important role in avoiding such kinds of conflict.

Poverty and Wealth

An observer said that Harresaw is poorer in absolute terms than surrounding villages, but the area used to be known in earlier times as a "land of milk and honey". The rich can be described as those owning on average 2 oxen, 1 mule, 10 sheep or goats. Poor households do not own livestock or land (or have very little land).

In a wealth ranking respondents suggested that the very wealthy in the community are those with more than two oxen and those with relatives in Saudi Arabia. The poor have no oxen and some have no livestock at all.

Social Mobility

Previously there were instances where the children of rich farmers became wealthy and those of the poor were poor because land was privately owned through the *rist* system. Hence, children of wealthy farmers had the opportunity to inherit large plots of land and large numbers of cattle, thereby becoming wealthy. Respondents say that now it is easy for the wealthy to become poor rapidly as a result of the death of oxen or a bad harvest which leads to a shortage of food to sell. Livestock die as a result of drought and disease. People become poor when they are old if they have no support, as a result of drought, and when the male head of household dies. They have no oxen, seed and less land. People may be upwardly mobile as a result of a good harvest, trade, or migrating to work (if young). People become wealthy as a result of a good harvest, hard work, sharecropping and luck. If God allows and everything is suitable one can become rich within a short time.

The present generation is poorer than their predecessors. For instance in the former generation there were many farmers who had at least two oxen for farming. At present, however, those farmers who have oxen are very few. There are instances where the son of a poor farmer became rich by collecting a large sum of money from migration. If there is anyone who wants to be rich he has to find other means than farming, such as migration to other parts or outside the country. Otherwise there is no chance to become rich within the village. Some parents, who are in a relatively better position, try to help their children who are becoming poor, on the basis of their abilities.

Status

Among the community many personal qualities such as courage, kindness, honesty, and generosity are admired and may be used in evaluating a person's status. Public feasts and political actions used to be used as a formal means by which hierarchical titles such as *hanta*, *sheqa*, and *grazmach*, were acquired. However, this is not the case at present. Status used to be attributed to war leaders, large land owners and religious dignitaries. Men who achieve high status add prestige to their family and *alyet* and after their death they may be immortalized in poetry and song.

The most respected people in the community include: self-made men, i.e. those who became rich because of their hard work and abilities; those who organize people to participate in activities like construction and terracing; elders who speak the truth, mediate between quarrelling people, advise anybody who needs it, and represent the people in talking with the government leaders of the PA; the *baito*; and religious leaders.

Previously men used to show their status by preparing large feasts at marriage and offering a big *gezmi* for their in-laws and building big houses with corrugated sheet roofs, which have large compounds. Status also comes from holding big feasts in the name of Saints and inviting all members of the village. Status is also attained through the ability to debate and to convince people in public meetings. Some people also gain status from the status of their parents.

There are still disparaging attitudes towards people who engage in blacksmithing and those who are considered as caste groups such as *tebib/buda*. These people have problems at times of marriage.

Using luxury goods such as wearing expensive clothes and shoes and going on mules are also considered as symbols of status. Men have also a better status than women in the community.

Social Stratification

Similar to other Ethiopian peoples, the Tigrayan people have experienced social inequalities, especially between the haves and the have-nots, Christians and Muslims, and men and women. These forms of inequality have lasted for centuries and still exist, though to a lesser extent. At present it is difficult to think in terms of landlords and poor peasants because there are no more landlords. There are religious and sex inequalities but not in the same way as previously.

The major step taken by the TPLF was the distribution of land to Muslims and women. Previously Muslims had no right to own land and they were restricted to trading and other activities. There was a Tigrigna proverb which translates as "a sky has no pillar and a Muslim has no country". This apparently indicates the extent of social and religious inequality which prevailed in Tigray. Women were entirely dependent on their husbands and always had the threat of divorce hanging over them. At present, however, all these things are disappearing. Muslims have equal rights with Christians in all aspects of life and in the society. And women's equality is also gaining acceptance in the society. It is claimed that wife-beating is rapidly disappearing in Tigray as a husband now thinks twice, knowing that if his wife leaves him she will retain her share of the farm (Peberdy:51-2).

However, discrimination against women is deeply rooted. Although they do most of the physically hard jobs such as carrying water, grinding corn, washing, cooking and gardening, in the past they had little say in any of the important household decisions. One job they were not allowed to do was to plough, as it was believed that their inherent inferiority would result in poor cultivation, and a low yield. Consequently the TPLF took important measures to enable women to plough which has both economic and symbolic significance. As a result hundreds of women were trained in ploughing. Women do this not because it is another job to do but because it demonstrates the equality of women more effectively than any slogan (*ibid*).

There are low-caste occupational groups such as blacksmiths, pottery workers, and hairdressers. They are very important in the community, for their services are needed by the community.

In most cases, wealth, status and power coincide in determining the status of an individual but there is no evidence of incipient class formation in the PA. Although there is a difference in wealth among members of the community, this does not go to the extent of class differentiation. In the community every member considers him or herself equal with others, and there are no people who consider themselves superior to others.

A number of respondents were asked to describe the local elites: they include those who contribute to and participate in politics, religious leaders, and elders. Wealth is not very important since people are not that rich. There is no conflict between factions within the elite although there used to be during the *Derg* regime. Some said local elites have a high level of power and influence in the wider political structure, and some respondents said that the main criteria for belonging to the elite were political. Others emphasised that they were farmers and derived power and influence from activities within the PA. One respondent said that the local elites were those who governed the area 20-30 years ago. They are respected in the area because they did many good things at that time and their children and descendants are also respected because of them. They are not getting wealthier. However they are relatively wealthy since they have inherited wealth from their ancestors.

10. Relationships with Other Communities and the Wider Society

Clans and Tribes

There are no clans and tribes in the community.

Villages and Regions

Relationships with other communities are not based on lineage ties. Relationships between villages are based on their neighbourhood and being situated in one administration. This often means villages share

common property resources such as grazing land, water, markets, dams and terracing works. Members of one village may have kin in other villages which link them. There is no status differentiation between villages.

Relationships with Wider Ethiopia

The people in the area have no traditional enemies. The people considered the *Derg's* regime as its arch-enemy, which was creating conflict among different ethnic groups. Now the people consider all ethnic groups as their brothers and have no negative attitude to any ethnic group in Ethiopia. The people consider themselves as Ethiopian and have a special respect for the Ethiopian flag which they use as a symbol whenever there are public occasions such as weddings and funerals. The people want Ethiopia to be equal for all its ethnic groups and do not want to be oppressed in the name of unity. The people want to have one strong country where all citizens exercise their freedom and equality.

The Effects of Government Policies

There was no villagization and no resettlement from other areas at the site. Due to the early control of the site by the TPLF the *Derg* regime was not successful in moving people out of the area. There were, however, continuous moves to more sheltered mountainous forest areas to flee damage and clashes with the *Derg*.

Respondents suggested that the community had great problems before 1991 due to shortage of rain, drought, and security problems. Now they have human rights and the right to work and travel freely. The community is also better off because there is now stability and democracy and the government is helping the community through an agricultural extension agent and encouraging NGO activities which was not done during the Mengistu period. The government organizes people and tries to change their attitudes. They are preventing erosion and using irrigation by building dams *willingly* (said one respondent). Another suggested people were worse off economically because of the recurrent droughts and because they are becoming dependent on aid rather than hard work. Another respondent said that the community was better off before 1984 but since then it has been continuously affected by drought and frost.

One respondent said that the people support government policies because they feel that they have been involved in formulating them. Actually many of them do not know whether these policies are being implemented or not. Another said that people in the local community think highly of current economic and political policies. Since the main current economic policy is the development of the peasant and his village, they accept this. Since they have accepted them they now work willingly. Others said that living standards have not changed and that the economic policies have had no effect. They are happy with the political policies.

With regard to regionalization a respondent said there was one major view held by almost all the population which was that they did not know anything about it, not even that they are living in Region 1. Another said the people support the idea that people in different cultures should govern and develop themselves. A third said there were 2 aspects: many people think regionalization is good because everyone shares power equally and many facilities are now available in the area because of regionalization, but some people fear this kind of regionalization will lead to war.

People know a lot about the Constitution since they frequently discuss it. They think it will affect them, for example, in the support given to rural areas. People also know a lot about democracy and think well of it since it allows people to speak and work freely. It allows people to live equally without hierarchies. One respondent suggested that the people are reflecting what they are told by the PA committee members and other government officials. The government is not opposed at any meetings and there is a hidden committee controlling the movement of the people. The government tries to handle the people by giving aid in kind and in cash.

One respondent claimed that economic and social change are affecting the poorest members of the community beneficially. For instance they have the right to get land. Another said they have benefitted

from lower prices, food for work programmes and aid. Poor members of the community have free schooling and access to health services. Another said that the poorest people have been helped by getting long-term credit for livestock, fertiliser, and improved seeds. For example one person got an ox which cost 1000 *birr* and is paying back 20 *birr* a month. One respondent said economic change was affecting the poor adversely in that prices for the commodities they bought had gone up.

Government Activities in the Community

The MoA and MNRDEP have extension agents who are currently involved in soil and water conservation, dam construction and afforestation works (nursery development).

In 1953 the road was constructed. The government built a school in 1974, started coordinating the adult literacy programme in 1980, and provided food aid in 1985. The government provided the *wereda* with health services which are free for those totally unable to pay and with a minimum fee for those in a relatively better financial position. Also health education is offered, especially family planning. The health clinic started functioning in 1992. Agricultural extension work carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture aims at teaching the peasants about modern technology. Veterinary services were available starting in 1994.

In 1993 a dam was constructed providing water and food for work. In 1994 a mill was installed. In terms of usefulness a group ranked government's activities as: 1. water; 2. school; 3. food for work.

The fieldworker reported that recently there have been a number of activities in the PA:

- (i) about 50 peasants have received credit with which they bought oxen.
- (ii) another 25 peasants received credit and bought sheep for reproduction.
- (iii) about 230 people were given a plough for free.
- (iv) 14 women were given chickens for reproduction.
- (v) credit was given to about 400 peasants in order to buy barley seed.
- (vi) about 100 peasants received credit in order to buy selected wheat seed (*enkoy*).
- (vii) 10 peasants have bought fertilizer on credit. Most peasants do not use fertilizer since they do not have money to pay for it.
- (viii) the government bought a cross-bred ox for 1000 *birr* and gave it to the PA to use for reproduction. The peasant who looks after the ox will make the ox his own property after three years.
- (ix) there is a nursery in the PA which offers job opportunities for about 50 - 60 demobilized soldiers, those people who returned from resettlement and families of the EPRDF army. These people are given 3 kilos of wheat grain per day and they receive 90 kilos of wheat grain from World Vision International for a month's work. From this nursery so far, 26,625 eucalyptus seedlings and about 11,000 other tree seedlings were grown in the area.
- (x) different types of implement such as hoes, hammers, sickles and spades have been distributed freely to the residents of the PA.

NGO Activities in the Community

World Vision is involved with the government in many of the activities described above. It is the major NGO operating in the area. Its programme components are:

1. Agricultural rehabilitation
2. Afforestation and soil conservation
3. Shallow well construction
4. Preventive primary health care

Future

A major problem is the shortage of land which is being aggravated by the population increase and the return of people from resettlement and from the army. Respondents recently said that problems relating

to access to land are now being resolved as follows: every 4 years land is redistributed by the PA and anyone who has no land has to wait 4 years after being registered as landless by the PA. Some claimed that the people would like land to be allocated like this in the future. Another said that the local people do not want any land allocation because the resettled are returning and wanting their land back.

Respondents suggested that the community needs off-farm job opportunities, rural credit, oxen, seed, and fertiliser, herbicides and other inputs, drought resistant crops, micro dams, more agricultural extension services, afforestation programmes, health centres, and educational facilities.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Awraja:</i>	An administrative boundary before 1991.
<i>Beles:</i>	The fruit from wild cacti.
<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>Dega:</i>	Highland country.
<i>Derg:</i>	The name of the military government that ruled Ethiopia from 1974-1991.
<i>Equb:</i>	A rotating credit and savings association.
<i>Hamle:</i>	July.
<i>Idir:</i>	A burial society.
<i>Injera:</i>	Ethiopian flat bread.
<i>Kaleecha:</i>	A witch or witch-doctor.
<i>Kebele:</i>	A local administrative division or an urban dweller's association.
<i>Kiremt:</i>	The main rainy season. See <i>meher</i> .
<i>Kushet:</i>	Village.
<i>Lem-tef:</i>	Semi-fertile.
<i>Lem:</i>	Fertile.
<i>Mehber:</i>	A religious society which meets on a Saint's day; each member takes a turn to host the group providing food and drink.
<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>Mengistu:</i>	The name of the military ruler of Ethiopia until 1991.
<i>Nehase:</i>	August.

<i>Rist:</i>	A type of land-holding.
<i>Tabia:</i>	<i>Kebele.</i>
<i>Tef:</i>	A millet-like grain.
<i>Tella:</i>	Home-made beer.
<i>Tsebhi:</i>	A stew or curry; <i>wat.</i>
<i>Wat:</i>	A stew or curry.
<i>Woreda:</i>	An administrative unit in the old administrative divisions until 1991.

ACRONYMS

EPRP:	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
EPRDF:	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
MoA:	Ministry of Agriculture
OLF:	Oromo Liberation Front
PA:	Peasant Association
RRC:	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
TPLF:	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front

Harresaw

Labour													
	Mesqere	T'eqemt	Hedar	Tahsas	T'er	Yakatit	Magabit	Miyazya	Genbot	Sane	Hamle	Nahase	
Boys	livestock									livestock			
	wood									livestock			
Girls	livestock												
	water									water			
	wood									livestock			
School terms													
	harvesting			planting				weeding					
Women	water												
	wood												
	Housework						Housework						
	Childcare						Childcare						
	livestock												

Harresaw

Health Calendar												
	(September)											
	Mesqerem	T'eqemt	Hedar	Tahsas	T'er	Yakatit	Magabit	Miyazya	Genbot	Sane	Hamle	Nahase
Disease												
Women												
coldness												
coughing												
fever												
Men												
cough												
fever												
measles												
childbirth												
backpain												
Children												
measles												
cough												
fever												
Are the people of Harresaw really as healthy as this?												

