

Faculty of Science
Institute of Geosciences
University of Fribourg



MA Thesis
MSc in Geography: 'Sustainability and Global Change'

Water & Women in rural Amhara
A 'naturalized' Connection
reflecting
a restricting political Agenda
in Ethiopia

Ursula Meyer
Rue Pierre-Aeby 9
1700 Fribourg

ursula.meyer@unifr.ch
ursula.meyer@gmx.ch

Supervised by:
Prof. Olivier Graefe
Chair of Human Geography
Institute of Geography
University of Fribourg

September 2010



Thanks be to:

- Prof. Olivier Graefe, supervisor of this MA Thesis, for his scientific advice and support
- Mr. Bernhard Meier zu Biesen, Regional Director of *Welthungerhilfe/German Agro Action* Ethiopia, and staff - *and*
- Mr. Ketsela, Project Manager in Kobo, *Orda*, and staff - for their free-handed trust and support during field research
- Mrs. Meseret Mamo, translator and facilitator during field research, and her teenage son Jonathan that accompanied us
- Prof. J.-J. Friboulet, for his fatherly support and advice during the MA thesis' completion
- Mrs. Beverley Schmassmann, for her precious contribution in correcting the final version of this thesis
- My friends, far and near, for their precious friendship, especially my 'Ethiopian sister' Mrs. Adina Getaneh
- The population of Kobo *Woreda*, Mengello Nacha, Zobebe plateau and Inkoyber Rama, for its hospitality, generosity and trust, without which this thesis would not have been possible – *Amasegnalon!*

The empirical research in Ethiopia was made possible through the financial support of *Welthungerhilfe/GAA*, Ethiopia and the Institute of Geography, University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

Abstract

The connection between water and women in the rural context of a country of the Global South commonly seems to be the concern of development project experts treating the subject mostly from a local actor's perspective. By doing so, political, historical and societal frame conditions are often not sufficiently considered in understanding why women are so 'naturally' connected to water and fail to improve their status in society beyond their usual function as domestic water managers. This MA thesis suggests an alternative approach to understanding women's social role in rural Ethiopian society as part of a broader power setting.

By applying Pierre Bourdieu's three concepts of *Habitus*, *Field* and *Symbolic Violence* to water supply in a rural district in Amhara, access to safe drinking water for the rural population can no longer be assessed purely positively. Rather this theoretical approach reveals hidden power mechanisms functioning on different levels of society that speak for a clearly repressive political regime. Deriving from the results of field research conducted in rural Amhara, the author argues that by granting easier access to drinking water women's daily work load might be reduced, but their 'naturalized' connection to water undermines at the same time a quest for more substantial right such as personal and political freedom and development.

Key words:

Theory of practice, drinking water supply, gender discourse, political repression, rural Ethiopia

Table of Content

Introduction.....	1
1 Development versus Social Practices.....	4
1.1 Discussing common Development Concepts.....	4
1.1.1 The dominant development discourse on Water & Gender issues.....	4
1.1.2 Some critiques about current development concepts.....	6
1.1.2.1 Water & Women: A ‘naturalized’ relationship.....	6
1.1.2.2 Water & Development: A power setting.....	7
1.1.2.3 Water & Actors: A limited radius for explanations.....	9
1.1.3 Conclusion: Evading from development terminology.....	10
1.2 Theoretical Concepts: A Theory of Practice.....	11
1.2.1 Pierre Bourdieu: Neither Objectivism nor Subjectivism.....	11
1.2.2 A new theoretical approach: A Theory of Practice.....	12
1.2.3 Three Concepts to interpret social reality.....	13
1.2.3.1 The Concept of <i>Habitus</i>	14
1.2.3.2 The Concept of <i>Social Fields</i>	15
1.2.3.3 The Concept of <i>Symbolic Violence</i>	17
1.2.4 Conclusion: Social practices as a key to unravel power relations.....	18
2 Water & Gender issues in Ethiopia: A power setting.....	20
2.1 Water in Ethiopia: The neglect of rural water supply.....	20
2.1.1 Natural Abundance versus social Scarcity: Some facts and figures.....	20
2.1.2 Access to water: A historical perspective.....	21
2.1.2.1 The Feudal Period: Producing for a World market.....	21
2.1.2.2 The Socialist Period: Large, complex and elitist.....	22
2.1.2.3 The Current Regime: Rural water supply through external donors.....	24
2.1.3 Water management in rural Amhara.....	26
2.1.3.1 The water projects of <i>Welthungerhilfe</i> /GAA.....	27
2.1.3.2 Kobo <i>Woreda</i> : An intervention site of WHH and Orda.....	28

2.2	Gender in Ethiopia: The Suppression of a political Discourse.....	31
2.2.1	Women’s policy and its ineffective implementation.....	31
2.2.2	Decentralization and its effects on women issues.....	33
2.2.3	Civil society, NGOs and academic freedom: A threat to the political elite.....	35
3	Research Design.....	37
3.1	Research context and contextual research.....	37
3.1.1	Starting point and research question.....	37
3.1.2	General course of action.....	39
3.2	Three Theses.....	39
3.2.1	Thesis 1: Gendered <i>Habitus</i> as an unsuitable foundation of social change.....	40
3.2.2	Thesis 2: Modern water supply infrastructure creat new <i>Social Fields</i>	40
3.2.3	Thesis 3: <i>Symbolic Violence</i> in basic needs provision.....	41
3.3	About interconnectedness: Relations at Stake.....	42
4	Methodology.....	44
4.1	Studying social realities: Some general considerations.....	44
4.1.1	Objectification: The construction of a scientific object.....	44
4.1.2	Objectification objectified: The quest for Self- reflection.....	45
4.1.3	Partial Truths: For polyphony of ethnographic voices.....	46
4.2	Research Setting.....	48
4.2.1	Shaping conditions of research in Ethiopia.....	48
4.2.2	Pre-Test Interviews and Site Selection of three villages.....	49
4.2.2.1	Study Site 1: Mengello Nacha, Weremenya <i>Kebele</i>	51
4.2.2.2	Study Site 2: Mariam Sifir, Zobebe <i>Kebele</i>	52
4.2.2.3	Study Site 3: Inkoyber, Rama <i>Kebele</i>	53
4.3	Field Research: A qualitative approach.....	55
4.3.1	Access to the Field.....	55
4.3.2	Participative Observation: Balancing between insider and outsider.....	57
4.3.3	Interview Techniques: Rather open and unstructured.....	59
4.3.4	Dealing with qualitative data.....	60

5	Water, Women and political Repression: A Synthesis.....	62
5.1	<i>Symbolic Violence</i> in societal structures.....	62
5.1.1	Masculine Domination: <i>Symbolic Violence</i> in gender relations.....	64
5.1.2	'Divine' Government: The accepted control to the rural population.....	66
5.2	Social practices shaped by consistent <i>Habitus</i>.....	69
5.2.1	Female <i>Habitus</i> : The naturalized connection with water.....	70
5.2.2	Rural <i>Habitus</i> : A <i>Habitus</i> with incorporated submissive character.....	74
5.3	Dynamics within the <i>Social Field</i> of rural Water Supply.....	76
5.3.1	Access to water becomes more masculine.....	78
5.3.2	The subtle restriction of the rural population through access to water.....	81
5.3.3	Within the <i>Field</i> : The role of NGOs in water development.....	83
6	Conclusion.....	85

Bibliography

Annex

List of Graphs:

- Graph 1: Sketch of Mengello Nacha, Weremenya *Kebele* (Page 52)
- Graph 2: Sketch of Zobebe Plateau, including Mariam Sifir and neighbouring locations, Zobebe *Kebele* (Page 53)
- Graph 3: Sketch of a family compound in Inkoyber, Rama *Kebele* (Page 54)

List of Maps:

- Map 1: Water Supply Coverage, Africa 2000 (Page 20)
- Map 2: Location of Study Area in North Wollo, Amhara Region (Page 26)
- Map 3: Water Schemes implemented by Orda/Welthungerhilfe in Kobo *Woreda*, 2008 (Page 30)

List of Photographs:

- Cover Photo: Water & Women in rural Amhara, Mengello Nacha, August 2009
- Photo 1: New constructions, Addis Ababa, September 2009 (Page 63)
- Photo 2: Mother and daughter at the water point, Mariam Sifir, September 2009 (Page 69)
- Photo 3: Barred water point in Mariam Sifir, August 2009 (Page 76)

Introduction

On 28th July 2010, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared access to clean water and sanitation as a human right (United Nations 2010). This is breaking news as the resolution has made a long journey to get anchored in the Human Rights declaration. No nation voted against the motion, but among the 163 participants were 41 abstentions, among them important industrialized nations such as the US, Canada and Australia. The initiative for this resolution mainly came from countries of the Global South as they are most touched by poor water supply coverage, while industrialized nations exercise restraint due to possible quests for financial or technical assistance in the South.

Whatever were the considerations of the voting nations, the vote reflects an important feature of the discussion around access to water. Even though water is essential to human survival and everyone is depending on this natural resource, access to it is moreover a very *political* issue. No government can seriously deny its population's right to get access to clean water and sanitation, but to declare it as a human right calls for action and insists on governments discharging their responsibility. However, access to water is intimately linked to political interests and power relations within (and between) societies.

This is the broader context that the MA thesis is dealing with. It aims to make a contribution to the current debate around access to safe drinking water in countries of the Global South. The focus is placed upon water supply improvements in Ethiopia where considerable efforts are currently made to meet the *Millennium Development Goals* till 2015. These include among others to halve the number of the population worldwide that does not have access to safe drinking water. Numerous NGOs and international agencies are thus engaged in installing water schemes in the most rural areas in Ethiopia and have achieved some success. Never the less, we suggest looking at this success from a more critical perspective by analyzing the broader societal situation such improvements are taking place in. As water is women's business in Ethiopia as elsewhere in the Global South, our focus is laid on power relations within Ethiopian society that become apparent with rural water supply improvements and shall interpret them especially in regard to women's social role as they are generally seen as main beneficiaries of water projects. We shall analyze such 'facts' in view of the general societal situation in Ethiopia and question the political will of the current government to grant its population more than just basic needs.

Ethiopia is a country of *grey* and *gold*. It has on the one hand a remarkable historical past, since centuries reined by powerful kings and emperors. The mythical Queen of Sheba is said to have

stood at the beginning of the reigning dynasty in Ethiopia that only ended in 1975 with the last king Haile Selassie. This multi-ethnic state is, as well, one of the oldest Christian countries with orthodox orientation since the 4th century, and with an almost as long Islamic tradition due to its proximity to the Arabian Peninsula - both traditions coexisting peacefully side by side. The country's glorious past is still present in a rich historical heritage in terms of traditions, sacral architectures and arts. In modern times, Ethiopia was the only African country that never officially became a colony of any European power.

On the other hand, Ethiopia is well known for its low ranking in terms of life standards. It figures as one of the poorest countries in the world, as its economic and human development indices are strikingly low as we shall see in terms of access to safe drinking water further on. Some areas are frequently hit by disasters such as flood and drought. As most of its population is very vulnerable to such events, they easily turn, until today, into human disaster and famine. About 80% of Ethiopians are subsistence farmers, living in the rural areas with little infrastructure or food security. As often is the case in such circumstances, cities and towns are attracting impoverished farmers in critical situations, leading to a high urban growth rate (4.2%)¹ (UNICEF 2010), but leaving them as poor and vulnerable as before. The resulting deplorable conditions in which many Ethiopians are living may partly explain the high density of foreign NGOs in the country.

The empirical research of this MA thesis took place in the context of such an NGO's water project in rural Amhara, a mountainous region in the northern part of the country. *Welthungerhilfe/German Agro Action* is mainly engaged in water supply infrastructures for the rural masses. It is in this context, that the qualitative study took place that consisted mostly of observation, participation and discussions with various stakeholders in selected rural communities. The other important part of the research included intensive literature research on the broader historical, political and societal background.

To interpret these data, we argue essentially with a leading social theorist, *Pierre Bourdieu*. His *Theory of Practice* offers an alternative approach to the current development theories and points with its theoretical instruments to the analysis of power structures within a given society. When looking at water and gender issues in a country of the Global South, this focal point is pertinently important as we shall see. The focus on access to water offers us something like a *mirror* to reveal societal structures that are not easily observable in the field. As access to water however, stands in close connection to political will and power structures, its study will uncover what otherwise would remain hidden.

¹ For the period 2000 – 2008, staying more or less in the same pace within the last 40 years. In comparison urban growth rate for Switzerland from 2000 – 2008 was 0.6 % (Unicef 2010)

The structure of the MA thesis is as follows: In a *first section* we discuss the general discursive and theoretical backgrounds of the current debate about water and gender issues in the Global South and discuss it critically in terms of its underlying presumptions. By introducing the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu, we trace the theoretical path that shall lead us to an alternative interpretation of the water and gender issues. In a *second section* we shall examine the regional background of Ethiopia in regard to the two areas we are particularly interested in: Water in Ethiopia and women in Ethiopia and the political power implications behind it. This shall take us to the design of our study that we precise in the *third section*. We state three starting points from where our inquiry shall set off. The *fourth chapter* then considers methodological implications and presents empirical instruments applied during the field research in rural Amhara. In the *fifth chapter*, we shall interpret the empirical data in combining general background knowledge of the country with empirical observations and data and lighten it in regard to Bourdieu's theory. This takes us to an interpretation with focus on structuring power relations within the Ethiopian society. In the *concluding chapter*, we shall summarize our interpretation, bring it back to the general context of the water and gender debate and contextualize its political implications.

1 Development *versus* Social Practises

1.1 Discussing common Development Concepts

Water & Gender issues in the Global South are generally, separately as well as collectively, the concern of development experts and are thus discussed in a large selection of development literature. When searching for scientific literature about the two subjects on the web, one falls, first and foremost, on rather pragmatic articles on implementations endeavours in various countries of the Global South by numerous Non-governmental-Organizations (NGO) with the final goal to promote ‘development’. But what stands behind this rather fuzzy term ‘development’? We will, in this initial chapter, take a step backwards and critically explore the underlying *development logic* that comes across in such development literature. We will then take a critical stance toward this common development discourse and discuss its presumptions in view of some critiques that have been pronounced by different authors. This will lead our path to finally conclude, on a personal stance, what will henceforth serve as a theoretical starting point of this MA thesis.

1.1.1 The dominant Development Discourse on Water & Gender Issues

When searching for scientific literature on *Water & Gender* issues in Africa or other regions in the Global South, one comes inevitably across the *development project* section. Looking at *Water & Gender* issues in the Global South from a development project perspective is thus the most dominant way of dealing with the subjects and worth looking at it a bit closer².

Scientific research on development issues generally serves as a basis for development policy making in developing countries and is guiding practitioners of numerous NGOs and Governmental Agencies around the globe in their project and program designs. Issues that concern women and water equally, follow basically a commonly accepted ‘story line’ that agrees on the consensus of this dominant development discourse. Based on this story line, numerous development projects and programs have seen the light of day. Generally they apply a common language, larded with catching phrases such as *community-led approach, capacity building, women empowerment, participation, poverty reduction, vulnerability assessments, income generating activities, sustainability* to mention but a few, that are the standard guide lines for action and reflect the current approach *en vogue*. They build the basic conceptual cornerstones of the current development discussion and are benchmarks for general actions and evaluation.

² We generally refer to the term of ‘development’ in the specific way it is understood as a *project* that is mainly promoted by outside interventions to induce change. The development *project* logic stands in opposition to development *process* logic where change comes from within the society and direction is not predefined.

The common discourse on *Water & Gender* issues in the Global South, with which we are all more or less familiar to through general socialisation, follows basically the following story line: As water is women's business in Africa as elsewhere in the developing world, this is often taken as the starting point of development endeavours in this sector. Women are culturally considered as being responsible for domestic household activities; many of them are connected to water and its availability. Water is needed first and foremost for domestic consumption such as drinking and food preparation, but as well for basic health and hygiene - both typical responsibilities of females. To provide these services to household members, women exert considerable time, energy and efforts fetching water and bringing it back to their houses in areas where water supply is low, the case in rural areas of developing countries. But additionally to costly time and energy investment, this water fetched at natural springs or in river beds can be unsafe and may provoke water-borne diseases what is a reason for the high percentage of infant mortality. Additionally, water as a life-giving resource may carry a diffuse social connotation linking it to life-giving females (Strang 2007). All this contributes to the conceptualization of an intimate connection of women to water. Women are seen as main players in water issues and their importance is underlined by attributed titles such as "*domestic water managers*" (Singh et al. 2003). These considerations aid the argument of the importance to include women into the decision making processes around water projects (see Ebato/van Koppen 2005, Baden 1999), as they would be the main beneficiaries. The aim is to empower women by reducing their work load in terms of time and energy to fetch water, improve their health and that of their family members and thus free them to engage in more income generating activities decreasing the household's vulnerability to poverty (see von Masson 2000). Another important component to women's empowerment in the current development project approach is the emphasis on the participation of the local female population in order to raise their sense of responsibility for the new water scheme and make it more sustainable in its use. To reach this goal, a local water committee that includes mandatory female members is established to take care of the water scheme, its management and maintenance and that gets training in central skills and capacities to fulfil this duty. This is the rough direction of argumentation that the common development logic is following and in which numerous development projects and programs are lining up.

Of course, we find critical contributions to the common debate surrounding development projects in development literature too. Development agencies and NGOs are well aware of new conflicts such projects may induce and that are not in favour of a real improvement of living standard. Such counterproductive effects are for instance discussed by Singh et al. (2003). But we argue that the

discussion never the less remains inside the common development logic and does not question the general approach itself. This could otherwise challenge a whole line of business in the Global North and South.

We will in the next section question some aspects of the common development project discourse on *Water & Gender* issues. Critique about it has been made from different sides that unravel missing factors and underlying prescriptions. But before discussing different aspects of these critiques though, we have to add a clarifying note: The critiques concern primarily the development *discourse*, though politics and resulting implementation strategies as discussed in the previous chapter. The development *discourse* however has to be separated from development *theories* that concern scientific modelling of development. The two belong to different spheres, have different purposes and aims and can not be directly compared, even though the first is influenced by the latter. For the moment, we discuss the *discourse* and come to its underlying *theories* only in the last critique. As we aim to argue in this thesis on a *theoretical* and not on a *discursive* level, we conclude on a critique of the *development discourse* and underlying *development theories*. This will serve us as guide line for the subsequent research on *Water & Gender* issues in Ethiopia with an alternative theoretical approach.

1.1.2 Some Critiques about current Development Concepts

In the next chapter, we will trace three lines of critique: *Firstly*, the critique concerning the Gender-Nature connection and its handling within development projects. *Secondly*, the critique on the modernist teleological understanding of ‘development’ and *thirdly* the actor-centeredness in the establishment of development projects while excluding broader political dynamics.

1.1.2.1 Water & Women: A ‘naturalized’ Relationship

The focus on women in development policy is a recent phenomenon. Generally speaking, women’s contributions towards development efforts have only been discovered vis-à-vis policy making in the 1970’s (Singh et al 2003, O’Reilly 2006), and since then experienced increasing importance. Based on women’s role as domestic water managers in most developing countries, women are addressed particularly in water projects to promote sustainability for water supply schemes. By the same measure, women should be empowered, their social status improved, including them into the decision-making processes in their communities. What sounds positive in the development project logic is regardless criticised by Kathleen O’Reilly (2006) when she states, that “*development projects involving natural resources often base their interventions on a ‘naturalized’ relationship between women and the project’s targeted resource. Existing gender-resource relations are then built upon or slated for change according to the needs of the project* (O’Reilly 2006: 961). O’Reilly summarizes the broader critique from the side of

geographic and feminist work to such development interventions as a failure to question gendered labour division and to understand it as a social construction that is “*far from being ‘natural’*” (ibid: 961). Such interventions would even increase women’s exploitation and constrain self-determined change. Adding her own research in a water supply project in Rajasthan, India, she argues, that the participation and empowerment approach applied in this case was based on this ‘naturalized’ connection between women and water. In the project’s documents, women were primarily defined through their gendered identity as mothers and housewives and thus their domestic duties which link them with water. Their relationship to water was naturalized through “*an unquestioned acceptance that it is women who should care for the household and children* (ibid: 963). By doing so, women’s water knowledge and customary social roles are misused and increase their exploitation (O’Reilly 2006). Deriving from this example we can state, that development agents and development project designers too are contributing to the social construction of a ‘naturalized’ social role that is unfavourable to women as it binds them to a specific action field and hampers them to open up into new fields. We have to point out that the position of NGOs and development agents might not be unbiased, but hold a certain vision of how things are or have to be that influences unwillingly their actions.

1.1.2.2 Water & Development: A Power Setting

The second critique focuses on the paradigm of development and its implications. It argues that the current development project discourse carries inevitably a hegemonic connotation. ‘Development’ is understood as a linear process from backwardness/tradition to progress/modernity (O’Reilly 2006: 961). This dualism holds a Eurocentric understanding of development with the objective of escaping from backwardness/tradition and reaching a state of modernity that is defined and set up by the Global North. In addition to this modernist teleology, the so called under-developed South has to be assisted by the developed North to manage this transition. Dörfler et al. (2003) argue, that with the current development discourse normative connotations are implicitly carried along that can be understood as the offspring of the hegemonic perspective. It is the North that knows what to reach and how to reach it. Dialectical thinking in categories such as *developed* versus *underdeveloped*, *1st world* versus *3rd world* underlines the lack of development and the backwardness of the latter and serve as a starting point of the development discourse. In such discourse, hierarchical thinking is always *inherent* and even though development theories are promoting to overcome such hierarchies, they perpetuate the hegemonic situation by their inability to think beyond dependencies (Dörfler et al. 2003: 12).

An even more radical stance against the dominant development paradigm comes from Vandana Shiva (1996), a clearly audible voice from the Global South (India) when it comes to Women-Nature relationship. She refers to the development paradigm as a violent, westerner, male dominated ideology that excludes women and non-European peoples and their alternative knowledge about nature (Shiva 1996: 266). In line with the social and political movement called *Ecofeminism*, an approach that marries environmentalism and feminism, Shiva links women very closely to nature by arguing that nature is feminine³, “*a living and creating process, the feminine principle from which all life arises*” (ibid: 266). She claims that women depend more directly on nature to sustain themselves, their families, their societies. They have knowledge and expertise about nature and its resources that the male seemingly do not have. Modern science and development on the other hand “*are projects of male, western origin, both historically and ideologically*” (ibid: 266), designed to dominate nature and reduce it to a purely productive unit in the capitalist’s logic. In her view, “*violence to nature, which seems intrinsic to dominant development model, is also associated to violence to women who depend on nature*” (ibid: 266). Shiva considers development, and at a deeper level (western) scientific knowledge, on which the development process is based, as a source of violence and as a way of dominating nature and women by marrying western knowledge and male domination to a patriarchal, universal ideology of progress. She harshly rejects development as “*the spread of the masculinist paradigm of science*” (ibid: 273) and argues for diversity and non-violence as a means of power.

This is a quite radical stance against western science, development and masculinity, which has to be considered despite its radicalism and differentiated in its content and applicability to the discussion above. Even though one might not agree on all of Shiva’s points, some premises never the less add up to our considerations about development as a Eurocentric discourse that claims universality in its core concepts of progress and modernity. Shiva’s accusation of western science and its spread in the form of a development discourse as a reductionist and patriarchal ideology (ibid: 268) that is subjugating non-western and female knowledge and meanings, reveals a critical point: The conceptualization of the relationship between North–South, between Male–Female, between Culture–Nature as a power setting. Such an interpretation of the northern ideology as the domination of the non-West reveals a hidden hierarchical, hegemonic setting. Therefore, development with its seemingly universal target of progress and modernity might not be as altruistic as it is promoted in the development discourse. What we retain for the discussion here is

³ Shiva is using the term *terra mater* and is referring to nature with feminine pronouns: “The earth is rapidly dying: *her* forests are dying, *her* soils are dying, *her* waters are dying, *her* air is dying (Shiva 1996: 264).

Shiva's argument as a Southerner that the dominant development discourse carries an unreflected hegemony that tallies with an unquestionable starting point of development efforts.

Let us, however, add some criticism to Shiva's arguments. First, Shiva's point on the connection of women and nature marks exactly the contrary argument of O'Reilly (2006) in the former chapter. The natural and mythic relationship to nature Shiva attributes to women is to be reviewed. O'Reilly questions Shiva's stand that "*women [...], because they are female, have a unique knowledge about the environment and are 'natural' protectors of natural resources*" (O'Reilly 2006: 963). This 'naturalness' is a social construction that Shiva fails to reveal. In addition, her point of the domination of the Global North over the Global South that she connects simultaneously with the domination of Male over Female and Culture over Nature is not tenable. One could accuse her too to 'naturalize' dichotomies by connecting North-Male-Culture and oppose it to South-Female-Nature. Although the accumulation of one or more of the dominated characteristics reinforces the subjugation of a given social group, it does not give a reason to their 'natural' interconnectivity.

1.1.2.3 Water & Actors: A limited Radius for Explanations

The last critique concerns the radius of considerations development *theories* are generally focusing on and are reproduced in development discourse. Dörfler et al. (2003) criticise the actor-centeredness of approaches such as *livelihood* or *vulnerability theories* and their blindness in considering social actors as completely autonomous, self-determined agents, disconnected and free from societal, political and macroeconomic frame conditions. The responsibility for a changing situation is in this perspective depending exclusively on enabled actors, without considering that social actors are embedded in and influenced by societal constrains (Dörfler et al. 2003). O'Reilly follows the same line of critique when she adds that in her case study in India, "*village women [were placed] in a category without recognizing power and social relations as factors influencing individual women's action, decisions, and ideologies*" (O'Reilly 2006: 963). This blindness for the broader frame conditions and the neglect of powerful and powerless positions within a social setting that constrain social actors are a general weakness of development projects and their conceptualization. Dörfler et al. (2003) arguing equally, when they state that such approaches may be able to describe existing situations but fail to *explain their origins*, because they neglect far-reaching societal circumstances (ibid: 13).

We can therefore summarize the third critique by arguing that development theories often do not pay enough respect to power settings within a given society and neglect the political and historical roots and conditions in which societal reality is taking place and development projects are implemented. By doing so, focus is laid on a limited actor's perspective at a very local micro level. This view can not bring any profound understanding of the whole picture and might not contribute

to societal change or break down of unequal power relations. At the same time most foreign development promoters fail to recognize that they are themselves part of a power setting and might even contribute to unequal power relations as we shall see further on. My argument here is, that what ever kind of endeavour is aimed for, and may their objectives seem as apolitical as access to drinking water, they are always taking place *within* a political situation that shapes actor's social practices and decisions, and have influence on the project's performance. Local social reality is never disconnected from the broader power setting within a society and thus social practices are shaped or restricted by the political power situation. Projects can uniquely focus on local level improvement and may be predestined to fail in changing broader political power setting.

1.1.3 Conclusion: Evading from Development Terminology

Having discussed these critical points about the dominant development discourse and theories the question remains: What is the alternative to them? How can we reach an understanding of social realities by including societal power structures in our perspective? And how does such an alternative approach still have a substantive output on deplorable social realities?

When we conclude on the critiques made above, we state that the dominant development discourse and its implementers in various forms of development projects will not be able to solve the stagnating social situation in many countries of the Global South. One can not overcome a problem when one is part of the problem. Also one can not understand a complex and far reaching societal problem with a narrow actor's perspective. What became clear in the discussion above is the emphasis laid on *power relations* within social structures and between the various actors. We have to see clearly that power is inherent to societal relationships. This has to be a core concern of our analysis. But analysing power settings clearly requires a self-reflected, critical stance that questions what seems to be obvious in order to be able to avoid an interest driven involvement.

A theoretical approach that lays its focus on the analysis of power relations within a society is the *Relational Agency Theory* proposed and defined by the French sociologist *Pierre Bourdieu*. We will once more follow the arguments of Dörfler et al. (2003) in the choice of this theoretical approach for three reasons: (1) Bourdieu's social theory is focusing its attention on *relations* between two extreme poles of society: the acting subject and the shaping structure, and not only on either of the two by excluding the other. The complexity of social reality is not reduced, nor is anything faded out, but the interconnections between subject and structure are put in the middle of interest. (2) Bourdieu's concept's of analysis enables the interpreter to understand social settings as a social field with different *power positions*. Development agents as all other social actors are to be included into this

field and into the struggle about the objectives at stake. Power relations within this field and between its different positions become an important focus of the analysis. (3) Bourdieu's *Relational Agency Theory* is applicable not only on societies of the Global South but on what ever societal context. Thus, all development discourse terminology can be left aside. The seemingly lack or inadequacy of a societal state of a given country is no longer the starting point of definition, nor the point of reference of a perspective. All societal contexts are analysed and examined in the same way and with the same tools of analysis. Social dynamics in non-European countries are no longer treated apart or from a Eurocentric perspective.

1.2 Theoretical Concepts: A Theory of Practice

1.2.1 Pierre Bourdieu: Neither Objectivism nor Subjectivism

Pierre Bourdieu's contribution to social science has had a profound effect on societal studies from the second half of the 20th century and continues to do so today. His approach induced a profound change in social science and influenced numerous contemporary societal theories and theorists from various disciplines. Bourdieu's suggested model of societal dynamics, the *Relational Agency Theory*, and the instrument it offered to interpret social reality, was a reaction of his renunciation from the then favoured theoretical approaches and the dominance of philosophy in French academia from which he himself derived. His new concept of the *Habitus* enabled for the first time to bring two things together that were always seen as opposites: The acting subject and the shaping structure. Put differently, the *Habitus* concept made it possible to overcome a dichotomy that has marked profoundly the scientific debate. Subjectivist theories oppose objectivist theories in the core question of whom or what shapes social action. Is it a free and conscious subject itself or is it societal structures which dictate individual action? As we will see further on, the concept of the *Habitus* suggests neither uniquely one nor the other but their interdependence. Or as Addi (2002) puts it: «L'agent (...) est libre dans les limites tracées par l'habitus. [...] La théorie de l'habitus veut corriger les excès du structuralisme holiste (Lévi-Strauss) et de la philosophie du sujet (Sartre). Elle montre que l'homme n'est ni un robot obéissant à des règles ni un sujet libre, et qu'il est guidé par son habitus exprimant une continuité entre la subjectivité de la personne et l'objectivité du monde social» (Addi 2002: 25).

By simplifying a bit the philosophical landscape of the 1950's in France, Bourdieu's own philosophical education was shaped by these two scientific traditions of the time. On the one hand, there was the *Existentialistic Philosophy* by Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) that had a strong impact on the French academia and was reinforced by a general dominance of philosophy which was worshiped

as a royal discipline. With a highly subjective philosophical approach Sartre was focusing on the individual and its existence as disconnected from all kinds of social phenomena or interconnectedness, existing like an atom without social constraints. Existentialism was a trend which denied that an individual subject was in any way dependant on its surrounding and its historical, social or political background. It existed only as subject, guided by its own free will and decision making capacity (Jurt 2008).

On the other hand, objectivism had a strong advocate in *Claude Lévi-Strauss* (1908 -2009), a pioneer of Anthropology, who based his arguments on shaping structures of society that give meaning to social phenomena only on the condition of their integration into a system (Jurt 2008: 17). With his approach of *Structural Anthropology* deriving from linguistic analysis, he aimed to subdivide social reality into its very basic generating principles of social structure such as kinship or myths⁴. His objectivist approach was opposite from Sartre's point of view in the sense, that Lévi-Strauss disconnected social action from the subject itself to emphasise objectified structures, on which the subject had no influence nor will to influence. In Lévi-Strauss' view, the subject is entirely shaped by societal constraints and obeys passively (Jurt 2008).

1.2.2 A new theoretical Approach: A Theory of Practice

From the background of this discussion in French academia in the 1950's where Bourdieu was a graduate of philosophy himself, he chose to renounce from the claimed supremacy of his discipline and turn his attention to the empirical study of social realities. Through the intensive experience of a different cultural reality in Algeria during the independence war in the late 1950's, where he rendered his military service, Bourdieu's awareness for societal logics beyond subjectivism or objectivism rose and he added several years of in-depth empirical studies in the Kabyle society (Bourdieu 2002, Bourdieu 2009, Schultheis 2007). He developed the first lines of an alternative approach in his founding work *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* (1972) that was neither faithful to one or the other of the dominant scientific traditions of the time. He went beyond them by putting forward social practice that in his opinion brings together *subject* and *structure* through the incorporation of a collective history into individual body and practise. Hence, he developed an approach that overcomes common dichotomies: Individual and collectivity, theory and practice, past and present (Steiner 2001). Bourdieu didn't deny the importance of societal structures and paid respect to Lévi-Strauss' work⁵, but with ongoing reflection he aimed to go beyond structuralism. In

⁴ The most important contributions to Structural Anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss are *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté*, (1949) and *Mythologiques* I - IV (1964, 1966, 1968, 1971).

⁵ One of his first ethnographic essays (*La maison kabyle ou le monde renversé*, 1972) on the Berber society shows strong parallels to structuralism and describes and interprets the Kabyle house with a set of opposing homologies: «*feu/eau*,

his view, the subject is not only shaped by the broader societal structures and tied by its actions in following societal *rules*, but is reciprocally shaping the world around it by applying a certain *strategy* in doing what seems to be ‘normal’ in the social context. Bourdieu therefore replaced the term of the strict *rule* as understood in structuralist thinking, by the term of *strategy* (Jurt 2008). He attributed the subject a sense of logic in his actions and practices. This logic, or as Bourdieu calls it, the “*practical sense*” (Jurt 2008: 39) is shaping social practices and gives them a continuous direction. In his view, the subject is not acting passively according to an externally imposed rule but has incorporated the world in his body making him act in line with that practical logic. It is, therefore, these social practices that stand at the centre of Bourdieu’s analysis, because they hold the key revealing the inherent logic of a subjective action (Bourdieu 1996).

Bourdieu developed his model and instruments within a traditional society with very consistent social practices. Later, he applied the same analytical tools on his own social background, what made it possible to understand complex French society. His research was always firmly rooted in empirical study and put emphasis in deriving theory from practice. His approach is, therefore, a strong plea for empirical research without which its theoretical pertinence is mislaid. He rejected the theory that only existed for its own sake and purpose of existence, as propagated by many philosophers of the time.

1.2.3 Three Concepts to interpret Social Reality

We will apply mainly three of Bourdieu’s concepts to the context of rural Ethiopian water management. These concepts are discussed in the next section and are to be understood as working tools, as instruments of analysis that help to look at social reality in a specific way, with a specific aim to interpret it in Bourdieu’s vision discussed above. They will be introduced here rather roughly, because we will differentiate and discuss them in more detail with ongoing argumentation and application to the empirical context. The three concepts are:

- The concept of *Habitus*
- The concept of *Field*⁶
- The concept of *Symbolic Violence*

cuit/cru, haut/bas, lumière/ombre, jour/nuit, masculine/féminin, nij/ borma, fécondant/fécondable, culture/nature » (Bourdieu 1972: 50), a clear indication for structuralist thinking.

⁶ The fourth core concept of Bourdieu is the concept on the different kinds of *capital*, that is to be understood as a differentiating tool of the *Field* concept. It will not be separately discussed in this thesis, but never the less introduced in the context of the *Field* concept.

1.2.3.1 The Concept of *Habitus*

As mentioned above, *Habitus* builds up the linkage between the subject and its surrounding world, an important characteristic of Bourdieu's social theory. It is with the *Habitus* that we can overcome the dichotomy between subject and structure, but interlink interiority and exteriority (Bourdieu 1987: 102), individuality and collectivity, as well as present and past.

Habitus is defined by Bourdieu as follows: “Produit de l'histoire, l'habitus produit des pratiques, individuelles et collectives, donc de l'histoire, conformément aux schèmes engendrés par l'histoire; Il assure la présence active des expériences passées qui, déposées en chaque organisme sous la forme de schèmes de perception, de pensée et d'action, tendent, plus sûrement que toutes les règles formelles et toutes les normes explicites, à garantir la conformité des pratiques et leur constance à travers le temps” (Bourdieu 1980: 91).

Hence, first and most obvious *Habitus* becomes tangible in ways of perceiving, thinking, and acting of an individual or a collective group and directs social practice in a specific and distinctive way. We can therefore discover and reconstruct *Habitus* through the observation of social practices (Krais/Gebauer 2002: 26). Social practices are shaped by individual and collective socialisation, experiences and history. This history or past experience becomes present and shapes the present or as Bourdieu puts it: “Histoire incorporée, faite nature, et par là oubliée en tant que telle, l'habitus est la présence agissante de tout le passé dont il est le produit” (Bourdieu 1980: 94). Hence, the collective history and individual experiences have become an inherent part of the individual's social practice, incorporated into its body and therefore transformed into something that seems to be ‘natural’ even though it is a socially constructed.

The focus of the analysis is therefore directed on the acting individual, but not for its own sake in the sense of a psychological interest, but for the interest of a societal analysis of the collectivity. In Bourdieu's view, collectivity is incorporated in the body and into the personality of the individual, in the sense, that an individual subject is not acting disconnected from social context, but in line with a collective but unconscious logic.

Until now one could criticise that this *Habitus* concept is not too far from Lévi-Strauss structuralism where the social practice is completely determined by a global system and structures outside of the individual. Once more, Bourdieu didn't deny the influence of global societal structures on individual practice, but he aimed to go beyond that standpoint, by claiming that the societal structures have become themselves *body*. This incorporated exteriority directs the subjects in its perception, in its way of thinking and acting. “Das Konzept des Habitus erlaubt es, Freiheit zu denken, die aber nie eine absolute, sondern eine bedingte ist, was dann gleichzeitig den ungedingten Determinismus ausschliesst” (Jurt 2008: 65).

By analysing the specific *Habitus* of a given population in what ever kind of society, no matter if in a highly complex, industrialized western society or in a traditional, mainly agrarian society as in rural

Amhara, the individual logic and meanings given to social practices as well as a highly unconsciously applied collective logic can be revealed through the observation of social practice. The *Habitus* of a subject has been shaped by individual circumstances of socialization at an early age. The framework of such socialization is a mirror of societal context and collective memory and history. The *Habitus* is though “*das Körper gewordene Soziale*” (Bourdieu 1996: 161), visible in individual or collective practices.

Just to be clear: One subject has one *Habitus*. A subject does not suddenly change its *Habitus* according to different social situations. But it can acquire a new *Habitus* in the long run due to social mobility for instance, even though despite all work on oneself this new *Habitus* remains shaped by the initial conditions of its genesis (Krais/Gebauer 2002: 47). *Habitus* contains individual aspects as well as collective traits. This leads to group *Habitus* with individual marks. For our context of the rural Ethiopian society, the specific *Habitus* of the female rural population will be of interest.

1.2.3.2 The Concept of *Social Fields*

With the concept of *Social Fields*, Bourdieu opens up his focus of analysis on broader societal contexts. It can be understood as a sequel to his conceptualization of the interlinkage between subject and structure. Bourdieu increasingly differentiates the general term of *Society* and defines it as *Social Space* which can be subdivided into separate *Social Fields* (Jurt 2008: 90f). What distinguishes *Social Fields* from each other is the specific *Habitus* of the involved actors and the common objective at stake that all the actors are struggling for. To illustrate what holds a *Field* together and structures its dynamics, Bourdieu has used the metaphor of a *game*: “*Die Spieler sind im Spiel befangen, sie spielen wie brutal auch immer, nur deshalb gegeneinander, weil sie alle den Glauben (doxa) an das Spiel und den entsprechenden Einsatz [...] teilen, und dieses heimliche Einverständnis ist der Ursprung ihrer Konkurrenz und ihrer Konflikte*“ (Bourdieu 1996: 128). He furthermore insists on the conflicting relations between the involved actors and defines such *Social Fields* as “*Kraft- und Machtfelder*” (Jurt 2008: 93).

Power conflicts are the first important characteristics of *Field* analysis. Each and every *Field* has its dominating and its dominated actors, its powerful and powerless positions (Bourdieu 1996: 137). Battle fields underlay a permanent and dynamic debate about positions and positioning among its actors who dispose of different capitals to bring into the *game*. Bourdieu differentiates four kinds of capital that are accumulated, converted or exchanged within a *Field* in order to ameliorate its position: The *economic* capital (material property that can be converted into money), the *cultural* capital (intellectual qualifications and academic titles, transmitted through family affiliation and

institutionalized through education institutions), the *social* capital (social relations, connections and duties) and the *symbolic* capital that concludes on the accumulation of all the other capitals and hence leads to reputation, recognition and influence within the *Field* (Jurt 2008: 72). Exchanges and negotiations don't allow static balance or state of armistice or curfew, but the actors are permanently defending or trying to ameliorate their position. It is these relations, dynamic and unstable as they are, that are important to the analysis of such social units.

Another specification of *Social Fields* is their historical conditionality (Jurt 2008: 96f). As *Habitus* of subjects, *Fields* too carry an incorporated history that has shaped their development and genesis. Bourdieu's interest does therefore not only focus on the structure of a *Field* but, as well, on its history of origins, on the factors that made it to be a *Social Field* with a distinctive logic. Only in the context of this historical condition can present social relations be interpreted. *Habitus* of subjects and the structures of *Fields* have therefore an important parallel that becomes obvious through social practices: "*Handeln ist [...] die Begegnung von zwei Realisierungen der Geschichte: Der in den Dingen objektivierten Geschichte in der Form der Strukturen oder Mechanismen eines Feldes, und der im Körper inkarnierten Geschichte in der Form des Habitus*" (Jurt 2008: 100-101). It is therefore of vital importance to reveal the historical conditions, to explain and understand the structures of the *Social Field*.

Finally, it seems important analysing *Social Field's demarcation of limits*. The limits of a *Field* are defined by the *Field* itself. They are not visible as such, they can only be revealed by analysing until where the effects of the *Field's* logic can be retraced. As discussed above, each *Social Field* has its own logic, its own laws and necessities, its own interests. This logic only makes sense and is effective within a specific radius, within a specific *Field*. In defining the concept of *Field*, Bourdieu was initially deriving from the physical phenomena of magnetic fields and their influence on surroundings. He states that like magnetic fields, *Social Field's* too have their limits where the structuring effects of the *Field's* logic fade out. But what is a *Field* effect and what is not? "*Nach Bourdieu kann man dann von einem Feldeffekt sprechen, wenn die Wirkweise eines Objekts oder eines Akteurs nicht anders als von der Logik dieses oder jenes Feldes her erklärbar ist*" (Jurt 2008: 98). Likewise we can conclude, that we stand outside of a *Field* when social practices that before (inside the *Field*) seemed to be natural and logical suddenly appear as strange and inappropriate.

The conceptualization of the social space in *Fields* offers a model to turn invisible structures and relations visible (Jurt 2008: 93). Bourdieu underlines the relational character of *Social Fields* when he states: "*In Feldbegriffen denken heisst relational denken*" (Bourdieu 1996: 126). *Fields* are not to capture with materialistic or phenomenological approaches because their most important constituents are relations. The last concept we will discuss here, pays specific attention to this relational aspects of *Fields*: The power factor in relations and its hidden mechanisms.

1.2.3.3 The Concept of *Symbolic Violence*

The third concept by Bourdieu that is of relevance in the context of this work here, is to be understood in relation to the previous ones. The *Habitus* concept and the concept of *Social Fields* are necessary components to understand what Bourdieu means by *Symbolic Violence*.

Bourdieu defines social relations, with some few exceptions of unselfish friendships or love (Jurt 2008: 87f), *per se* as power relations and resumes with this to what we have discussed as a characteristic of *Social Fields*. He distinguishes two different forms of violence: „*Die eine, die auf nackter Gewalt – der Waffen oder des Geldes - beruht, und die symbolische Gewalt, die viel subtiler und weniger sichtbar ist*“ (Jurt 2008: 86). Physical violence creates dependencies and submission as does *Symbolic Violence*. What makes this subtle form of violence so efficient though, is the fact that it is not perceived as a form of violence. No physical submission or violent action is taking place. Rather the subjective structures of an individual are gradually adopted and invaded by objective societal structures. In this sense *Symbolic Violence* remains invisible and even unconscious to both the dominant and the dominated subject or social group. Its legitimacy is guaranteed through the fact that the dominated subject accepts the situation as ‘natural’ and doesn’t oppose it. This approval is an essential characteristic of *Symbolic Violence* and the foundation of its conservation.

But why does a dominated subject accept its domination? In here comes the concept of the *Habitus* as an incorporation of externality into subjective interiority. External power doesn’t have to be imposed physically in order to reach submission, but can count on the incorporated power structures within the body of the dominated actor. These structures result from an already integrated power situation in flesh and blood through socialisation and collective dominated history. This makes it easier for the dominator to impose its power without physical force, because it will find mental structures in subject’s minds that ease the way for its imposition. A *Habitus* of a dominated social group or subject holds therefore submissive traits that let submission appear natural and normal. There is no need for physical violence anymore to reach control (Bourdieu 1998).

This hidden mechanism of power leads, in Bourdieu’s view, to a ‘second nature’. Power imposition remains unrecognized, misjudged, accepted and even supported especially by those subjugated to it, because it is part of the world by which the subject itself is shaped. A power situation is accepted and even supported because the subject assigns cognitive structures to it that have been generated by the same social world, that is now dominating and determining the subject. Submissive practices though are reproduced with the contribution of the dominated (Bourdieu 1996: 204).

But *Symbolic Violence* is not only incorporated in an individual or group *Habitus* and reproduced in social practices, but at the same time is incorporated into institutions and societal structures. Bourdieu equally used the term of *Structural Violence* to describe how *Symbolic Violence* shapes

structures of *Social Fields*, institutions and policies that derive from it. The principle is the same: Societal institutions or mechanisms have incorporated the same power inequality structures as *Habitus* of subjects, but are equally not questioned nor contested but kept up by the acceptance of the favoured as well as the disfavoured social groups (Jurt 2008).

Bourdieu states one domain, where the hidden mechanisms of *Symbolic Violence* work exceptionally efficiently: In gender relations, to where he applies his concept of *Symbolic Violence*. His book on “*La domination masculine*” (1998) reveals how subtly power imposition between men and women, even after half a century of emancipation and feminism in complex western societies, is still at work and can only be explained through an incorporated *Habitus* that is beyond consciousness of subjects but is part of what seems most natural: the physical body. Power relations between sexes and their acceptance are produced and reproduced in the same manner as any other subtle power relation. Unconsciously accepted and supported by females, they are strengthening masculine dominance. Here too, the effectiveness and maintenance of masculine domination is founded on female agreement and reproduction through gender specific *Habitus* of both sexes, male and female – the result of collective and individual socialisation process. Men as well as women are actors of a *Social Field* of power and influence, whereas both are victims of the unquestioned situations in the way that both are acting according to *Habitus*. Hence, *Symbolic Violence* is incorporated into both structures and bodies – into *Habitus* and *Social Fields*.

1.2.4 Conclusion: Social Practice as a Key to unravel Power Relations

In the previous chapters, three concepts by Bourdieu have been presented that will be of relevance for the analysis of social structures and their power relations in the rural areas of Ethiopia. It became clear that these concepts are interlinked and interdependent. One can not exist without the other, but they are based on each other and complement each other. They are to be understood as instruments to analyse social structures at different levels and enable to give meaning to single social practices.

As we have seen, social practice is not random and disconnected from the context it is taking place in, but is the result of a cumulative socialisation process and historical development. Social actors are neither free from their individual nor from their collective historical context, but act, think and perceive in a particular manner *because* they are part of a context.

What is striking in Bourdieu’s theory is the model he suggests to comprehend how the subject is directed by the societal structure. The subject is not determined by the structure such as following obediently a rule that is imposed on it from outside. But the subject is intimately part of the structure itself as it carries the societal structures, with all its power imposing aspects, within itself.

This assures the constancy of social practices over time much more than any imposed formal rule or explicit norm (Bourdieu 1980: 91). It is therefore social practices that stand at the centre of attention, because they are a key in revealing what has shaped *Habitus* of individuals and groups as well as the structure of *Fields* and their logics.

The second important point we wish to underline here, is the focus on power relations in Bourdieu's approach. Power within social relations directs decisively social practice, even more so when it is not revealed as such. Bourdieu's model aims to unravel what is taken for granted and is not questioned – a promising approach to the development context to which we will apply his theory. As we will see in the next section, the historical and societal background of water and gender issues in Ethiopia suggests a broad range of starting points of analysis of social practices and hidden power relations.

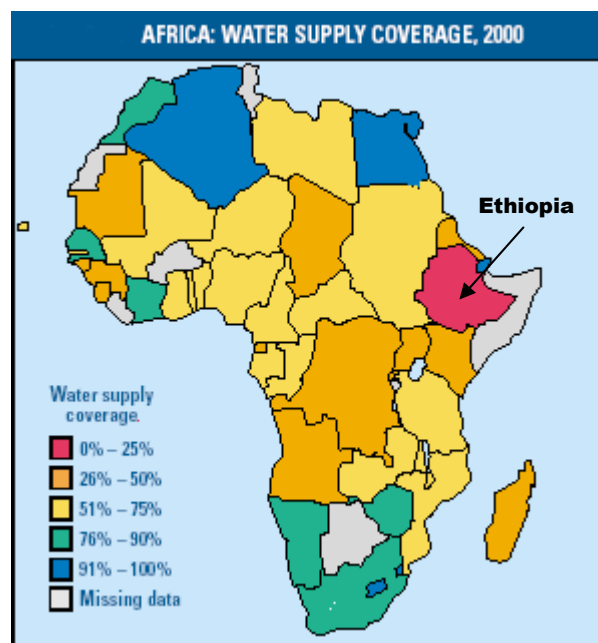
2 Water & Gender Issues in Ethiopia: A Power Setting

The scientific interest of this thesis is to be placed in the interception of *Water & Gender* issues in the Ethiopian context, which leads us to look at both water issues and gender issues in the country *separately*, in order to get a contextual overview on the subjects. This will enable us to place our own empirical study within a broader context and, in a further step, connect the two areas with each other.

2.1 Water in Ethiopia: The Neglect of rural Water Supply

2.1.1 Natural Abundance *versus* social Scarcity: Some Facts and Figures

Even though figures vary considerably according to different sources, Ethiopia's rate of water supply has one thing in common in all rankings: They are among the lowest in Africa and worldwide. The map below (Map 1) indicates that less than 25% of Ethiopia's population had access to safe drinking water in the year 2000 and even taking into account efforts that have been made in the last decade, the figure remains low.



Map 1: Water supply coverage in Africa, 2000 (Medilinks 2010)

According to latest figures from the World Bank, only 22% of the population had improved access to water, and merely 6% had access to improved sanitation facilities ⁷ in 2005 (World Bank 2005). When looking closer and differentiating according to urban and rural settlements, the picture becomes even darker for the rural areas. Although the urban rate was with 73% much higher in the year 2000, the rural figure that concerns the large majority of Ethiopians, drops to 13% ⁸ (World Bank 2006: 18).

These figures are even more surprising considering the fact that Ethiopia is not primarily a dry country. Due to its strong mountainous relief, it has relatively high precipitation rates in central, northern and western parts (up to 1800 mm/year), hosts the source of the Blue Nile and gives birth to a number of other important river basins in the region (Tesfaye 2009). Ethiopia is therefore not a country hit by *natural scarcity* of water resources, but rather suffering under *social* and *infrastructural scarcity*. It is there that it becomes interesting for social science. Access to drinking water does not only seem to depend on the quantity of rain that falls from the sky, but rather how this water is made or not made available to the population (see Niemann/Graefe 2006). Access to drinking water therefore becomes a political and societal issue.

2.1.2 Access to Water: A historical Perspective

Ethiopia has undoubtedly a vivid political past, in ancient times as well as in recent decades. As much as the political authorities have changed over time, equally the approach to the country's water resources and its priorities of use has changed. Water is a natural resource that is crucial for the survival of human mankind, but its use and management is not always as uncontested as it might seem. Its use differs according to different political considerations as we shall see in the next chapter.

Following Dessalegn (1999) in broad terms, we shall look at how the changing political regimes have dealt in the last 50 years with the two main aspects of water use: *drinking water supply* and *irrigation*.

2.1.2.1 The Feudal Period: Producing for a World Market

The Regime of King Haile Selassie (1930-1974 ⁹) was an imperial regime with feudalistic power structures. During his regime the first initiatives of water resource development had been

⁷ Even though sanitation improvements can not be separated from safe drinking water improvements and have to go hand in hand, we will in this MA thesis put emphasis on water supply only.

⁸ This great disparity between rural areas and urban centres is characteristic for many countries of the Global South.

⁹ With short interruption during Italian occupation 1936-1941

undertaken in the mid 1950's, even though the administrative role of the government remained generally minimal (Tesfaye 2009). With ongoing intended modernization of the country by King Haile Salassie, the government's interest in large-scale and high-technology water projects developed. First projects in the Awash Valley (Northeast of Addis Ababa), Rift Valley (South of AA) and Wabe Shebele Basin (Southeast of AA) were planned and established. Their purpose was primarily an increase in the agricultural production and power generation. Hydro power dams were built, irrigation schemes established within their reach, and Addis Ababa and a few other towns got their first water supply system. As all these mainly large-scale projects were on governmental initiative, they were managed by state or para-statal enterprises. An important precondition for such projects was the estimation of the water resource potential of the country's river basin in order to be able to attract foreign capital for investments in industrial agro-businesses and increase export earnings of the country. During the 1960's and early 1970's the main objectives of these advancements were therefore put on large scale irrigation projects to increase economic profit for the state's elite. Water supply for the rural population remained underestimated (Dessalegn 1999). The rural population fetched its drinking water at rivers and natural springs and defecated in the open as it had done historically.

2.1.2.2 The Socialist Period: Large, complex and elitist

After the overthrow of King Haile Selassie through a Marxist revolution military coup of several ethnical liberation movements in 1975, General Mengistu Haile Mariam installed a socialist regime, popularly called *Derg*¹⁰ regime, modelled and supported by the Soviet Union. His governance was an ambiguous one: It was particularly brutal towards oppositional minded people and an estimated 1.5 million people lost their lives during the years of '*red terror*'. On the other hand his regime favoured rural peasants and therefore remained surprisingly positive in the memories of the rural population of Amhara.

In terms of water development, Mengistu Haile Mariam followed the course of his predecessor in favouring large-scale and complex water projects, especially during the first phase of his regime. His logic however, included the link that modernization and socialization of the agricultural economy through heavy investments into irrigation, would result in higher agricultural production and income for farmers, higher employment opportunities and therefore an increase in foreign exchange earnings. Agricultural production was therefore not for local consumption but for export purposes (Dessalegn 1999). His endeavours were at a first glance to spread cultivated land and decrease population density. The ordered displacement of about 600'000 peasants from the

¹⁰ *Derg* is an Amharic term and means '*committee*', deriving from the then communist regime (Lefort 2007: Footnote 6)

populated high lands to less populated areas never the less had the underlying political goal to uproot and weaken unmanageable population groups.

This top-down approach included the justification of state ownership of water projects, by arguing that water was a public resource and therefore had to be managed by public actors. Moreover, “*given the emphasis on complex and large-scale water projects at the time and their management by a small professional elite, the diffusion of new water management expertise among the farming population was out of the question and not actively sought in the first place*” (Dessalegn 1999¹¹). It was not until the mid 1980’s, when disastrous droughts hit the country and famine swept away hundreds of thousands of lives that the Derg accepted grudgingly to invest in more small-scale schemes to increase local food security. In view of a starving population that was completely unable to feed itself, the regime was forced to slightly change its approach in water management in order to increase the local food production (Dessalegn 1999).

Never the less the priority on large-scale and high technological schemes, managed by state-controlled enterprises remained unchanged. In the general trend of nationalisation, even traditional small-scale water schemes that had been managed by the local population since almost a century were confiscated, up-graded and handed over to producer co-operatives. But this rather led to the decay of the schemes. “*The irrigation schemes lacked operational autonomy, and there was no sense of ownership on the part of the beneficiaries, because of the association of irrigation with collectivisation, many peasants shunned irrigation and remained suspicious and reluctant to return to it even after the fall of the Derg*” (Dessalegn 1999: see above). The Derg period hence destroyed many of these traditional schemes and with them, the high level of practical knowledge necessary for the construction and maintenance of water management by the local population got lost (Dessalegn 1999).

On the side of the *water supply* for the rural population’s consumption and domestic use, not much investment was committed until the late 1970’s, but bias was rather on urban systems. Rural water supply was neglected already since the imperial regime or was only carried out along the main road network which was scarce at the time, especially in the mountainous areas. Communities inaccessible by motor transport were largely ignored. On the positive side of the Derg regime however, Dessalegn (1999) states that water supply for rural populations became a high priority in the 1980’s. The government set an ambitious ten year plan (1984-1994) and considerable progress was made in the 1980’s and early 90’s. On the other hand, the famines in 1974 and 1984/85 raised the world’s attention and as a reaction to the human disaster, international donor agencies and NGOs became actively involved in the rural water supply schemes. However, the progress of rural water supply was only moving at a slow pace. In Dessalegn’s opinion, this was mainly due to a lack of a comprehensive national water policy, including a juridical framework on priorities of

¹¹ No page number available, Homepage

investment resources and water tariff policy, as well as a general lack of participation, community management and self-responsibility of the rural population. The same author considers as well the estimated high rate of malfunction or schemes at different stages of disrepair which decreases the real coverage rate in comparison to the official rate. He attributes this high rate of malfunction of water supply schemes to the fact of non-involvement of the population and the lack of responsibility to the top-down induced schemes (Dessalegn 1999).

In short we can summarize, that the Derg regime had introduced only a partly successful progress in water resource development. Many of its projects, be it large-scale or small-scale, drinking water supply or irrigation projects, were poorly planned, operated and managed, water use was therefore inefficient, reinforced by the lack of a consistent policy and negligence of the direct stakeholder in the rural areas. Some of the hydro power dams had to be abandoned due to poor design, were kept in operation with reduced efficiency and capacity, or caused serious environmental damage. The population on the other side was supplied with technical infrastructure that no one among the community members was able to manage, especially not with a private interest. The local knowledge and initiative to maintain traditional water management practices was subsequently destroyed and undermined.

2.1.2.3 The current Regime: Rural Water Supply through external Donors

The socialist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam came much more silently to an end than it started sixteen years previously. In 1991, it basically collapsed by itself as a result of the missing support from the Soviet Union. Mengistu Haile Mariam was chased away by his own population and fled to Zimbabwe where he enjoys even today the hospitality of Robert Mugabe.

In the meantime Ethiopia underwent a transitional period to the model of multiparty democracy. This political transition was initiated by former rebels from the Northern part of the country, namely from Amhara and Tigray region that had become the new political leaders of the country. Most current representatives of today's ruling party, called *Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front* (EPRDF), derive from these regions, a fact that feeds the longstanding accusation of ethnic domination by Amharic and Tigrinya leaders. The long lasting Prime Minister Meles Zenawi himself is from the Tigray region. During his almost 20 years of rule, he formed the country's political scene through a decentralization process based on eight main ethnic regions into a system of Ethnical Federation. His rule is never the less ambiguous and raises serious questions about democratic standards.

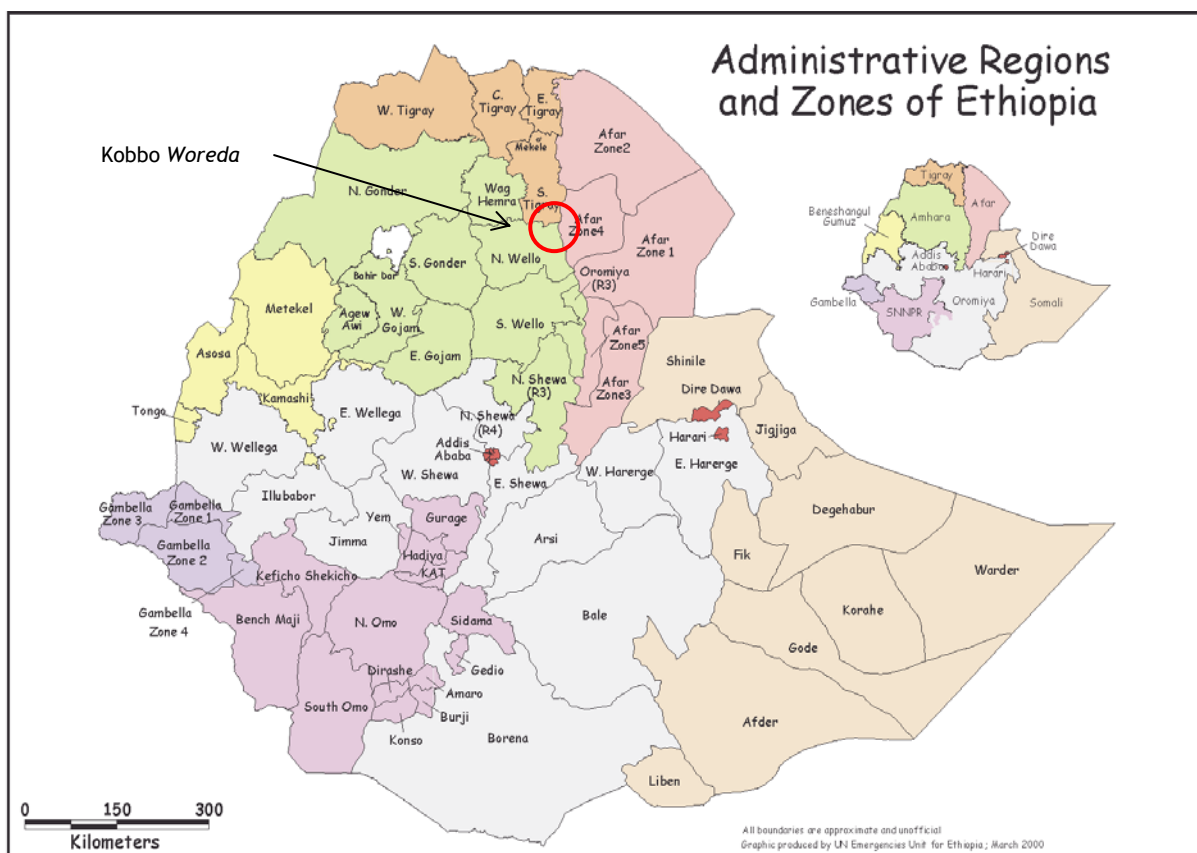
In terms of water management over the last 15 years, the political scene has stabilised in Dessalegn's (1999) opinion. The present government has learnt some lessons from the past and put more emphasis on a more pluralist approach in water policy. Aside from further large-scale water development project for hydropower production in the 1990's, stronger emphasis was laid on small-scale irrigation projects with direct benefits for the local population. These schemes were less vulnerable to technical failures and included local knowledge for their sustainable construction, management and maintenance. In addition their establishment is less costly and more effective. The present government has expressed its strong commitment to rapid progress of water supply for the rural population. Dessalegn (1999) is however cautious with regard to the government's plans to catch up with the other African counties in terms of water supply coverage. In his opinion, the current efforts will at best keep up with the population growth, but is insufficient to achieve 100% coverage within reasonable time. The financial effort needed for such achievement is beyond the government's reach. Therefore, the Ethiopian government is facing a huge effort in achieving a supply of drinking water for every body. Since the 1980's, the government is seeking active support of international donor agencies and NGOs becoming an important factor in the implementation of the government's policies (Dessalegn 1999).

We can summarize the development of water management in Ethiopia over time as follows: As many other African states, Ethiopia's experience in water development programs in its past was mainly dominated by state-owned and state-managed water projects with strong emphasis on large-scale and complex irrigation schemes. From the 1960's on, they were heavily financed by the World Bank and USAID and have been proved by large as a failure. Only a few projects have brought improvements in agriculture production and foreign earnings, mentioning missing improvements of food security and living standard for the local population. Large-scale projects have in addition caused the flooding of arable land and the displacement and relocation of high numbers of rural population (Dessalegn 1999). Rural water supply for consumption and domestic use has for a long time been neglected or was not sustainable. Water development in general has been characterised by a top-down approach throughout the last decades and prevented and destroyed individual initiative and a sense of ownership and responsibility by communities. The prevailing high vulnerability of the rural population to natural hazards and food insecurity, often caused through lack of access to water for domestic use and productive purposes, has therefore to be understood as the result of an ongoing impoverishment of individual *capacities* of the rural poor to help themselves. The current regime delegates the task of rural water supply to international agencies and NGOs and its decentralized local Water Desks. Financial means come clearly from the first ones.

2.1.3 Water Management in rural Amhara

Having discussed the historical background of water development in Ethiopia in general in the last chapter, we will now narrow our focus locally on the area that is the main interest for this MA thesis. Ethiopia is divided into 8 main ethnic regions - Amhara Region is one of them. It is situated in the northern part of the country, reaching from the plains at the Sudanese border and from there rising gradually eastwards to include some of the highest summits of Ethiopia (>4500m). According to a World Bank Report, these north eastern highlands of Amhara belong to the most vulnerable areas of the country in terms of natural hazards (drought, flood), food insecurity and low economic potential, touching at the same time a high number of people (World Bank 2004).

Water supply coverage is particularly low in this rural area. Therefore *Welthungerhilfe*, the NGO that was backing the empirical field study connected to this thesis, engages into water supply projects. The district at stake lays in the extreme northeast of Amhara at the border with Tigray and Afar region. Kobo *Woreda* (local term for district) is situated at the foot of the highlands plateau, embedded in between the highlands in the West and the Afar desert in the East. This area is part of *North Wollo Zone* (Map 2).



Map 2: Ethiopia with its ethnic Regions (Relief Web 2009)

North Wollo Zone is an area frequently hit by natural disasters and famine. The devastating famine episodes in 1974 and 1984/85 hit this zone worst at the edge of northeast Amhara and since then on several other occasions have brought the farming population into serious constraints. Ege/Yegremew (2002) state that *North Wollo* is “*probably one of the poorest areas in Ethiopia and the vulnerability to famine is intimately linked to poverty*” (Ege/Yegremew 2002: 25).

To come back to our main interest in rural water supply, access to water might well be one of the factors that led (and is presently leading, March 2010) to serious livelihood insecurity in the area. Rural Amhara is an area with particular low coverage of water supply. Dessalegn gave the extremely low figure of 8.3% for safe rural water supply in Amhara in 1999 (Dessalegn 1999). Roughly ten years later, the figures have only slightly changed: “*With 2,5% sanitation coverage and approximately 15,2% water coverage, [rural Amhara is] at the bottom of all regions in Ethiopia*” (Welthungerhilfe 2007). The question therefore remains, why water supply rates are so particularly low in Ethiopia, and even more in rural Amhara.

2.1.3.1 The Water Projects of *Welthungerhilfe/GAA*

The WASH projects (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) of *Welthungerhilfe/German Agro Action* (WHH/GAA) in Ethiopia are taking place in the context of the *Millenium Development Goals* of the United Nations which among other goals, aim to half the percentage of population that has no access to safe drinking water worldwide by 2015. WHH/GAA, one of the big, well known German NGOs which has been working in Ethiopia for about 40 years, is hence engaged in contributing to reach this goal.

The WASH project in rural Amhara¹², running from January 2007 – December 2011, is budgeted at 3.8 Million Euros. The financing is provided, 75% by the European Commission, 16.7% by WHH/GAA and a smaller contribution by the local government in Ethiopia (8.3%) (Welthungerhilfe 2007). The project is focusing on five districts in Amhara, *Kobo Woreda* in *North Wollo* is one of these. The implementation of the water schemes is done on a local level by the Ethiopian partner-NGO called Orda (*Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara*) that is in direct contact with the rural population. WHH assures the more distance tasks of coordination, planning and supervision.

¹² The project description of the WASH projects in rural Amhara by WHH/Orda can be found in Annex 1.

Apart from improving the water and sanitation situation in the rural areas, WHH/Orda are engaged in providing *capacity building* of the local population (training, advice, technology transfer, experience sharing, material provision). The strategy of implementation of the projects is an integrative, community-led approach that puts emphasis on self responsibility of the local population in identifying, planning, implementing and sustaining their own WASH project. The water schemes are planned in close contact between the population, the local political authority and the NGO. The community has to apply with proposal to the Orda office in order to improve their water access. After a technical appraisal by Orda or the *Woreda* (district) administration water experts, approval, rejection or suspension is given. In case of a positive response, a local *Water & Sanitation Committee (WatSanCo)* has to be elected by the community that will receive grants to invest, implement and manage their own sub-project. The NGO is convinced that “*by providing comprehensive capacity building packages, this concept enhances local self-help potentials, participation and ownership. As a sustainable outcome, communities operate and maintain the schemes by their own resources and through support of private and government actors?*” (Welthungerhilfe 2007).

As discussed above, the Ethiopian state is limited in its means to implement water supply infrastructure due to lack of financial resources and is therefore keen to cooperate with NGOs and international donor agencies. Hence, NGOs such as WHH/Orda and others are fine tuning their endeavours in close cooperation with the *Woreda* Administrations, the local political authority (InterviewC6, Allemayu Takuari, Chairman of Kobo *Woreda*, 11th September 2009).

2.1.3.2 Kobo Woreda : An intervention site of WHH and Orda

Kobo *Woreda*, as one of the WHH/Orda intervention sites, is a very rural district, characterized by subsistence production of basically *teff*¹³, maize and sorghum. Kobo town, the district’s capital, is located in the so-called *Raya* Valley, a wide and fertile plain at approximately 1500 meter a.s.l.. This valley forms the back bone of the *Woreda* and has a strong cultural function in uniting identity of the local population. It runs basically North- South and is situated between the highland plateau in the West and the Afar desert in the East.

The *Woreda* is composed of 42 *Kebeles*¹⁴ and counts around 250’000 inhabitants. When the baseline report on the water and sanitation situation in the *Woreda* was written by WHH/GAA in June 2008,

¹³ *Teff* is a local grass, the basis for the national food *injera*, with very low yield due to tiny grains, but containing important nutritive constituents.

¹⁴ Ethiopia’s administrative division is reaching from the State of Federal Republic of Ethiopia -13 Ethnical Regions (8 main regions plus 5 large cities with the same status) – Zones (ex. North Wollo) – *Woreda* (district, ex. Kobo) – *Kebele* (municipality, ex. Rama), representing continuously smaller units.

only about 10% of the population were using protected and safe water sources, sanitation was almost non-existent. Water was mainly fetched at natural springs (47%) and rivers (38%) (Welthungerhilfe 2008).

The planned or already implemented water points by WHH/Orda in the *Woreda* are addressing the small unities of *goti* (village). It is in this radius, that community members have to find consensus on their plans and actions in terms of improvements of access to water. The numbers of beneficiaries varies between 20 – 70 households, in other words 400 – 700 persons.

Until June 2009, WHH/Orda had in the last two and a half years already implemented a number of water points in the *Woreda* (Map 3). For the field research in the context of my internship with WHH/Orda, I visited several and studied in particular three of them. The villages studied were in Rama *Kebele* and Zobebe *Kebele*, both in the North eastern part of the district, and a village in the Weremenya *Kebele*, in the southern centre of the district. General starting point of the research was Kobo, the district's capital.

Kobo woreda Community-Led WatSan Sub-Projects Implemented by ORDA, WHH, & Eu, in 2008/2009



Map 3: Kobo *Woreda* and the water points established by WHH/Orda until 2009 (Abraham B. 2009)¹⁵

¹⁵ Meaning of abbreviations: Deepwall= Deep motorized pump, EcoSan= Sanitation project, HDW= Shallow hand pump, IRR= Irrigation scheme, SPD= Spring capture, Semi-Urban= Semi-urban water supply system, VIPL= Ventilated public latrine

2.2 Gender in Ethiopia: The Suppression of a political Discourse

As the approaches to water development have done, gender issues too have changed throughout the different periods of Ethiopian politics, although gender issues have not been on the political agenda in African societies for very long, but only coming to light within the last 40 years.

Even though women of many African countries have received a considerable amount of attention, political advancement, freedom and rights in the last decades, Ethiopia is not (yet) among the progressive countries in this respect. Instead, Ethiopia claims a unique history and the pride of never having been colonized by any European power seems to legitimate its seclusion in certain political and social spheres. “*Historical pride is treated as a marker of distinct identity and culture. It is at the same time accepted as untouchable, unquestionable and unalterable; in short, it is not open for discussion or verification*” (Biseswar 2008a: 405).

In the next chapter, we will basically follow Indrawatie Biseswar (2008a) on the currently missing gender discourse in Ethiopia and the efforts of the government to prevent the involvement of Ethiopian women into more radical emancipation movements. The author argues that to use the term ‘*gender*’ in the Ethiopian context is even misplaced, because the government exclusively uses the term ‘*women*’ in order to avoid a direct connection with more radical gender discourses on political emancipation of women taking place in other African countries (Biseswar 2008a: see Note 1)

2.2.1 Women’s Policy and its ineffective Implementation

Ethiopia with its socialistic episode in the past has a distinctive approach towards women and their involvement into public spheres and politics. Although women were addressed as individuals by the Derg ideology, they were basically expected to support the regime’s politics and serve in its labour pool. Women’s association of the time were established as the right-hand of the political elite who “*exploited women for the Derg’s profit without payment*” (Biseswar 2008a: see Note 2). Addressing women was not for their own sake and freedom, but to include them into the state’s structures and keep them under check. Obviously, the so-called ‘women question’ had a different objective than the current general gender discourse. The current government of Ethiopia has not changed its approach towards women, but is repeating the same politics under a more convenient disguise to dazzle the international community. As Biseswar states, the goal of this state-led ‘women’ discourse never the less remains the same: “*to keep the entire nation’s women hostage*” (Biseswar 2008a: 406).

Of course, Ethiopia has a respectable constitution regarding to women's rights and individual freedom. Ethiopia is among the signing nations of a number of international conventions to protect human rights and freedoms and ensure women empowerment. The current Ethiopian government has even established a number of further policies on women's issues and political instruments to their implementation. As in many African counties, a *National Machinery for the Advancement of Women* (NMW), promoted and coordinated by the Economic Commission for Africa of the United Nations, was established as early as 1992 by the transitional EPRDF/TPLF regime. Its implementing body on the national scale was the Women's Affairs Office¹⁶ (WAO), mandated to coordinate and monitor the imposition of the government's plans and policies on the female masses (Biseswar 2008a). On the regional level as well as on *Woreda* and *Kebele* level, Women Affairs Bureaus (WABs) were established. These endeavours by the government were welcomed by the international community, but might have blinded it. The term 'gender' is for instance consequently missing in names of policies and institutions and might already indicate a gap in understandings. Instead, the term 'women' is used in the Ethiopian context. But the WAO is facing a number of obstacles in implementing the policy into practice. According to Biseswar, these obstacles can only be read as spokes being put in the wheel of a governmental policy *by* the government itself in order to *deliberately* make its own policy *ineffective*: The spokes include:

- *Lacking credibility* of the WAO, because its emergence from the central government, what was regarded with suspicion by the civil society as another instrument of the ruling party to control its population
- Placement of WAO on a *weak position* within the whole political structure
- *Hierarchical structuring* within the WAO, placing the WAB at regional and local levels at lower stage who have to take orders from the central office; in short a top-down approach that sees local target groups and offices as passive recipients.
- *Low capacity* of appointed party loyalists at all levels of WAO subdivisions. It seems to be a sufficient qualification to be a woman and a party member in order to be placed as head of a local WAO desk. With it goes the missing critical consciousness, gender awareness and feminist basis of such appointees, tackling women issues as merely pragmatic capacity building issues without applying any ideological background. "*Their* [the employees', note: UM] *accountability was more to the ruling party instead of the women whom they were supposed to represent?*" (Setegn 2003, in Biseswar 2008a: 411).

¹⁶ Since 2005, the *Women Affairs Office* (WAO) was renamed into *Ministry of Women Affairs* (MoWA) due to a restructuring of the political organization (Biseswar 2008a). For reasons of facilitation for the reader it will be continuously called WAO in this thesis.

- Persistent *understaffing* of WAO desks, weakening their effectiveness additionally through low remuneration and undemocratic, authoritarian political culture and repression, leading to qualified people resigning.
- *Low budgeting* of the Ministry, reflecting the low esteem attached to the WAO
- And finally the most crucial problem: The *focus* of the interventions. Biseswar criticises harshly that the focus of all these policies are a merely *welfarist approach* that is only addressing basic needs, relief and service delivery but is preventing any radical empowerment of women to enhance their real freedoms, self-determination and political influence (Biseswar 2008a).

With her investigations in women's policy's implementation - that at first sight might seem to be quite progressive - Biseswar reveals how the Ethiopian state deliberately distorts its own policy and ends up by turning the tables against its own female citizens. All these shortfalls in the structure of the implementing bodies concluded finally, in Biseswar's opinion, into a further "*ghettoization of women's issues*" (ibid: 412).

The content of the *National Policy on Ethiopian Women* (NPEW) itself, formulated by the transitional Ethiopian government in 1993, and to be understood as a guideline of operations for the WAO, includes general aims as venerable as the equality between men and women, participation of women in political, social and economic life, property rights for women, respect of human rights, access to public functions and decision-making processes for women, reduction of rural women's work-load, elimination of prejudices and harmful traditional practices affecting women. Nevertheless of these venerable aims, the policy was for a long time not more than a declaration of intent, only 13 years (!) after NPEW, in 2006, an action plan for its implementation has finally emerged. Biseswar therefore criticises not primarily the content of the policy but its guardians and implementers, namely the WAO. "*They simply lacked the desire, capacity, human power, finance and technical resources to pursue the policy as planned. [...] Probably one of the most serious elements of concern is the level of hypocrisy displayed by the EPRDF/TPLF when it comes to resource and budget allocation [...]. It fails to acknowledge that machineries by themselves do not translate rhetoric into practices*" (ibid: 414).

2.2.2 Decentralization and its Effects on Women Issues

The decentralization politics, established by the transitional EPRDF regime immediately after coming to power in 1991, holds another hindrance of women empowerment. It develops its

specific dynamics when it comes to government programs implementation in the different ethnical regions. As Biseswar states, decentralization politics “*carries the notion of bringing the state closer to people and people closer to the state*” (ibid: 419). In terms of women’s issues, one would expect that in such setting it becomes easier for women and their voices to be heard, to achieve a higher degree of political representation and that this offers more opportunities for women to play an active role in local politics. But as we shall see, the contrary is true for Ethiopian women.

A general problem of decentralization politics, that is not any different for water as for gender issues, turns out to be the delegation of state responsibilities to regional governments in order to implement national policies. “*This means that while the state is unwilling to take action in the central organs of power, it delegates regional states to take up the matter, fully aware that the regional governments are not equipped to do so*” (ibid: 419). By delegating its tasks, the states flinches away from all responsibility for inaction and ineffectiveness, caused by the already discussed shortfalls of regional offices. To *delegate* means in this context, to make sure that the policies are *not* carried out.

In addition, the decentralization politics, especially in Ethiopia, accentuates the regional and ethnical differences since regional borders run along ethnical and linguistic lines. Resulting differences in traditional and cultural practices between regions and people are thus often seen as ethnical boundary markers and are therewith strengthened and revived through ethnical federalism. Such traditions often include practices that are harmful to women’s advancement (such as early marriage, usually between 11 - 15 years of age or female genital mutilation) keeping them from emancipation (Biseswar 2008a). Regional governments are in general more conservative and resistant against change, strengthened as well by religious beliefs, another distinction factor between regions. Religious belief becomes reinforced and thus traditional gender ideology with strong paternalistic and andoarchal attitudes toward women with it. It is there, that the contradiction between national policies such as the NPEW ordered by the central government in Addis Ababa and the local customary laws and traditions becomes a visible hindrance for women’s advancement. On the one hand the central government aims to implement general policy lines universal for the whole country, but at the same time is granting and encouraging its ethnical regions to follow their customary laws and traditions that locally indeed enjoy great significance (Biseswar 2008a).

It terms of women’s rights, the decentralised organization of the country has not helped to empower women to stand for their emancipation, but has rather contributed to the control of individuals, grassroots initiatives and women’s organizations. Biseswar even estimates it as a *dis-empowerment* strategy and concludes that decentralization in Ethiopia “*seems to be the ultimate tool to*

subject the broader mass of women and prevent their advancement. On the one hand it has managed to effectively enforce cultural practices that are counter-productive to women's empowerment and on the other it has prevented women from seeking redress" (ibid: 421). The same tendency, although expressed with clearly less harshness and accusation towards the national government, is summarized by Tegege and Kassahun (2007) when they carefully conclude that "*decentralization has not significantly benefited women*" (Tegege/Kassahun 2007: 50). Achievements in women issues and empowerment were reached by NGOs rather than by regional and local government endeavours. This brings us to a last area to look at in terms of women and gender discourse in Ethiopia.

2.2.3 Civil Society, NGOs and academic Freedom: A Threat to the political Elite

NGOs, local and foreign, and civil society organizations are very active and on the increase in Ethiopia. The relationship the national government has toward these organisations is, however, an ambiguous one. As we already discussed in the chapter on water supply development, the Ethiopian government is strongly dependent on outside donors and is eager to cooperate with foreign NGOs in order to implement water supply infrastructures. On the other hand, the government eyes NGOs and civil society with suspicion and is distinctly wary towards these bodies. It has in the past years kept them on a tight rein, "*perceiving them as a direct threat to its political order*" (Biseswar 2008a: 421). In 1995, the Ethiopian government launched an offensive on civil societies, especially women societies (Biseswar 2008a). Since January 2009, NGOs that get more than 10% of their financial resources from outside the country¹⁷, and that are working in the area of human rights and democratization endeavours are banned and representatives strictly sanctioned when breaching the new law (Tagesspiegel, January 8, 2009). This clearly underlines the repressive and autocratic character of the national government. It hinders its own population and outside players to become active in areas neglected by the state. Consequently, NGOs and civil society organisations, especially those engaged in gender issues, found themselves seriously harassed, intimidated, even silenced or at least put under restrictions and constraints to discourage and hamper their actions (Biseswar 2008a).

Likewise an educated population, conscious of the rights and freedoms withheld from them, is obviously a threat to the political elite. Reform forces and political opposition that challenge the elite's dictatorship are unwelcome. A more radical discourse on gender would imply the questioning of power relations between male and female, even more would include the questioning of the power distribution within the society as a whole. Academic teaching and freedom is therefore

¹⁷ Which are nearly all NGOs!

strongly restricted and radicalism is suppressed. In 2005, the University of Addis Ababa launched its first graduate program on gender studies. But its content and study material is firmly controlled by the state and lecturers with a radical stance are not permitted to teach. Rather the state's aim is *“to cultivate passive women ‘activists’ who will learn to appreciate the government’s inputs in the area and work hand-in-hand with the state”* (Biseswar 2008a: 423). Deviation and critique to this state-imposed ideal is not tolerated.

3 Research Design

By bringing together the Ethiopian background with the theoretical reflections of Bourdieu's approach, our fields of interest for this MA thesis become apparent. Thus, by applying a specific theoretical point of view makes it easier to sharpen our eye on relevant markers in the field and trace our direction of argumentation. Applying a theoretical framework could therefore be described as looking at a social landscape with specific pair of theoretical 'glasses' that reveal its topography, its ups and downs, its connections and relations – hence surpasses pure description but reveals meaning and leads to an interpretation of the landscape.

In the first part of this chapter, we shall clarify the general setting the research is placed in and the research interest and questioning within this setting will be defined. In the second part, three theses are formulated that combine theoretical concepts of Bourdieu with the social reality and societal setting at stake.

3.1 Research Context and contextual Research

3.1.1 Starting Point and Research Question

Our starting point is the critique on the dominant development discourse that we presented earlier in this thesis. We have discussed its weaknesses and are suggesting that with Bourdieu's theory, we would be able to emphasize some crucial points that are left aside in the current development discourse: Namely on power relations and their consequences within societal structures that shape individual social practices. We will now apply this to the specific field of water infrastructure improvements implemented by international NGOs in rural Amhara and analyse its consequences especially in a gender perspective. The 'naturalized' connection between water and women that is generally taken as a starting point of development endeavours is to be questioned.

On the one hand, we will follow the *Water path*: The main focus of our investigation is access to water and its management. Even though water is a *natural* resource, it becomes highly *social* when it comes to its management or distribution. Access to water is strongly influenced by social powers, as water is a necessity for mankind's survival. Therefore, it can be perfectly and discreetly misused by the powerful elite as a political means to suppress the ones and privilege the others, by granting or refusing access to it as Turton (2000) has showed in his study on water distribution in South Africa during the Apartheid regime. Access to water in a situation of natural or social scarcity can therefore be read as a mirror of underlying power structures within a society. With Bourdieu in

mind, access to water therefore presents an appropriate subject to study power relations inherent to societal structures.

Following the *Women path*, we will focus on one specific social group within the Ethiopian society that stand commonly at the centre of the access to water discussion in development projects discourse. By applying ‘radical doubt’ as Bourdieu suggests, we will question if improved access to drinking water in rural Amhara is to be assessed in such purely positive ways for women as it is mostly done in the common development logic. To reach this, we will enlarge our picture and include the broader social structure that shape women’s status and social role within the household and the community. To reach this broader perspective the current development discourse has to be left aside and transgressed in order to address the question of women’s political freedom and emancipation in a broader context. In this context we will especially keep in mind, that suppression and restriction is not only to be reached through physical violence, but that subtle, symbolic violence can as well be at work. Women are not in the focus of this study because of their being female, but because women’s status in society reveals even clearer the political suppression of the whole rural population. Starting from the questioning of their ‘naturalized’ connection to water, we will focus on hidden power mechanisms that are inherent to rural water supply.

To conclude more precisely on our research interest, we are starting from the new water supply infrastructure that has recently been or is about to be built in Kobo *Woreda* in Amhara. The installed pumps and pipes bring the resource so urgently needed by everyone, easily and safely to households and communities. Undoubtedly, this creates substantial time and energy reduction for women and children responsible for domestic water use. It reduces as well a number of other dangers such as health risks and risks of accidents. No one will disagree that these are positive changes. But we will go beyond this statement in this thesis by assessing the broader societal context and from there on interpret these ‘improvements’. We will especially keep our eyes on hidden power mechanisms that work through social practices, which are accepted even by the suppressed and strengthened by their contributions. By analysing social practices and what has shaped them in the past we shall critically question, if improvements of drinking water supply has a purely positive effect on women’s status especially and their role within the rural communities and families.

The question of this research is therefore, why, how and in what direction is the social role of women changing through the technological improvement of access to drinking water on a household and community level? How is women’s status strengthened or weakened and why? What effect do such interventions have on women’s lives, their self-determination and their basic political rights and freedom?

3.1.2 General Course of Action

These general research questions were addressed during an empirical field research in Ethiopia within the context of an internship with the German NGO *Deutsche Welthungerhilfe/German Agro Action* and took place from July to September 2009 in rural Amhara.

During these three months general information about the country, its situation and its people was collected in order to get a general overview and impression on the country at the Horn of Africa. In a more specific enquiry, three villages in the project area of WHH/GAA in Kobo *Woreda* were chosen to conduct a more detailed study on the local circumstances on the spot. Villages with different accesses to water were selected in order to get information about the different water situations.

The main methods of empirical data collection were general *Observation* and *Field Notes* during the whole stay in whatever situation and in whatever location and *Participative Observation* during the stay in these rural villages while living for a while as close as possible to families and households. I was participating in daily activities and questioning people on different subjects relevant to the research but equally for broader overview information. Talks with women were the main interest, but discussions were held as well with officials, members of Water & Sanitation committees (WatSanCo) or equally any person willing to engage into discussion. Different kinds of interview techniques have been applied and tested. The data gathered is uniquely of qualitative nature, as time and resources were too short for additional quantitative inquiries.

3.2 Three Theses

The following three theses are not hypotheses in the sense that they have been formulated *before* reaching the field, but only in the hindsight, after coming back from field research. Thus, they were formulated out of the empirical experience and with the political and historical background knowledge in mind. Having emerged from observations made on the spot and including the information gathered they are to be understood as suggestions as to how to interpret the observed social reality in the light of Bourdieu's theory and will trace the lines of our further arguments.

- Thesis 1 centres on local, individual and household *practices* and is connected to the *Habitus* concept.
- Thesis 2 addresses social *relations* within communities and between local and regional stakeholders and is connected to the concept of *Fields*.
- Thesis 3 concerns the broader political and societal *structures* and is connected to the concept of *Symbolic Violence*.

3.2.1 Thesis 1: Gendered *Habitus* as an unsuitable foundation of social change

The first thesis is centred on social practices of individuals and groups. The general question here is what directs individual social practice? What is guiding his/her actions, decisions, opinions and ideas? We will adopt the concept of the *Habitus* to the analysis of individual practice in regard to gendered practices on household and family level. To recall once more Bourdieu, *Habitus* is defined as „System dauerhafter und übertragbarer Dispositionen, als strukturierte Strukturen, die wie geschaffen sind, als strukturierende Strukturen zu fungieren, d.h. als Erzeugungs- und Ordnungsgrundlagen für Praktiken und Vorstellungen“ (Bourdieu 1987: 98). In other words, these permanent dispositions are incorporated collective structures that structure further social practices. *Habitus* is therefore both: The result of structures and a structuring principle at the same time, an *opus operatum* and a *modus operandi* (Bourdieu 1987: 98). He never the less put his focus on the *modus operandi* (Steiner 2001: 24) as the structuring principle, the dynamics that generate structures. *Habitus* thus holds a whole range of dimensions, past and present, individual and collective, becoming most tangible in social practices of individuals or groups.

Our first thesis claims, that gender-specific *Habitus* is strengthened and reproduced through water projects that focus on women as they ‘naturalize’ the connection between water and women and thus restricts women to their habitual action radius. Even though it is obvious, that the strongly gendered labour division of the rural Ethiopian population shapes profoundly social practices within the rural communities and families and attributes to each sex its spheres of activities, duties and responsibilities, this gender-specific *Habitus* is not useful as a starting point to induce real and profound social change. It is rather a contradiction in itself to base development endeavours that claim gender awareness and aim to improve women’s lives on a restricting gendered *Habitus*. More freedom and self-determination of women can not be based on gendered stereotypes, but long lasting change and improvement of living standards need to be based on more room for manoeuvre for women through a changing *Habitus* for women *and* men. Thus, it is not only female *Habitus* that needs to be questioned but at the same time male *Habitus* too. Unquestioned *Habitus* of both, women *and* men, will only lead to superficial change but are not in a position to have an effect beyond.

3.2.2 Thesis 2: Modern Water Supply Infrastructure create new *Social Fields*

The second thesis is centred on dynamics within communities and regional organization around water supply. The question here is how relations within communities change when modern water supply infrastructure comes in? What are the strategies of different social players when entering

into debate about managing new infrastructure? The theoretical concept of *Fields* seems to fit to such questions. In the sense of Bourdieu, *Social Fields* can be defined as relatively autonomous *Fields* of power where different actors negotiate with each other about a common objective at stake. Powerful and powerless actors stand in a conflicting position to on another. We will, therefore, define the rural water supply as such a *Field*. According to Bourdieu, social relationships are power relationships. This becomes apparent within *Fields*, where agents with different interests stand in opposition with one another. The emphasis of this second thesis is on a *relational* analysis of the *Field* of rural water supply.

For the second thesis we claim that through the institutionalization of new water supply infrastructure, new *Social Fields* in the sense of Bourdieu's concept are created - thus, power relations become reinforced in and between rural communities. These *Fields* are marked by unchanged (gendered) *Habitus* and involve actors with different power positions. They engage into struggle for more influence through the exchange and conversion of different forms of capital. The winners of such institutionalisation of access to water are men as they take a more powerful position within local management positions regarding access to water. Secondly, it is NGO players as they bring technical and financial capabilities. And thirdly, it is the Ethiopian state that reinforces its political weight by granting access to water but still keeps its population in paternalistic check. In terms of relational dynamics, women lose influence over water as they are seen as passive objects and beneficiaries of modern water infrastructure.

3.2.3 Thesis 3 : *Symbolic Violence* in basic Need Provision

The third thesis is centred on political framework and societal structures. The questions asked here are: What is the government's relation and intention vis-à-vis its population, mainly vis-à-vis its rural population in regard to access to water? How is access to water used as a political mean to empower or to dis-empower the rural population? Societal structures contain a form of violence that is not physical but that is inherent to organisation, social institutions or policies and are therefore hidden and not obvious. *Symbolic Violence* in Bourdieu's framework is even unconscious to both, the suppressor and to the suppressed which assures its functioning. Inequality and power relations are inherent to economic and political framework conditions and as such legitimized by institutional and political structures.

We are basically inspired by the argumentation of Biseswar (2008a) on the missing gender discourse in Ethiopia as previously discussed and shall enlarge this subtle power imposition and control of

the government on the rural population as a whole. We claim in this thesis, that spasmodic access to water is used as a mean of detaining the rural population's development and self-competence by only granting the coverage of the basic needs but not allowing any further self-initiative or political claims. By holding back the rural population through limited access to production means and development, the political elite assures its uncontested power position. By granting access to water and arguing that with these infrastructures women's situation is improved, the latter are tied to their gendered *Habitus* and subtly held from claiming any further rights and freedoms. NGO endeavours in this area are allowed only until basic needs are fulfilled but blocked if they aim to go any further. The situation is perceived by the rural population as positive, because their access to water has improved. Claims for more than just satisfaction of basic needs are not pronounced due to lack of political awareness of a population used to being ruled by elites since centuries. In this sense, water distribution in the rural areas becomes a mirror of societal power relations and reveals hidden *Symbolic Violence* imposed on rural population as a whole and on the female population in particular.

3.3 About Interconnectedness: Relations at Stake

Before we apply these theses on the Ethiopian social reality, we have to insist on one important point in advance. These theses are to be understood uniquely as a *starting point* for the analysis of our empirical data and their interpretation. If we consequently follow the logic of Bourdieu's *Relational Agency Theory*, we have to emphasise that the above formulated theses in connection with the three theoretical concepts are a pure operationalisation that shall help us to structure our argumentation, but will not end there. Rather these starting points will help us to argue stepwise in order to make our arguments plausible. The logic of Bourdieu's approach is to argue for an interconnectedness of the different concepts and the simultaneity of their functioning. However, we can not explain all at the same time and therefore chose to structure our interpretation according to these theses.

The quintessence of Bourdieu's logic is to show that the concepts are interlinked and interdependent – they are *related*. The functioning of the *Symbolic Violence* can not be understood without including the *Habitus* concept. Nor can the *Habitus* be explained without the relational dynamics within a *Field*. Bourdieu himself admits that the concepts work only in a kind of hermeneutic circle: „Die Beziehung zwischen *Habitus* und *Feld* ist eine Beziehung der Bedingtheit: Das *Feld* strukturiert den *Habitus*, der das Produkt der Verinnerlichung, der Inkorporation der immanenten Notwendigkeit dieses Feldes ist“ (Bourdieu 1996: 102). Hence, we should in fact present everything simultaneously what is not realistic and therefore will deduce stepwise, starting from a thesis that will first focus on

households and in further argumentation be enlarged to concluding statements that imply as well the broader societal context.

Bourdieu's approach serves in its very inception to overcome the dichotomy between individual and society and Bourdieu's aim is to show that they can not be dealt with separately from each other. There is no separation, there is only interconnectedness – or in Bourdieu's term *relation*. The subject carries collectivity; objectivity is in turn generated by subjectivity. In this sense the layers of social reality can't be split into different levels. Their interconnection, „[ihre] *Beziehung der Bedingtheit*“ (Bourdieu 1996: 102) stands at the centre of our attention. Bourdieu emphasises: „*Habitus, Feld und Kapital lassen sich durchaus definieren, aber eben nur innerhalb des theoretischen Systems, das sie bilden, und niemals für sich allein*“ (ibid: 125). [Auch in anderen Bereichen] „*kennt die Wissenschaft nur Systeme von Gesetzen. Und was für die Begriffe gilt, gilt auch für die Relationen, die einen Sinn nur innerhalb von Systemen von Relationen bekommen*“ (ibid: 125).

If we penetrate further into this logic, we realize that only a theoretical model that itself is defined through the interconnectivity of its different concepts can explain the reciprocative interconnectivity of different aspects of a societal reality. The model itself has to be based on the interconnection of its theoretical concepts. We may even dare to claim, that the concepts of Bourdieu aim to clarify one and the same social mechanisms but from different perspectives.

4 Methodology

Having presented all relevant contextual background, be it theoretical, discursive, historical or political in the first part of this thesis, we will now go on and become more pragmatic. In the next chapter of this MA thesis we turn our attention toward the empirical research carried out in Ethiopia from July to September 2009. First, we introduce some fundamental considerations in studying social realities. Secondly, the local research setting will be presented, including the sites where qualitative research has been taking place. The third part discusses the methodological proceedings and choices made during field research and the dealing with empirical material for analysis.

4.1 Studying social Realities: Some general Considerations

Before starting with reflections on empirical field research, we have to consider some important specifics of social research. Studying social realities is different from studying any other scientific object because the researcher is herself part of the social world she aims to understand. This fact holds a double challenge that needs to be considered before starting with empirical analysis. We follow once more Pierre Bourdieu in his suggestions on *double objectification* in the following chapter.

4.1.1 Objectification: The Construction of a scientific Object

The first challenge of social research that needs to be carefully considered is the fact that the object the researcher aims to study is the social world. This social world is part of the world the researcher is living in and is part of. This creates a first challenge since the researcher is thus not free from everyday understandings and perceptions of this world that result from her socialization within its midst. As with every other social being, she too has developed a common perspective or an “*intuitive Spontansoziologie*” as Bourdieu calls it (Jurt 2008: 28) that explains things from insider logic with narrowing perspective. Hence, familiarity with the social world, and the imminent knowledge that goes with this, can hold a serious hindrance of understanding (Jurt 2008). In order to look at this same social world from a scientific perspective, Bourdieu claims that the social world has to be constructed as a scientific object. This means that the researcher needs to break with her everyday understanding and perception in order to look at the social world, no more with her own socialized optic, but from a distance that opens up new perspectives and understandings. Bourdieu requests from the social researcher a rupture from everyday understanding by applying “*radical doubt*” (Bourdieu 1996: 269 ff) to so called ‘facts’. This is not easily achieved: “*Wie kann der Soziologe den*

radikalen Zweifel praktisch umsetzen, der nötig ist, um all jene Vorannahmen ausser Kraft zu setzen, die der Tatsache inhärent sind, dass er ein soziales Wesen ist, also sozialisiert und geneigt, sich in dieser sozialen Welt, deren Strukturen er verinnerlicht hat, wie ein Fisch im Wasser zu fühlen?“ (Bourdieu 1996: 270). Therefore, the beginning should be a state of steady alarm towards social ‘facts’, or as Bourdieu puts it elsewhere: *Epistemological vigilance* toward the social history and constructedness of ‘facts’. Notions of everyday language have to be replaced by scientific terms in order to mark an epistemological change, unreflected presumptions have to be *dis*-covered and the outward appearance of the phenomenon at stake has to be questioned (Jurt 2008: 30). This break with common sense is the first step in this process of *objectification*, as Bourdieu calls it (Bourdieu 1987) - a rupture with common sense, common knowledge, common language and notions implies a new standpoint in regard to the object of study. Bourdieu requests a break with realism, with what seems natural and evident. This in turn necessitates this *construction* of a new scientific object - that is the social world. By introducing a distance between the observer and the object, the social world becomes an object of scientific dimension and reflects the complexity of a seemingly simple social reality (Moebius/Peter 2009: 10 ff).

4.1.2 Objectification objectified: The Quest for Self-Reflection

But Bourdieu doesn’t leave it with this first rupture with the social world, but requests a second one: The objectification of the *objectifying subject*. While the first objectification focuses on the construction of the social world as a scientific object, the second step of objectification focuses on the researcher *herself* (Moebius/Peter 2009). The challenge in the researcher’s position lies in the fact that she herself is part of the social world she aims to study. Her notions, her language, her perspective are the result of her involvement in this world and in the sense of *Habitus*, this world’s structures that have become her mind’s structure. “Überall ist Vorkonstruiertes. Es stürzt, wie auf alle Leute, auch auf den Soziologen geradezu ein. Er soll ein Objekt erkennen – die soziale Welt - , dessen Produkt er ist, so dass die Probleme, die er zu ihm formuliert, und die Begriffe (...) – alle Aussicht haben, ein Produkt eben dieses Objekts zu sein“ (Bourdieu 1996: 269f). The social researcher can only escape her own blindness of *Habitus* through the objectification of herself.

This is to be understood as a continuous self- examination of the involvement of the researcher into the social world and into scientific activities. Bourdieu’s quest concerns on one side the self-reflection of the observer’s own social, regional or geopolitical background, her affiliation to class and gender and the consequences this might have on her relation to a given study object. On the other hand, he claims a rupture with the scholastic view, a view that sees science as entirely objective and impartial, while excluding the researcher’s own involvement. But as Bourdieu and

other philosophers of science have pointed out that knowledge (in the sense of *Erkenntnis*) is not to be completely disconnected from the knowing subject, but knowledge is equally historically embedded (Jurt 2008). Therefore, the objectifying subject has to apply the same critical *epistemological vigilance* to her own history, her own shaping conditions and various influences on being and working, as it does to social settings outside herself. The practice and application of a *Habitus* of steady reflexive self-questioning in scientific works is therefore needed to execute this process of *double objectification* (Hark 2009: 203f). Only then will the researcher be able to analyse her own structures and tendencies with the same theoretical abstraction as she does towards their determinants (Bourdieu, in: Moebius/Peter 2009: 14) and escape from being caught in her own blind spots.

This double objectification process, however, doesn't result in the complete exclusion of all subjectivity from scientific research. To be able to understand the social logic of a given setting, the subjectivity of the *studied subject* has to be taken into account. To include the subjectivity of a social reality necessitates the researcher to go and meet this social reality. Therefore, Bourdieu's approach is a clear plea for empirical research. As we know from previous chapters, social practices are a key of studying the underlying logic that directs individuals in their actions. However, social practices can only be captured and observed in direct contact to the social field. Let's bear in mind, „[dass] *die Subjekte auf der Ebene des Bewusstseins nicht über die ganze Bedeutung ihres Verhaltens [verfügen]. Diese umfasst mehr Sinn, als sie wissen.*“ (Jurt 2008: 41). To reveal the full sense of the subject's social practice, the researcher needs to objectify herself and the social setting under study to be able to discover any meaningful insight that lays beyond common sense.

To sum up the general claim of Bourdieu, we may conclude that his main endeavours lies in putting aside hindering factors in order to maximise understanding of the social world. This necessitates a double objectification from the researcher's subjectivity and leads to a sharp eyed vision of the social logic underneath social practices. In this sense, we may conclude on a somewhat slangy summarizing phrase: The researcher, as an unreflected insider of her own social reality, first has to become a reflected outsider of her own social world in order to be able to become a reflected insider of the social world of an unreflected studied subject – all this in order to better understand the social reality of which we are all part.

4.1.3 Partial Truths: For Polyphony of ethnographic Voices

After having discussed the epistemological background of Bourdieu's conceptualization of studying social settings at some length, we would never the less like to add some relativity to the discussion

above. Even though we fully support Bourdieu's argumentation about the need to "concentrate on the viewpoint itself, the relationship to the object that it asserts and all that follow from this" (Bourdieu 2006: 170), or in other words, to reflect about one's standpoint first of all - in reality of social research it might not be possible for even the most serious researcher¹⁸ - to fully objectify the own viewpoint. Even Bourdieu admits, that such a self- objectification can not be done once and for ever, but has to be constantly further developed and struggled for, which means that it may not be reached in its final end. Keeping these limits and human shortcomings in mind, might too, be of value to the objectification of one's subjectivity as a researcher.

James Clifford's argumentation (1993) helps us not to overestimate the abilities of objectification of human beings and reminds us that ethnographic writing remains a *reproduction* of the reality and is not *the* reality itself. Social research still remains immanent to the social world in which it was taking place and in which the writer's physical existence is rooted. As Bourdieu, Clifford lays his focus on the conditions of reproduction – on the *con*-textuality - to do justice to the fragmentarity of ethnographic reality. Bourdieu's epistemology therefore could be seen as portrayal of an ideal which is impossible to reach entirely in human existence. To at least partially approach a social truth and overcome the gap between an ideal and its realization, Clifford suggests to resign from the idea of a *unison* representation and interpretation of social reality, but to allow *polyphonic* voices to express themselves, including the production of discordant voices and contradictions. As Clifford states, there is no complete picture. The diversity of voices, the different and unmatching they are, might best reflect a social reality that always remains a partial truth. "*Es gibt kein vollständiges Bild, mit dem man 'Lücken stopfen' könnte, da das Wahrnehmen und Auffüllen von Lücken zu einem Bewusstsein für andere Lücken führt*" (Clifford 1993: 125).

¹⁸ That hopefully includes ourselves!

4.2 Research Setting

The empirical research took place in the context of an internship with the German NGO *Welthungerhilfe/GAA*. *Welthungerhilfe* is one of the largest and most well-known NGOs in Germany that is working in the country for about 40 years to achieve “*improved economic and social development of vulnerable households and increased capacities of communities and local development partners to tackle root causes of food insecurity and poverty*” (Welthungerhilfe 2007). The various projects in the country are implemented through local partner NGOs and concern different aspects of rural living. One emphasis of WHH/GAA is on safe drinking water and sanitation facilities for the mostly rural population of Ethiopia. The empirical data gathered during the field work in the NGO’s project areas were therefore serving to answer some particular questions the organization was asking me to look at closely, but at the same time, are now serving as empirical data for this MA thesis.

4.2.1 Shaping Conditions of Research in Ethiopia

During the first weeks of my stay in Ethiopia, different WASH projects in country were visited. The project in Kobo *Woreda* was mainly chosen for an in depth inquiry due to the fact that it had already been running for nearly two years and had gained some foothold. Changes through established water schemes were therefore easier to observe and social practices around new water points were hoped to have settled a bit.

On the first field trip to the research area, I spent a few days in Kobo, the district’s capital, and was introduced to the local partner organisation Orda which is responsible for implementation of the project. Its staff showed me around various locations where in the last two years drinking water schemes have been established. The discussions held with the local population on these occasions granted some basic knowledge, allowed first hand experience in data collection and served as pre-test interviews. After final preparations in the capital Addis Ababa, I moved for six weeks to the research area and started preparing my village stays. The time table as finally carried out can be found in Annex 2.

Except for the educated youngsters in the district’s capital Kobo, most of the rural population of Amhara doesn’t speak English but uniquely Amharic, the local language of the region. Due to this and my research’s focus on women, I was accompanied during the village stays by a young woman who helped me with translations and turned out to be a real gem. She was familiar with the rural population of Amhara even though she had left her place of origin many years ago to find work elsewhere after having lost her family during the years of civil war. Having worked for westerners in Bahrain (Gulf State) she had experienced the western world and was therefore able to build a cultural bridge. With her sunny nature and astonishing capacity to quickly create an atmosphere of

mutual trust she opened wide the doors of the local population for me as a foreign visitor. The fact of relying on a local translator for the interview situations is, however, an important shaping factor of the inquiry and has to be considered when dealing with the data. The fact of not having direct access to the people, but depending on translations and explanations revealed to have a double effect: On the one hand, information is a translation and therefore inevitably a summary or an interpretation of the information received from the interviewee. On the other hand, it allowed me to be part of the discussion but at the same time outside, not having to lead the talks but keep an eye open on the surrounding events - an important characteristic for field researchers, as we shall see further on.

4.2.2 Pre-Test Interviews and Site Selection of three Villages

During my first field trip to the area, I had visited several project sites and did a number of pre-test interviews. These visits were my first direct contact with the local population of rural Amhara. As I didn't have a too detailed idea of the community situation the people were living in, I went without preparing a formal questionnaire but just roughly thought of areas I wished to address. My first goal was not to elaborate on the details, but to sense the situation and to understand the basic and purely organizational framework of the water schemes. For further details and reflections on pre-test interviews, I refer to the report written on applied methodologies during field research "*Social Geodata: From field to analysis*" (Meyer 2009). Transcribed pre-test interviews¹⁹ can be found in Annex 3.

As a result of the transcription of the pre-test interviews two separate *question sets* for the different focus groups emerged, one for discussions with women, the other one for discussions with members of the WatSanCo (Annexes 4 a + b). For the moment, they only served as a provisional chart that had to be further developed and adopted for the interviews to follow.

In the context of the internship with WHH/GAA, three villages in three different *Kebeles* within the project area of Orda (Kobo *Woreda*) were selected in order to get an insight into different contexts of local drinking water situations. The site selection met the following criteria to assure the study of different villages in terms of: *context, location, water access* and *duration of new water infrastructure*. Due to lack of time resources on the side of the project team in Kobo, the criteria of *accessibility by public transport* and prior *introduction* by the project staff had to be considered as well. All of the study sites

¹⁹ The transcription of the pre-test interviews is not a word-by-word transcription of the talks as no recording took place, but a transcription of hand written notes.

were accessible by public transport and had been visited during my first stay in the *Woreda*. All villages have either established a new water point or are about to get one in the near future.

The study sites were three *Goti*²⁰ in three different *Kebele*.

- Mengello Nacha, Weremenya *Kebele* (MN)
- Mariam Sifir, Zobebe *Kebele* (MS)
- Inkoyber, Rama *Kebele* (IR)

Even though their geographical situation defers from each other²¹, the three villages have some traits in common. Their inhabitants live essentially from cattle rearing and agriculture. According to a family's wealth, one or two cows, sometimes a camel and some goats or sheep constitute the financial reserves of the household. They are kept in constant movement during the day by a male herder, most often a son of the family that wanders them around to put them out to pasture, water them, plug farms during planting season and take them back to the family's compound in the evening. Cattle are only sold out in extraordinary case and need of financial liquidity - if a new house (*gojo bet*) is built and a new household is founded, for instance. The daily costs in turn, are covered by the earnings of agriculture. *Teff*, maize (*pocollo*) and sorghum (*mashilla*) are the basic agricultural products of the region and are used for domestic consumption. Complementing products such as red chilli pepper, ginger, garlic, beans, lentils, *gesho* (a shrub whose leaves are used for the production of local beer (*dalla*) on religious holidays and celebrations) and others are additionally important products and complete the household's usual needs. Most often, households do not produce all of these products themselves, but exchange them on the weekly market. Women are thus sellers and buyers on the same day: They engage in selling some of their *teff* in the morning to get the necessary money enabling them to buy what is needed for their household in the afternoon. Money is most often not kept over time, but only serves as a means to facilitate market exchanges.

Even though rural Amhara is ethnically relatively homogeneous, it exists never the less a social stratification within the villages. Differences in wealth and power influence are based on access to production means such as land and oxen (Ege/Yegremew 2002). Land is state property and can not be sold, but can be used as production unit. Families live in small units of two generations (parents and children), elderly people most often stay in their own house, even though in proximity of the younger generation. A relatively high number of female headed households were observed in the

²⁰ *Goti* is the unofficial subdivision of *kebele* (municipality). A *kebele*, the smallest official administrative entity, consists of several *goti*. A *goti* often consist of two or more patrilocally living extended families, called *gibbi*. It is the *gibbi* that primarily serves as social identification and not the purely bureaucratic entity of the *kebele*. For a tabular view of local terms of political and social organisation, see Annex 5.

²¹ For better spatial imagination, there is a collection of Google Earth maps of the study sites in the Annex 6. The local position of their *Kebele* within the *Woreda* can be found on Map 3, page 30 of this thesis.

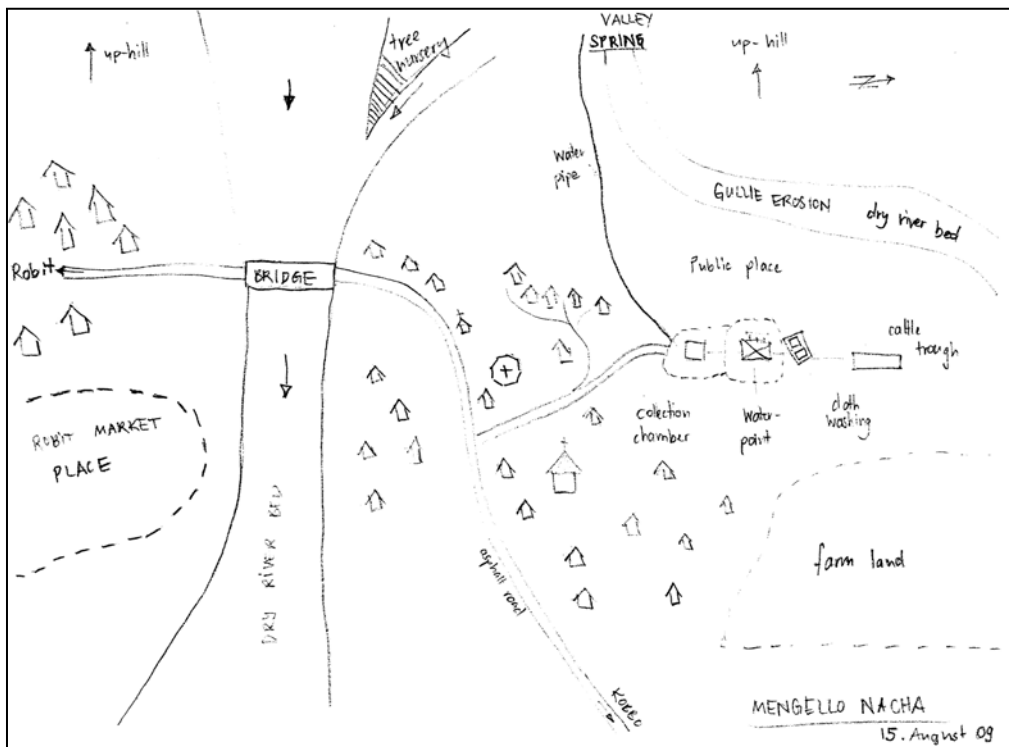
area be it due to childlessness, divorce or widowhood. Landlessness of a woman was also reported to be a reason for women staying single. Women are commonly not holder of land themselves, but their father hands over a plot of land to their future husband in case of marriage. Hence, landless female headed households are commonly at the bottom of the social stratification.

A last common trait of the tree villages is the immigration pattern. While Kobo *Woreda* borders Afar region to the East and hence favours reaching Djibouti and the Red Sea coast easily, many households in the area are touched by immigration of family members. The Arab countries and Gulf States attract masses of people, male and female, farmers and persons with secondary school education equally, youngsters mostly, but as well older people, to cross the Red Sea illegally, hoping to find a job and send some money home to their family especially in years of drought in Amhara. The danger of drowning in the Red Sea or to be cough and sent back with nothing is high, but does not keep the immigrants back. Their motivation to leave seems to be both, economic forcing (sometimes pushing) and attraction of a better life. What role remittances from these family members play in the villages could not be found out during field research.

4.2.2.1 Study Site 1: Mengello Nacha, Weremenya *Kebele*

Mengello Nacha is a small *goti* at the foot of the highland mountains on the south-western edge of the fertile Raya Valley (1500 meter a.s.l.) that forms the back bone of Kobo *Woreda*. The village is part of the Weremenya *Kebele*, a municipality situated along the only asphalt road running North-South across the district. Mengello Nacha is therefore easily accessible by public transport and in proximity to Robit, a small town offering basic survival kits for the untrained foreign visitor and a weekly market. The *goti* is placed on the slopes of the near mountains and its farming land is arranged on small terraces. Traditional round huts with clay walls and grass roofing are common, but some families have as well more spacious square houses with metal roofing. They are dispersed in Eucalyptus groves, among them is an Orthodox church and a schooling centre for Orthodox priests is about to be built. The population of Mengello Nacha had at the time of study a brand new drinking water scheme (*Spring Capture*), established in June 2009, hence some two months old. Before that time, women and girls were climbing a rocky foot path to fetch water at a natural spring some 500m above their village. In their case it was not primarily the distance but rather the danger of sliding with a full jerry can of 25 litres on their backs that caused hardship to women and girls and had seriously harmed some of them. Neighbouring villagers are still fetching their drinking water in a nearby river bed, causing health problems and dries out at times. Tap water can be bought in Robit for those having the financial means - most of the households in the area do not.

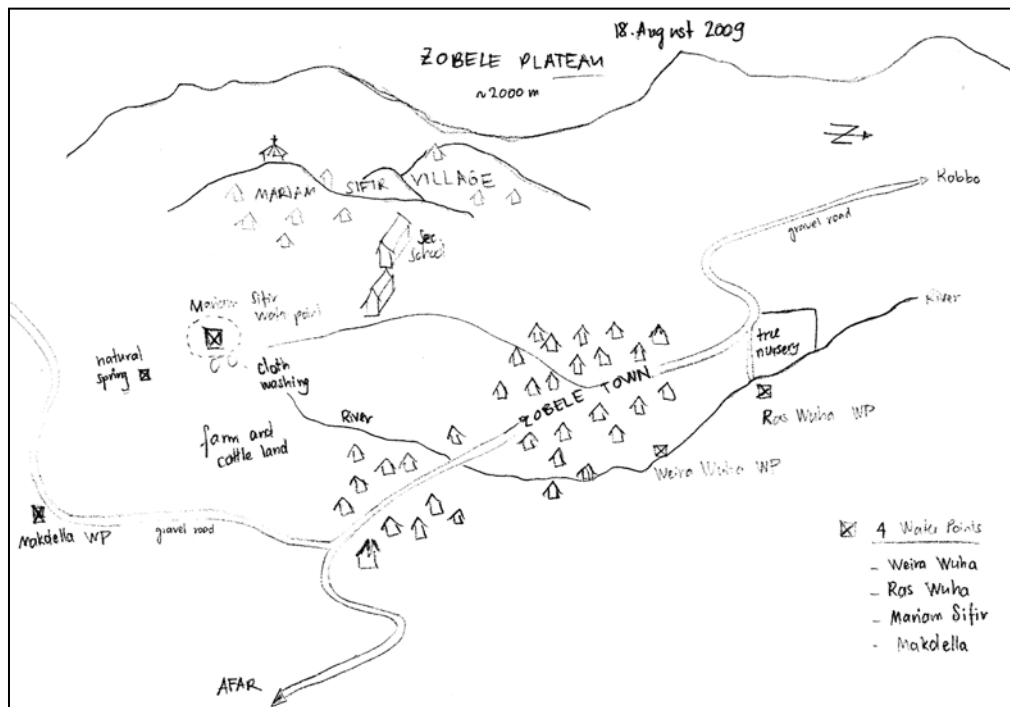
This competitive situation is expected by the beneficiaries of the Mengello Nacha water scheme to create problems in the near future.



Graph 1: Sketch of Mengello Nacha, Weremenya Kebele (Meyer 2009)

4.2.2.2 Study Site 2: Mariam Sifir, Zobebe Kebele

Mariam Sifir is situated on top of a range called Zobebe Mountain, separating Amhara Region from Afar Region in the extreme North-East of the *Woreda*. It lies at about 2000 meter a.s.l., within a small plateau surrounded by hills. On the same plateau are situated a number of other villages, among which Zobebe town. This small town lies on the important gravelled transit road connecting Amhara and Afar Region. The area is quite densely populated and drinking water supply is scarce. Mariam Sifir is a bit remote, but within walking distance from Zobebe town. The houses of the two extended families (*gibbi*) that mainly constitute the *goti* are situated around three small hills. As always the case in Amharic villages, Mariam Sifir has an Orthodox church, a hexagonal building with coloured façade and metal roofing, placed on top of one of these small hills and surrounded by a forest ring. The inhabitants have to come down from there to the humid plain for farming, herder their cattle and fetching their water.



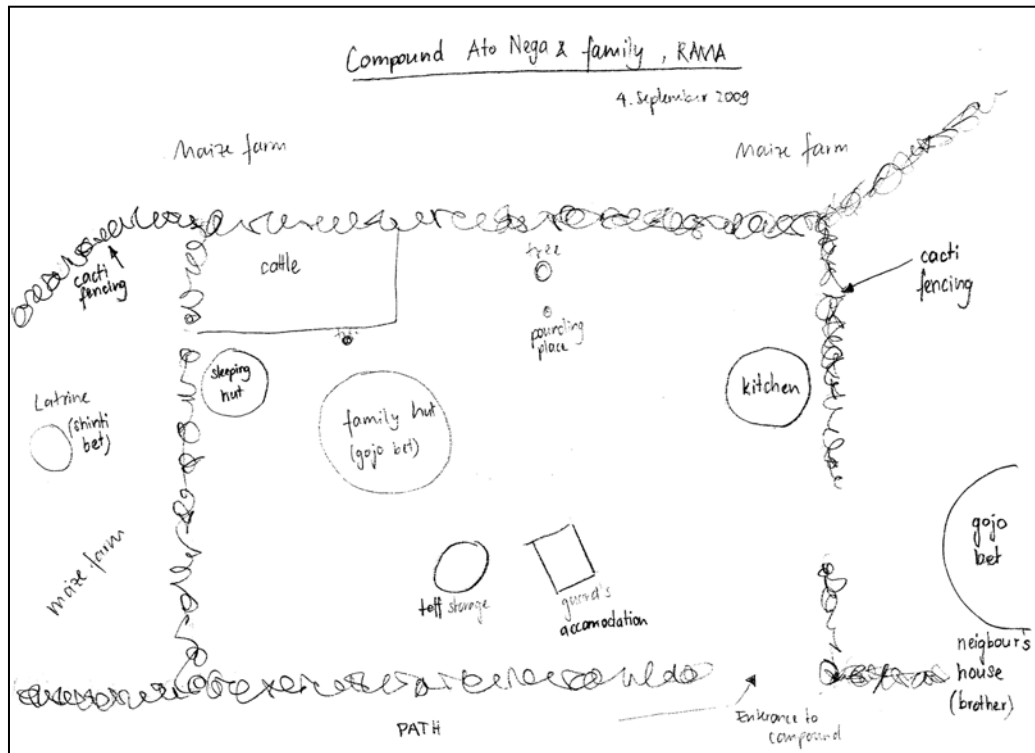
Graph 2: Sketch of Zobebe Plateau, including Mariam Sifir and neighbouring locations, Zobebe Kebele (Meyer 2009)

WHH/Orda has established three *Shallow Hand Pumps* (some 7-10 m deep) on the plateau, one of them at Mariam Sifir, assuring for the last two years safe drinking water to a number of households, while others are still fetching their water at neighbouring, unprotected natural springs. This creates a number of conflicts between the inhabitants of the Zobebe plateau. The approximately 70 households of Mariam Sifir are not willing to share their water with their neighbours, because they claim participation in the whole process of planning the scheme and are contributing financially to its functioning. The *Kebele* administration (political authority of the municipality) in Zobebe town has applied for further water schemes at the Orda office in Koba to solve these tensions.

4.2.2.3 Study Site 3: Inkoyber, Rama Kebele

Inkoyber constitutes of a number of dispersed round huts down-hill on the same Zobebe Mountain, a little further north from the previous location and part of the neighbouring Rama Kebele. The inhabitants of the area were previously living on the top of Zobebe Mountain too, but settled down-hill some twelve years ago due to scarce land resources and insufficient harvest in the mountainous area, and were benefiting from a land redistribution program of the government at the time. Inkoyber is a dry place, visible by enormous cacti dominating the area and serving as separation of compounds and terraced farms. The only metal roofed building of Inkoyber is the public mill house

(at the same time the only house with electricity) and the Orthodox church. All other houses are traditional round huts (*gojo bet*) with grass roofing and clay walls. A specificity of the Inkoyber round huts are the paintings of the inside and the outside façade with naturally coloured plaster found in the area.



Graph 3: Sketch of a family compound in Inkoyber, Rama Kebele (Meyer 2009)

Since the inhabitants of Inkoyber have settled down-hill, they have had to beg their neighbours for the spring water at the slopes of Zobebe Mountain that is situated on the neighbouring *Kebele's* ground (Zobebe *Kebele*). Obviously, this creates conflicts especially during the dry season, when alternative water resources in the plain of Raya Valley dry out. The villagers did, at the time of study, not have any alternative access to water, and women and youths were climbing the slopes of Zobebe Mountain - a rocky mountainous trek of about 1½ hours one way - very early in the morning with donkeys and camels in order to get water for daily use. Serious accidents to humans and animals due to sliding and rock falls were reported. But there are plans for a water scheme in the area, which will be one of the more costly for WHH/GAA. The construction has started for a motorized *Deep Well Pump* some 30 m deep and 7-8 km away, which should bring water via a pipeline to the needy population of Inkoyber. Not everyone in the *goti* is convinced yet that this will work and a lot of persuasiveness by the WatSanCo is still required. So far, the population of Inkoyber has participated

in Hygiene and Sanitation programs and an impressive number of housewives proudly present a flawless and tidy household and family latrine to the interested foreign visitor.

In every of these three villages, we (my translator, her teenage son and myself) spent roughly one week, hosted generously by local families that offered us unhesitatingly a place to sleep in their modest households. Our hosts were either members of the WatSanCo (MN and IR) or a member of the *Kebele* Administration (Zobebe Town) and served equally as key contacts in our investigations. The different methodological steps and qualitative methods applied during these stays will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.3 Field Research: A qualitative Approach

Field research is a typical form of qualitative research in social science that allows the study object to remain in its natural setting and not to be distorted by inquiry instruments. Hence, the researcher has to go into the field²² in order to meet the social setting she wants to study. The aim of field research is, to study people's life mostly unchanged and without simplifying a complex situation for an easier understanding to an outsider (Fischer 1998: 74). The most important advantage of field research is the *openness* towards unknown and unexpected situations. The researcher normally does not go with a hypothesis into the field, but remains open about her research's questions. This approach poses, at the same time, a major challenge to the researcher because social reality is complex, sometimes seemingly chaotic. A specific social phenomenon can not be separated from its context to make it easier understandable, but the complexity of the social situation has to be taken into account. This is the reason why methods applied in field research have to be rather simple, unstructured and open (Fischer 1998). Methods applied in field research are therefore mainly *observations* and *consultations*. They will be discussed in the following chapter after having considered the specifics in finding access in the field.

4.3.1 Access to the Field

More than in quantitative research, access to the field, to people and groups, plays a crucial role for qualitative research. It requires a more intensive and deeper involvement of the interviewed as well as the interviewing person to commit into discussion and the opening up of one's personal

²² The term 'field' is in this context not to be mistaken as the *Field* of Bourdieu's concept. In the context of field research it contains the entirety of social reality that the social researcher is exposed to in order to study the subject. In this thesis the general term 'field' is written without capital letter, while Bourdieu's *Field* is written with an initial capital letter and in italic.

situation - for both sides as we will see further on. This should not to be taken for granted and depends heavily on personal trust. Such contact to the field normally follows five continuous steps as Mayring (1996) states: *Approaching, orientation, initiation, assimilation* and *closing*. During this process the researcher's position evolves – ideal typically formulated - from first being perceived by the local population as an *intruder*, with ongoing time as a *member* and finally as an *advocate* of their problems (Mayring 1996: 41). This shows the course of starting as an *outsider* and gradually growing into an *inside* perspective.

The beginning of a field study is obviously the most crucial and the most difficult period, because the local population can reject the researcher for one or another reason. As Fischer (1998) states, the most crucial role in this starting period - aside from the general struggles to organize one's daily life in an unknown cultural setting - plays the attempt to get one's intentions across (Fischer 1998: 79). This was as well my own experience.

A further characteristic of qualitative research is the importance of the researcher's personality. It represents the most important instrument in qualitative research and stands further in the foreground than in any other research. Social and communicative skills are crucial in gaining trust and thus access to the field. The researcher cannot approach the field as a 'neuter', but has to become an approachable and touchable person through social interactions in order to win the populations support. The way in which the researcher is perceived in this starting period strongly influences the kind of relationship the researcher will be able to develop during the whole field stay. Inevitably, she will take a specific role within the field or gets one attributed by others. This *attributed role* strongly determines to what extent she will be given or denied access to information (Flick 1999: 71).

Another determining factor of access to information is the *key person*. Undoubtedly, key people can have effects in both directions. They can either help open doors, but they can close some as well. It is therefore important to consider the consequences of playing a certain role and relying on a certain person. Often it is not possible to deviate from a specific perception by the local population or emerge from a person's guidance within a short period of time (Flick 1999). What is more important though is to be aware of these shaping factors when dealing with empiric data.

In the case of my field research in rural Amhara, I was clearly perceived by the local population as a representative of Orda, the implementing body of their water scheme, as my first visit to the sites were accompanied and facilitated by Orda staff. In addition, it has to be taken into account that even without the label of an Orda representative, a European person (local *ferenji*) in such a remote area, carries unwillingly a high potential of being perceived as a representative of any donor or development agency, and will hardly ever be seen as neutral. Hence, it was not possible to completely avoid this perception within this short time. What helped to evolve slightly on this

course of “*Intruder- Member- Advocate*” was the fact that I participated in their way of life, slept in their houses and ate their food. This convinced them more than explanations that I was interested in their lives in a different way than Orda staff members, who were rushing in for discussions with WatSanCo members and disappeared as fast as they appeared.

Our key persons in the three villages were at the same time our hosts and either WatSanCo members or members of the local political authority. They were all promoters and advocates of the new water schemes. Within the short time we spent in the villages, they opened doors for us to sympathizers of the projects, but access to the critics remained closed.

Additionally, I was not travelling independently to rural Amhara, but with the backing of an international development organization, for which I had some assignments during that time. Hence, I constantly had wear two different hats: The first one as a representative of WHH/Orda that I used to wear for interviews with official political representatives on behalf of a stakeholder analysis for the NGO. Wearing this hat was an unproblematic legitimisation of my stay and a satisfying explanation to the population as foreigners are generally and foremost seen and expected to act as development promoters. But this hat only granted me discourse conform answers. At the same time, I wished to remove this hat as soon as possible during the village stays where I was collecting data for my own study. I tried to introduce myself as an independent visitor, aiming to understand Amharic village life. This seemed to be a much less satisfying and sometimes an incomprehensible explanation to the rural population. It took considerable time to gradually get my real intentions across.

4.3.2 Participative Observation: Balancing between Insider and Outsider

As mentioned above, participative observation is a classical method that goes hand in hand with field research. It is an integral method that combines observations of all kinds, participation in different activities, discussions with actors and introspection into the researcher’s experiences (Flick 1999). A participating observer does not aim to remain outside the social situation but is engaged to be in direct contact with the actors in the field and hopes to gradually grow into an inside purveyor. How to reach this aim is not strictly defined. Data collection remains an open process that has to be adapted according to the situation found in the field.

In the case of the field stay of this MA thesis, the participation part of the method was inevitably taking place while staying in a rural village that offered no hiding place for a foreigner. Quickly after my arrival I had become the talk of the village which placed me right in the middle of the village life. Further participative activities followed and ran from climbing to the water spring in the early

hours of the morning, to hanging around at the public mill house while waiting for invitations, eating numerous *injera*²³ plates despite being already completely full from the previous invites, taking part in joyful coffee ceremonies among ladies, assisting in an endless village meeting under an pitiless sun, visit the neighbours and relatives of our hosts, sharing the joy of long awaited rain and the sorrows of a mother that feared she had lost her youngest in the violent forces of this very rain, spending the hottest hours of the day in a small dusty round hut, taking a nap on someone else's bed, listening the numerous stories, successful or tragic, of youngsters having left their families to find a better life elsewhere.

To participate includes as well emotional participation. It is not always easy to remain a researcher in such a context - a researcher that has to remain a "*professioneller Fremder*" (Agar 1980, in Flick 1999: 76) that observes and reflects and needs to disassociate such experiences from her very personal being.

However, the other contributor of the method, observation and documentation, helped to manage this balancing act between insider and outsider. It was worth taking the advice to subordinate oneself to "*monastic strictness*" (Lofland/Lofland, in: Flick 1999: 189) in terms of regularly, extensively and conscientiously writing down observations and experiences and valuing this investment with the same estimation as observation itself. During the field stay in Kobo *Woreda*, I regularly took notes, for sure at the end of the day, but when possible immediately after important observation periods. This produced sometimes an artificial moment in a rural society, where most of people are illiterate, and children looked reverentially at what this *ferenji* was doing with pen and notebook. Activities and direct involvement had to be interrupted in order to free time for these writings.

The participative observation approach is basically a rather unstructured and open approach. However, it makes sense to follow some basic guidelines as suggested by Flick (1999). He describes an ideal course of observation practice by starting with (1) *descriptive observation* that serves as general orientation in the beginning of field research and produced unspecific descriptions. This wide starting phase helps to catch the complexity of reality. During the (2) *focused observation*, the observer narrows its view on a certain sphere or process that is of special interest to the research question, while the (3) *selective observation* towards the end of the field stay aims to find further examples, nuances or variations of the units focused in phase 2 in order to complete the picture (Flick 1999: 158).

²³ *Injera* is the Ethiopian main dish, similar to a French crêpe, but made out of *teff* flour. In rural places it is normally served with spicy red pepper sauce, *berbere* or *shiro*, and eaten by hand from one and the same plate for every one.

Another piece of advice applied during my field stays, was the elaboration of an *observation guide*, in order to make sure that most important corner stones of a social situation were considered. I was again inspired by Flick's (1999) suggestions and formulated two observation guides after my first village stay for two relevant locations I was interested in: The household and the water point (Annexes 7 a + b). It included questions on the following observation spheres: *Space, Actors, Activities, Objects, Actions, Events, Time, Goal and Emotions* (Flick 1999: 160), adapted to the respective situation. In direct contact with the field, it helped to correlate my rather open observations.

To conclude this chapter on participative observation and its documentation, I refer once more back to Clifford (1993) and his notion on partial views of reality. Written observation notes are always selective; they are only partially reflecting reality, because reality is too dense to be entirely documented in a text. Selection leads to a text that does not contain everything, but only what was considered by the author to be worth writing down. In this sense, a text is the construction of a reality but not *the* reality. Flick (1999) suggests enriching observation notes by additional means of data, for example through alternative forms of diary that carry different degrees of subjectivity. He suggests completing field notes with photos, sketches, drawings, maps and other visual material (Flick 1999: 190), in order to reduce the selectivity that notes and observation are necessarily subjected to.

4.3.3 Interview Techniques: Rather open and unstructured

The second essential method of field research is the discussion with different actors in the field. This interaction should too remain rather open as it needs to be constantly adapted to the local situation. In the case of the field study of this MA thesis in Kobo *Woreda*, I lean to this method rather as discussion or general talk than a guided and well prepared interview. Even though I had started with semi-structured interviews during the pre-test period, I quickly realized that this form of direct questioning was not adapted to the social and cultural setting of my stay. The cultural setting was too unknown to me, therefore I decided to open the stage and see what people had to tell me about their life, especially in regard to the water situation in their villages. The interview guides that had emerged after the pre-test interviews were further developed (Annexes 8 a + b), but never served as a direct discussion guide. They rather directed my mind in open, unstructured discussions.

The following paragraph is an excerpt of the report written on interview techniques applied during my field research (Meyer 2009). It highlights the context in which most open discussions were held

and the steps necessary to get there. The paragraph is based on evaluative field notes taken at the end of the three village stays.

I intuitively developed a specific way of approaching people that I only realized with time: *A way of showing one's face at public places while waiting for invitations*. A certain course of steps seemed to take place each time we started from new in a village. On *day one*, we were most of the time introduced to the place and its water scheme by a key person, whose name I got from the Orda office. We were always received and hosted by either a WatSanCo member or another official person of the village. He (always men) showed us around, introduced us to some villagers or the water guard and provided us with necessary information. On *day two*, we went round in the village by ourselves and made our own observations at different places, trying to make us seen by as many people as possible. We had to become the talk of the village. This 'hanging around' at public places like the water point or the public mill house without directly approaching the people for interviews, was useful for observations, but was at the end of the day sometimes unsatisfying and provoked impatience on my side due to time pressure. But it showed fruits the next day, on *day three*. It was important not to knock at people's door by ourselves and ask for an interview, but to wait until they would invite us. After three days the news about the foreign visitor had made its round in the village and the people's curiousness had grown large enough to invite us. On *day three* and *four* we would normally eat a lot of *injera* – sometimes five times a day! It was there, that personal relationships were created and where discussions rose naturally. This eating together consumed a lot of time, but seemed to be an unavoidable step in gaining trust and access to the women. As the ensuing traditional coffee ceremony is mainly held among ladies, we found ourselves after the meal in the middle of a group of female relatives and neighbours.

(see **Field Notes**, Evaluation Report Rama, 6th September 2009, Paragraph 310, Kobo)

Whenever possible, discussions were recorded on tape. An overview over the discussions, the interviewees and the content of the talks can be found in Annex 9.

4.3.4 Dealing with qualitative Data

In the hindsight of field research, field notes and most interviews were transcribed in Word documents. The transcription of the interviews stays as close as possible to the spoken word, but is not always a word-by-word transcription. Sometimes it was not possible due to translation and language issues that hampered a clear message. In such cases, the transcriber chose new formulation that she considered getting closest to the sense of the statement the interviewee made. Additionally, we have to keep in mind that discussions were translated from Amharic into English. Thus, translated words should not be overestimated and a transcription that puts too much emphasis on exactness of transcribed statements could eventually mislead us (Flick 1999). Rather we suggest widening our comprehension and focus primarily on what seems to be important for our research interest. In the context of the following interpretation of the data, statements should not be isolated

from the context they were made in. Rather we put our interest on contextual information and not on single statements.

A selection of ten interviews with relevant discussion content were chosen for further analysis, considering selective criteria such as equal representation of *study sites*, *social status* and *function* of interviewees, *gender* and *age* (Annex 10). These ten interviews plus field notes were then analysed with ATLAS/ti, a computer program for analysis of qualitative data. This program does not do any analysis, but helps to keep an overview over large amount of text and facilitated its structuring and coding. Thus, we roughly scanned the material with special attention to the three theses we wanted to find evidence for and coded paragraphs according to these three theses. Never the less, it revealed to be difficult to find clear cut statements that could be attributed to the three theses and coding was therefore made in a broader sense including additional coding too. The coding is thus a rough structuring and global analysis (Flick 1999) of empirical data, but should neither be overestimated. A copy of the two *Hermeneutic Units*²⁴, one for the *interview* coding, another one for the *field notes* coding, can be found on a CD attached to the virtual version of this MA thesis. Additional empirical data such as evaluation reports were included into the ATLAS/ti analysis, a large amount of photos, short video clips, project documentation partly helped to underline a specific point in the interpretation or were included into the ATLAS/ti analysis.

²⁴ In the ATLAS/ti program, text entities are called *Hermeneutic Units*. They include several texts that are coded within a common folder and therefore are treated in connection to each other.

5 Water, Women and political Repression: A Synthesis

The three theses were developed out of the empirical experiences. We suggested attributing Bourdieu's theoretical concepts to one of these theses and then seeing if we find empirical evidence that support such interpretation. For reasons of feasibility, we will do this in reverse order and start with the third thesis on *Symbolic Violence* in societal structures. The next thesis will focus on the *Habitus* of the female and rural population. As a last thesis, rural water supply will be analyzed as a *Social Field*.

However, the analyses of the separate theses do not find an end in themselves, but shall lead us to the interpretation of the whole picture in reuniting the different concepts. Thus, our final argument will explain mutual influence and interferences of societal dynamics and by doing so follow Bourdieu's argument of interconnectedness of societal mechanisms.

This proceeding can be defined as the *construction of the scientific object* as discussed earlier. We look at social reality in rural Amhara villages not with an everyday understanding but construct it as a scientific model. We shall try, “*an einen empirischen Fall mit der Absicht heranzugehen, ein Modell zu konstruieren, das nicht mathematisch oder formalisiert zu sein braucht, um wissenschaftlich zu sein -, also die relevanten Daten so in einen Zusammenhang zu bringen, dass sie als ein Forschungsprogramm funktionieren, das systematische Fragen stellt, die sich systematisch beantworten lassen, kurz, ein kohärentes Relationensystem zu konstruieren, das als solches getestet werden muss*“ (Bourdieu 1996: 267).

The following three chapters all start with a photograph that illustrates, sometimes unequivocally, sometimes more symbolically, the quintessence of the suggested thesis.

5.1 *Symbolic Violence* in societal Structures

To examine the functioning of *Symbolic Violence* in Ethiopian society, we will examine societal structures under such perspective. As structural framework of a society is not easily observable in a relatively short empirical field stay, we will not be able to substantiate our interpretation with empirical data but will argue with the scientific literature and background information on the country we have presented earlier. Herein, we find quite obvious indices that let us conclude that the Ethiopian regime uses the mechanisms of *Symbolic Violence* to subtly repress and control its female, but in the end its entire rural population, to reinforce its own power position.

The following photograph is to be understood as an illustration of our third thesis: *Symbolic Violence* comes into effect in the relationship between the rural population and the urban central government through societal structures, policies and programs.



Photo 1: New constructions in Addis Ababa (Meyer 2009)

The photograph shows a construction area in Addis Ababa with buildings in various states of progress along the street. Finalized and unfinished constructions stand in obvious contrast to one another. The unfinished constructions appear as shady skeletons. Their scaffoldings made out of tiny wooden sticks do not make a very safe worthy impression. Rather the construction raises the impression of precarious working conditions and security standards. The glass façade of the one finalized building covers what lies below. Most probably the same precarious standards have been applied to the now finished building, but these conditions are covered by a shiny, hyper-modern outward appearance. The scenery looks abandoned and something of an imposition. Structures are being built here, *infrastructures* and *constructions*, de-personalized, and imposed by an invisible hand from above, remote from every day life of the rural masses. One wonders if the buildings are in the service of the people or if the people are in the service of the buildings. This raises, additionally, a sensation of a perilous situation. The dark low hanging clouds over the place adumbrate nothing good.

Without wanting to overstretch the meaning of this scenery and forcefully adjust it to a complex social situation, we can never the less derive some metaphorical parallels to the point we want to

make here. The construction materials on the picture stand for the unequal relation between the central government and the population masses: Glass, steel and concrete reflect the *urban* force and power that opposes the fragile and breakable *rural* wood. The concrete constructions dominate the building, while the wooden scaffoldings hanging on it appear like a farce. However, these violent structures can be covered by a shiny façade as *Symbolic Violence* too appears as harmless. It is not consciously perceived as a violent situation, but its outward appearance covers its violent and imposing character. *Symbolic Violence* is a-personalized violence. It is not depending on a physical presence of anyone rather it has its effect through structures, institutions and social mechanisms. Policies, programs and institutions should normally be in the service of the people, but can be distorted through subtle *Symbolic Violence* to reach the contrary.

5.1.1 Masculine Dominance: *Symbolic Violence* in Gender Relations

Having discussed the suppression of a gender discourse in Ethiopia earlier in this MA thesis, it is not reaching too far to interpret this matter as an obvious case of the functioning of *Symbolic Violence* between gender and between the population and its government. As we have seen earlier, a gender debate in its political sense of the term - as the questioning of the common power distribution within society as a whole, a society including males and females - is not taking place in Ethiopia, and even more, is deliberately suppressed and hampered on the side of the ruling party and the current government. The use of official vocabulary summarizes very briefly that the Ethiopian government is not interested in a gender discourse. It persists using the term 'women' for all its measures put in place and has instructed its employees in the various WABs and WADs to mind their language as they are not allowed to use the term 'gender'. Biseswar states sarcastically, 'gender' is only used for foreign consumption (Biseswar 2008a). Behind lies the perception that women's issues only concern women and should therefore be solved by women alone.

But why is 'gender' such a dangerous term for the Ethiopian government? "*The rationale is that as long as women's issues remain isolated from the rest of society, they will not be a threat to the political rule of the party. The problem will only emerge if 'gender' is allowed to take a front seat and begins a radical politicization of all women's issues, problems and concerns*" (Biseswar 2008a: 425). In this sense, the term 'gender' is a political term that holds up a critique on power distribution within the society as a whole. It addresses not only women but includes female as well as male citizens. The term 'gender' refers, as well, to the social constructedness of sexes that upholds power relations. 'Gender' is therefore a threat to a state that suppresses not only its female masses, but its entire population. It therefore fears rightly "*that if gender issues were to receive attention, women would become too radical and rise up against its*

oppressive rule” (ibid: 425). The ruling party has therefore a strong interest and engage into the *de-politicization* and *de-radicalization* of women issues (Biseswar 2008a).

We can summarize on a first stance that all policies, ministries and bureaus on women’s concerns that the ruling party has put in place to seemingly promote women’s freedom and rights are in fact hushing up the fact that the government’s concern lies in completely the opposite direction: They are used as instruments of control, repression and direction imposed on half of its population to subtly and steadily reduce its room for manoeuvre, rebellion or protest. But not only (female) civil society is hampered through these repressions, NGOs too, do not have a free hand in their actions to push for civil rights, political awareness and freedom and are dancing to the government’s tune. Only NGOs engaged in politically harmless areas such as charities, basic needs and service delivery are tolerated and accepted in the country.

On a second stance, we have to state that this control is accepted on the women’s side as it remains undiscovered by them. The suppressive element is not physically imposed on women but is subtly inherent to structures, policies and institutions that all seem to be in favour of women’s issues in the first instance, and only reveal their suppressive and restricting character with deepened study. The patriarchal way of the ruling party to deal with gender issues, has all the characteristics of *Symbolic Violence*. Gender roles are so much a part of *Habitus* of women as well as of men, that both do not realize the power inequality they hold. They are produced and reproduced in social practices on both sides, and are not questioned because of their apparent naturalness. Even on the side of educated Ethiopian women, Biseswar observed a “*serious lack of strong, independent feminist leadership in the country*” (Biseswar 2008b: 126), though a lack of awareness on the women’s side for the unequal power distribution in political processes and daily life practices. She asks with a slight sign of impatience: “[...] *What is holding them back? Why is it that educated women in the country cannot break the chains of ancient subordination and exclusion? Why can they not develop a feminist consciousness, taking a more radical stance on the emancipation of women in the country?*” (ibid: 126). Having discussed the hindrances on the side of the policies and government earlier, Biseswar (2008b) discusses in this complementing second article a number of issues on the side of *women* that hampers them to take the lead for more radical emancipation. She comes to the conclusion: “*Although it is difficult to acknowledge and accept this, many of the problems lie within women themselves. [...] There are no feminists in the country who are prepared to take up the lead and challenge their own inaction, looking for viable solution from within*” (ibid: 151).

The dominated subject doesn’t realize the power inequality and restricting societal setting they are living in. If the dominating subject is fully aware of its imposing attitude it has to be questioned too.

Domination of women, not only in politics but in general daily life, is so much ingrained, that it seems to be normal to be dominated. How can a true gender debate take place in rural areas where most women and men are illiterate and living according to traditional gender roles, when not even the educated women (and men) realize what restricted action radius they are forced to live with? This is *Symbolic Violence* in its most evident form! Dominated women do not *want* to break chains of ancient subordination and exclusion because they fail to realize that they are chained. They submit themselves unreflected but voluntarily and reproduce domination with that. The *Habitus* explains such submissive social practice from the subject's side. But we shall look at this later on. First, we enlarge our exploration of *Symbolic Violence* a bit further into the general rural population's practices.

5.1.2 'Divine' Government: The accepted Control of the urban Elite

A second area, where power imposition is not realized as such and functions as *Symbolic Violence*, is the relationship the rural population has with "*the powers at large, the mengist, a term which designates the government, the party, the state and all their agents*" (Lefort 2007: 256). As mentioned earlier, Ethiopia has a longstanding tradition of centralized top-down rule. The fact of having been ruled for centuries by powerful kings, emperors and dynasties and the containment of colonial powers is something that raises proudness among Ethiopians. It has, on the other hand, the effect that repressive power imposition is rarely contested and mostly accepted as natural, at least among the rural population. It is "*in line with their conception of power and the relationship they must have with it, and with immemorial political practices, deeply rooted in the feudal system, under which they have lived for centuries*" (ibid: 258). Lefort (2007) has showed this in a study about the national elections in 2005 that became a mile stone in Ethiopian's political awareness for its unexpectedly high vote for the opposition parties that the ruling party successfully managed to turn to its own favour with harsh methods. He argues that the result of the election in his study area was strongly directed by a characteristic of Amhara culture: The "*belief in the omnipotence of God, who dictates their existence and governs their environment, and the importance of a hierarchical order derived from Him. Therefore, individuals are not equal and must obey orders from above*" (ibid: 256).

Power imposed is perceived as natural and normal even when it includes misrule and suppression from the political elite. It is not contested nor questioned, but even supported by the suppressed, because the collective history of top-down rule. Lefort (2007) observed clear evidence that the election process was not fair and free. Under threat of punishment, people were told whom to vote for, and the opposition was totally absent. But most farmers "*found nothing worth saying about this 'electoral' practice*" (ibid: 258). According to the general conception of power as a divine authority, it is excluded to question or disobey the *mengist*. "*God and the mengist are the same*" and "*It doesn't matter who*

I vote for, since it's God who decides who will be elected' were answers farmers were giving him (ibid: 258). In an online press article of one of the rare critical homepages on Ethiopian politics – the '*Ethiopian Review*' - the recently held national election in May 2010, where the ruling party EPRDF and prime minister Meles Zenawi won seemingly uncontestedly 99 % (!) of seats, was commented by the anonymous author with a repeatedly similar sarcastic conclusion: "*Many Ethiopians believe the opposition is incidental. Only God can change their government*" (Ethiopian Review, 3rd June 2010). The farming population doesn't see election as an opportunity, but as a heavy burden fraught with danger, because nobody wants to give his/her vote to the losing party, as they anticipate that the winner would "*deprive those whom it considered disloyal by voting against them from access to [...] means of production*" (Lefort 2007: 254). With the emergence of an opposition during the 2005 elections for the first time, farmers faced a serious struggle to guess in advance who would be the winner in order to vote for him and not to stand on the loser's side (Lefort 2007). This shows again, how the ruling party can count on incorporated submissive structures of its rural population who cooperates in its unlimited power project.

We see a similar pattern in rural *Habitus* as we have seen previously in female *Habitus* that speaks for subtle *Symbolic Violence* in the relationship between the urban political elite and the rural population as a whole. The rural population is not realizing that it is deprived from something but even contributes to their own suppression. Going a step further and looking particularly at water development in rural areas, we can interpret the sluggish water supply development of the last decades in a similar way. Having discussed general water supply issues earlier in this thesis, we have asked why coverage rates are so particularly low in Ethiopia. We may conclude that the autocratic Ethiopian regime is still the same regime that pursues the same goals, no matter if it is vis-à-vis to gender debate or other spheres of life. Hence, it may be equally repressive in terms of water development as to gender debate when this serves its interests - the retention of power. Water supply for the rural population is a discrete means to reach its goal. As we have seen previously, rural water supply has long been neglected in favour of large scale irrigation and hydropower projects. These were supported in view of export production in agriculture and brought basically benefits for the urban political elite. The rural population was for a long time left to their own devices (see Dessalegn 1999). Granting only hesitatingly access to water in this light turns out to be a political controlling instrument of a strong central power. It reflects a repressive power relation between urban political elite and the rural masses.

But we argue that with increasing population pressure, ecological hazards and international attention, the poor water supply coverage could no longer be ignored and the government had to change its strategy of subtle repression. Efforts were hence turned toward rural water supply that is

mainly financed by the international community and lies basically in the hands of foreign organizations that implement water schemes according to the last stage of the art of development intervention. NGOs are putting emphasis on sustainable practices for long living functioning of the schemes in a surrounding of high vulnerability, low capacities and lost native knowledge about water management. The government is supportive to this approach as long as others bring the money and do the job – and especially – as long as these improvements exclusively concern basic needs. To further political awareness, support claims for more freedom or rights among the population is not included in this approach. In this way we can argue, that water policy turns out to be equally subtly distorted as gender policy, as it reduces water supply improvements to a pure welfare improvement in terms of basic needs but stops as soon as it touches more political claims.

5.2 Social Practices shaped by consistent *Habitus*

In a next step of our analysis we approach the very local everyday life in communities and households. It is on this level that empirical research has taken place. Again a photograph serves as starting point that illustrates our thesis on social practice and the *Habitus* appearing through it.



Photo 2: Mother and daughter at the water point (Meyer 2009)

The picture shows a very common scene in Kobbo *Woreda*, as can be observed at many other rural places in the area. Just having filled their jerry cans at the water place, a mother and her daughter are preparing themselves to carry the water back to their house. The mother has already bound a jerry can of 20 litres on her back, using the common technique of women to carry loads. The jerry can is put on the lower back, upholstering it with some wired cloth and attached with a strap around her shoulders. To stabilize it in this position, the lady has to slope forwards and hollow her back as much as possible. The mother helps her 5 or 6 year old daughter to bind a small jerry can of 5 litres on her back. The small girl seems to take this task very seriously as her face and her stance show, reflecting the determination of a child to imitate what it has seen her mother doing over and over again and identifies with the same duty.

Water is women's business - in Amhara as well as elsewhere in rural Africa – this is illustrated by this photograph. The social practices surrounding this duty are handed down from mother to daughter, from generation to generation. In every community that we visited during the field stay we found the same gendered labour division. Rural women are commonly engaged in household affairs, child rising, food preparation, market exchanges, firewood collection and – water. Rural men are farmers and herdsmen, handling camels or oxen to plough their farms and fields, prepare it for sowing, weeding them (often assisted by their wives and older children) and harvest them. Additionally, there is a generational division between boys/young men being responsible for animals, wandering them around in order to feed and water them and household heads working on farms, engaging into public affairs, business and long distance travels.

We have argued earlier that this gendered labour division with all the common social practices that go with it, intimately connects women to water and let it appear as a 'naturalized' connection. This connection is part of a strongly gendered *Habitus*, but it is not its only aspect. We shall analyze in the following sections the same aspects as we have discussed in the previous chapter – the gendered and the rural *Habitus* of the Amharic population. We aim to reveal this *Habitus*, as it is the generator of social practices, directs them and guarantees their constancy over time much more reliable than any formal rules or explicit norms would do (Bourdieu 1987: 101). To substantiate our argument, we shall illustrate our analysis with empirical data derived from field observations and interview data. It was on this societal level that field study was centred on.

5.2.1 Female *Habitus*: The naturalized Connection with Water

Following Bourdieu's argumentation, the affiliation to one or the other sex is one of the most crucial factors of social differentiation. The relationship between male and female, and therefore

the gendered *Habitus* deriving from it, consists the earliest schemata of social identification (Krais/Gebauer 2002: 49). It can be deemed as a main principle of structuring societal settings and individual practice. Bourdieu found a pertinent metaphor for this shaping factor: “*Das Geschlecht ist eine ganz fundamentale Dimension des Habitus, die, wie in der Musik die Kreuze oder die Schlüssel, alle mit den fundamentalen sozialen Faktoren zusammenhängenden sozialen Eigenschaften modifiziert*“ (Bourdieu, In: Krais/Gebauer 2002: 49). There is no in-between, because it is *bodies* that seem to be the very ‘nature’ of human being. As bodies are different, different social practices seems to be most natural. As Krais and Gebauer summarize: “*Mit diesem körperlichen Bezugspunkt ist die Arbeitsteilung zwischen den Geschlechtern nicht nur so tief und fest im Habitus verankert wie nur möglich, sie macht auch wie keine andere gesellschaftliche Struktur vergessen, dass sie gesellschaftliche, und das heisst von den Menschen selbst produzierte und beständig reproduzierte Struktur ist: Sie gibt sich als ‚natürliche‘ Ordnung der Welt*“ (Krais/Gebauer 2002: 51).

Having recalled this, we will now compare these reflections with the empirical data collected in the field to analyse this gendered *Habitus* in the rural Ethiopian society. An example that gender is incorporated into bodies can be observed in the way, loads are carried differently according to gender. The gendered *Habitus*, a social construction, becomes *body* as we shall see in the following paragraph.

Everywhere in rural Amhara water canisters are carried in the same *gendered* way - thousand times repeated at numerous water places and under different circumstances. Women would *always* hollow their back and put their load on their lower back, attached with a strap around their shoulders. Surprisingly, men carry loads differently, with a similarly specific technique, but applied exclusively by men and boys. When they help their mothers, sisters or wives to fetch water and carry it back to their family’s house, they don’t carry it on their lower back, attached with a strap. But they hoist the jerry can on their right shoulder and hold it with one hand at the handle, while underlying with the other hand their characteristic Shepard’s crook (without which no serious Amhara farmer leaves his home), over the other shoulder to prop the jerry can’s back with a kind of lever arm. This lightens the weight and stabilizes the canister. This different way of carrying loads seemed to be so much connected to the gender identification, that it seems entirely unconceivable to do it otherwise, even though there is no physical reason, why women could not carry a jerry can on their shoulder or men to carry it on their lower back.²⁵

(see **Field Notes**, 10th September 2009, Paragraph 245, Woldiya)

This empirical observation serves as an example, how much gender identity is connected with the physical body – *incorporated* into the body. Gender identity *is* body and therefore perceived as the

²⁵ In the following, empirical material will either be copied directly from the original interview transcription/field notes (*italic*) or summarized/reformulated from there (no italic) with indicating footnotes to what document and paragraph it refers to. For interview citations the precise time of the statement is indicated with minutes and seconds.

very 'nature'. Carrying loads in a gendered way can even be seen as a symbolic representation of gender conception. Women subordinate themselves entirely under their load. They bow down. They distort themselves in favour of their loads. Everything is taken out of their hands as they get tied by a strap around their shoulder. In terms of their water duties, they embody water, water becomes part of them. They *passively* carry water loads. Men in turn remain straight and upright. Their stance is not dominated by loads, but they only take them on *one* shoulder and not on their whole body as women do. They handle the load's weight with their hands or Shepard crooks in their own favour, to lighten load, to reduce the hardship. Their relation to their load is more distanced as they *actively* carry loads²⁶. Such observations stand at the origin of the 'naturalization' of the connection between water and women.

This 'naturalized' connection has then consequences for the social practice of women in terms of water. The duty to fetch water is similarly closely connected to the gender identification. This close connection of a practice to gender identity, through *Habitus*, becomes especially evident, when a female is *not* able to do what seems to be so naturally her duty. The following incident shows that fetching water is more than a duty, a part of identification with the female fellow group – and the lack of ability to carry it out as requested by society is a serious reason of personal disturbance and social exclusion:

During the discussion with a member of the WatSan committee at one of the studied villages, the man thanked us, that 'we' brought this water infrastructure to the village that makes it much easier for the villagers to fetch water. He told us, that before women and girls had to climb up a rocky, steep foot path behind their houses to reach the spring in the mountain. To illustrate the improvement the modern water point had brought, he later took us to the house of a family, whose 10 year old daughter's leg had to be amputated from mid thigh due to a serious accident. The girl had been sliding her way down from the spring with a full jerry can of 25 litres on her back and her leg was completely crashed by the rocks. Even though the girl had the chance to have surgery at a decent hospital where she got even a prosthesis for her leg, what probably brought tears to her eyes in the moment of my visit, is more the fact that with her leg she lost at the same time the ability to participate in an important female social practice that is essential to female identification and *Habitus*.

(see **Field Notes**, 11th August 2009, Paragraph 40, Mengello Nacha)

This short paragraph from my field notes show how a specific social practice is intimately connected to gendered social collectivity. To take part, results in a feeling of being part of the collectivity, of being 'normal'. Not to be able to take part into it leads to the feeling or the actual

²⁶ These observations strikingly resemble Bourdieu's findings in western complex society in terms of submissive gendered stereotypes, described and analyzed in '*La domination masculine*' (Bourdieu 1998).

social exclusion. An alternative way of living does not seem to offer an option or doesn't even exist in the perception of the affected person. Rural women know very clearly what is expected from them and they expect it from themselves and their fellow females. But they might not know why it is this specific social practice and not any other that is expected. As Jurt (2008) recalls Bourdieu, the individual does not dispose of the whole sense of its social practice, but realizes only in part the reason of its doings (Jurt 2008: 41). The obvious explanation in this case here would probably be that a lady has to be able to physically meet her daily duties in order to care for her family. No man would marry a woman that can't meet this obligations set by the hardship of rural life. This *Habitus* is for both genders rigid and constant, mostly unquestioned in a long tradition of unchanged practices. For the young girl in Mengello Nacha important factors of this duty cease to apply. Her despair is to be understood in this context.

Nevertheless to these constant social practices, some signs of a new consciousness seemed to appear here and there. Some of the illiterate rural women raise a sense of questioning their living as illustrated by the following paragraph:

"Spontaneously arisen discussion with three ladies and a lot of children around. Starting point of the informal discussion was the question of one lady about my age. "Salassa sost" and no baby? She is 35 and has 5 children. It is enough for her, Baka! She doesn't want more babies, but she doesn't know how to stop having babies."

(Mengello Nacha A2, Interview, Paragraph 10, introduction note, 12th August 2009)

The question of this lady reveals curiousness about different ways of life and ability of questioning her own. She didn't judge the foreign visitor for not having babies at 33, but rather used this example to strengthen her annoyance of having so many babies but not being able to determine her life by herself due to lack of knowledge. She made clear that she is conscious of the blindness and ignorance she is living in and asked me for advice about the schooling of her children:

"She says, why are you coming here? Is it better our children stay farmer? What is better for our children? We don't know, maybe you can help us. We are in the village place, we don't know anything."

(Mengello Nacha A2, Interview, Paragraph 37, 12m12s, 12th August 2009)

My translator, having a similar personal background of giving birth to her son at very young age without having much formal education, adds the following statement:

"We don't have more school. This is village place. We don't know how to take care of ourselves. Someone that knows everything can control his life. But these people here, they can't control their life because of lack of knowledge. They eat today but they don't know about tomorrow. They don't think for future. They don't think for tomorrow. They wait for God only. Maybe rain will come

tomorrow, if not they will die. They think like that these people. If someone has school he can plan about his future. These people are only waiting for rain.”

(Mengello Nacha A2, Interview, Paragraph 34, 1m, 12th August 2009)

To summarize these short paragraphs, we can state that the rural Ethiopian society holds very rigid gendered *Habitus*. Similarly to Bourdieu's studied Kabyl society, the Ethiopian society has been stable in its social structure over centuries, with strong differentiation according to gender. Such stable social structures have enabled a rather constant and rigid *Habitus* to emerge, much more rigid than would be possible in modern societies where *Habitus* often includes conflicting and contradicting aspects (Krais/Gebauer 2002: 72). A *Habitus* as well, that includes not only very strong ties to gendered practices but as well the feeling of not knowing anything and being dependent on all possible help coming from outside. This aspect of general *Habitus* of rural population will be discussed in the next chapter.

5.2.2 Rural *Habitus* : A *Habitus* with incorporated submissive Character

As we have seen in a previous chapter on the perception of the Ethiopian government as a divine authority illustrated by Lefort (2007), we can interpret such perception as part of a general *Habitus* of the rural population as a whole. A population that has a long standing experience of being ruled and governed by a strongly controlling top perceives itself as helpless and unable to take any action to change a deplorable situation. As Krais and Gebauer state, it might perceive itself as inferior: “*Ein wesentliches Element symbolischer Gewalt liegt [...] darin, dass die Unterdrückten [...] nicht anders können als mit der Inkorporation der geltenden Ordnung sich selbst als minderwertige Subjekte zu identifizieren*“ (Krais/Gebauer 2002: 53). Their radius of action remains very restricted, tied to their gendered and submissive rural *Habitus* under a government that is expected to be almighty and bring about change. If it doesn't, this is not valued as a reason to question the government's legacy and seriousness to act in favour of its population. Rather it is tolerated and suffered.

During my field stay, the government was rarely mentioned in any discussion, neither positively or negatively. The difficult situation the population in the rural areas is living in was just accepted as a given fact and by no means openly brought into connection with the misrule of the government. Rarely any critique has been pronounced in the discussions I had with the rural population, whereas it came all the more from the young, educated population in Kobbo or other semi-urban/urban areas, as we shall see later.

In rural villages the approach of the population towards myself as a representative of the western world and the NGO bringing gifts and goods was more reserved as they hadn't much contact with

foreigners until now. But the approach of people in Kobo as a semi-rural area²⁷ was in a way very invasive. When I walked through the streets, I was often asked for money by people of any social strata as a means of getting into contact and most children's only sentence in English was: "Give me *birr*²⁸!" Apart from the fact that this became quite a burden in the long run during my stay, it shows the way foreigners are perceived: As the one's bringing in what is needed or wished for. To some extent this might be a typical reaction when the rich and the poor of the world meet, but it reflects as well the expectation from the rural population to receive things for free from outsiders, be it government or international agencies, and could be interpreted as the incorporated experience from the socialistic period, where the state took over all private initiatives (in terms of water schemes for example) in order to manage in a top-down manner. The population was not asked to contribute anything except their support to the Derg. This demanding attitude has been incorporated and remains to have its effects on rural *Habitus* until today.

This way of the population's self-perception becomes apparent in numerous statements, where it became clear, that the people were hoping to get help - and expecting it by right - from foreign agencies what in turn enforces this feeling of not being able to help oneself.

²⁷ Kobo counts around 35'000 inhabitants and is the districts capital, hosting a number of administrative offices and functions. The way of living for most of its population remains very rural, as only few people work for governmental institutions, and private enterprise is almost absent. But people have a steady power supply, television and are informed about what happens in other parts of the world.

²⁸ *Birr* is the local Ethiopian currency and stands here as synonym of money.

5.3 Dynamics within the *Social Field* of rural Water Supply

For the last step of our analysis and interpretation of empirical material, we will now place the above discussed aspects into a specific *Social Field* in tangible reality where all the concepts meet. To start with, we will once more look at a photograph that recalls our thesis about the creation of new *Fields* through modern water infrastructures and with it dynamics of power and influence within that *Field*.



Photo 3: Barred water point at Mariam Sifir (Meyer 2009)

In the gleam of the sun set's light, the photograph shows a water pump WHH/Orda uses to install in the rural area of Kobo *Woreda*. The pump is situated in an open field, surrounded by meadows and farms, in the background some hills. It consists of a built, square plinth on which the pump is installed and from which it is easier to back up the full jerry can. The lever can be manually operated up and down by a single person to pump the water from the ground. The water place is abandoned in the picture, no person is present, and the pump is barred – even doubly barred in these evening hours. On the one hand the lever arm is moored with a chain in order to block its functioning. On the other hand, a thorny fencing surrounds the water point that restricts access to the pump. It becomes clear, that the water point is not open to everyone at anytime but access is restricted to a few.

This picture captures the main point of what we want to discuss below: Modern water infrastructures create new power settings through the struggle of different players for access to water. Access is restricted – thus, there must be powerful players that have the influence to exclude others from having access. The barred water point can be seen as a symbol for a *Field* of power, “*ein Kräftefeld*” (Krais/Gebauer 2002: 56).

To define a *Social Field*, three preparation steps are necessary: *First*, the common object at stake has to be identified. For the beginning, we take water supply for the rural population as such an object. Different agents are participating directly or indirectly in negotiations about this object. They share a common *doxa*, a common belief in this object and follow a certain logic of understanding, which is in our case the common development discourse discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. *Secondly*, the limits of the *Social Field* have to be defined. But these limits cannot be defined by outside decision, but it is the *Field* itself that defines its limits. The limits of a *Social Field* are where the effects of the *Field* fade out. The analysis of the limitation of our *Field* will not be our main point of interest in this paper. *Thirdly*, the actors within this *Social Field* have to be defined and symbolically assembled around the water pump on the picture:

- 1) *Political authority*: The Ethiopian State with its representatives at a regional and local level. At the local level of the Kobo *Woreda*, it is represented by the *Woreda* Administration in Kobo and the various *Kebele* Administrations in every municipality. The Ethiopian has mainly *symbolic* capital.
- 2) *NGOs* engaged into implementation of the water infrastructures. The important ones to be considered here are WHH and Orda, two NGOs that cooperate in Amhara, but contribute different kinds of capital. WHH is an international NGO that contributes mostly *economic* and some *symbolic* capital, Orda is a local NGO with

social and cultural capital.

- 3) *Local water committee:* Members of the local WatSanCos in the villages who benefit from the implementation of a modern water infrastructure by WHH/Orda. The members of the WatSanCo are elected by the villagers and consist normally of five members: Chairman, secretary, treasurer, and two additional positions less clearly defined.
- 4) *Rural population:* We consider the group of the rural population in general as another actor, especially women who are understood to be the main beneficiaries of the new water schemes.

In the following sections we will combine what has previously been discussed for the concepts of *Symbolic Violence* and *Habitus*. As mentioned elsewhere, the concepts of Bourdieu do not end with their separate handling. But the main emphasis of his theory reveals its pertinence in linking the different concepts as well as different societal levels with each other. Thus, on the background of the conceptualization of the rural water supply as a *Social Field* we shall join concepts and societal levels and come to a conclusive interpretation which puts relationships in the foreground.

5.3.1 Access to Water becomes more masculine

In this first section, we shall analyze the first relationship within the *Field*: The relationship between the female beneficiaries (4) and the local water committee (3). We have argued in a previous chapter for a strongly gendered and submissive female *Habitus* that is characteristic for the Amharic rural population. We will discuss in this chapter how and why relations between these two actors change under the effect of such *Habitus* within the newly established *Field* through modern water supply.

On one side, the water infrastructure improvement, as initiated and implemented through NGOs, requires the execution of the common participative community-led approach from the side of the NGOs, which aims to raise a sense of self-responsibility of the rural population towards its new water point. This aim is reached by the establishment of a village committee, elected by the population itself, trained by the NGO to sustain the financial and managerial maintenance of the water point. In line with local gender *Habitus*, in the studied villages men were holding the main responsibilities as the chairman, the secretary and the treasurer. But the NGO stipulates the active participation of females within this committee. Hence, the mandatory two females mostly held the two not very clearly defined remaining positions. These members were rarely introduced to me as a foreign visitor. The two out of three key people during my village stays were male members holding

one of the main positions of the committee. In the only case where a woman held the position of the treasurer, she kept herself in the background:

We assisted in an extensive village meeting in Inkoyber Rama that was held on a public holiday to enable all male members of the *Kebele* to take part and lay farm work aside. The main subject of discussion was the planned water point that was about to be built. Obviously, there was opposition against the project due to mistrust against the WatSan committee's integrity and the organisation of the labour contribution from the side of the villagers. No female was present, neither the female treasurer of the committee nor any other female from the *Kebele*. Public discussion was held exclusively among male household heads (youngsters and very aged persons were absent too). Later, during the discussion with the female treasurer, her husband and some committee members, held in the treasurer's house, it became clear, that the lady was not actively involved in negotiations, excused for the care of a small baby and replaced by her husband on the committee.

(see **Rama D3**, Participative observation of village meeting, Inkoyber, 2nd September 2009)
(see **Rama D5**, Interview, Paragraph 21, 4m33s, 2nd September 2009)

This paragraph is representative of the difficulties it poses to include females into public life. The stipulation of the NGO to include women's participation into the planning process of the water point is complied, but in reality of negotiation and decision making women are not actively present. The comment of my translator points into the same direction after having listed all members and their functions of another village's WatSanCo:

[The] *two ladies* [of the committee] *have no special function because this is hard work, they don't give for ladies.*

(**Mengello Nacha A1**: Interview, Paragraph 68, 46m10s, 11th August 2009)

To summarize this first part of our argument, we conclude that the institutionalisation of access to drinking water through a modern water pump becomes more masculine as women's control over water reduces. In line with gendered *Habitus* and labour division, women are gradually excluded from decision making processes that concern water as this water doesn't fall within the ambit of household anymore but becomes *public affair* – though male sphere. Women lose space for self-determined manoeuvre and cede freedom to control water outside to male influence. Strang (2004) argues elsewhere, that technological improvements in terms of access to water reflect as well a change in social meaning that weakens the female position additionally: “*Changes in material culture generate and reflect changes in meaning: There is a fundamental difference between carrying (female) vessels of water from the (female) well, and pumping an ejaculative stream of it out of the earth through a (male) spout. The invention of homologously male objects for water management is a telling analogue of the technological development that is*

generally acknowledged to have enabled male social and political dominance“ (Strang 2004: 24). The consistent and rigid gender *Habitus* still leaves the duty of domestic water use within the female sphere with the difference that being men decide about it, men manage it, men have training and skills about it and men give symbolic meaning to it.

A second critical point that concerns the relationship between the WatSanCo (3) and the rural population (4) focuses on the *social stratification* within villages. Differences in social positions certainly existed in Amharic villages already before the implementation of modern water schemes, but we argue that they become more accentuated with the new technical infrastructure - especially through WatSanCo membership. Arguing with Bourdieu’s concept of capital, we state that it is the individuals that accumulate a high amount of capital that get elected as committee members. The committee chairmen, secretaries or treasurers of the three studied villages all seemed to have a similar profile: They accumulated *symbolic capital* such as persuasiveness and social legitimacy through material property, cattle, spacious and tidy compounds (*economic capital*), reading, writing or accounting skills (*cultural capital*) and social relations, large families, friends and supporters (*social capital*). This probably helped them to be elected as WatSanCo member by the villagers. The range of possible committee members though does not include all social layers, but favours those who have sufficient *symbolic capital* to offer. Household heads from families with less status were not among the studied committees. As we have seen above in the case of Inkoyber, committee members were never the less mistrusted by the villagers, but without being seriously contested. This mistrust could be interpreted in the sense that the villagers were not freely electing their committee member, but were directed by a tacit social obligation to vote for the most influencing person. In return, they withheld suspicion toward the committee’s integrity. The following example shows how social differences within rural communities become visible and result in restricted access to public functions:

We were invited at a woman’s house that we met the previous day at the public mill house. She addressed Meseret (translator) directly and unhesitantly and started talking to her while other people still observed us carefully from safe distance. The lady invited us to come to her house to have coffee. The next afternoon she sent her son to bring us to her place. Her house was somewhat different from the tidy, painted model households we had visited so far. It was not surrounded by the common cacti fencing as many other compounds in the area, it just stood a bit lost on a small open space between other people’s compounds, very modest, dusty and small. The lady prepared the coffee ceremony, roasted the beans on the open fire, pounded them in a wooden mortar and boiled coffee in the traditional coffee pot. When it was prepared, her old uncle-in-law joined us and we drank and ate spicy *injera berbere*. She said she only came to Inkoyber six months ago, before she lived up-hill. She is married and has 5 small children and said that she does not know anyone here. When she gave birth to her twins two years ago,

her neighbours of up-hill Rama cared for her and brought goat milk to feed her two babies. Here, at down-hill Rama, no one cares for her children. She is alone.

(see **Field Notes**, 2nd September 2009, Paragraph 76, Inkoyber Rama)

(see **Rama D4**, Interview, Paragraph 30-32, 13m03s, 2nd September 2009)

The low social status of this household became not only obvious through the modest household fittings, but as well through the unprotected compound and the lack of social relationships. The cacti fencing of Inkoyber compounds (see Graph 3) are an important marker of a tidy and well-endowed household. It is an important status symbol – the ability of its inhabitants to defend themselves against hyenas and other unwelcomed guests and represents the social position of a family. The nicely painted walls, a family latrine established through Hygiene and Sanitation programs of Orda – all these attributes were missing in the above mentioned household. Additionally, the social exclusion of the family become obvious during the coffee ceremony - the social meeting *par excellence* - where family and friendship ties are celebrated and refreshed. No female neighbour or friend would join us in that modest house to have coffee with us. In our host's house however (the WatSanCo chairman's family), we regularly enjoyed coffee ceremonies among neighbours, friends and relatives which illustrates the large *social* and *symbolic* capital of our host. This shows clearly, how social differences become obvious in social practices and this low social status or exclusion does not correlate with public functions. Hierarchies indeed exist in Amharic villages and are reinforced through access to new opportunities of membership in committees and public functions.

5.3.2 The subtle Restriction of the rural Population through Access to Water

The second point refers to the relationship between the rural population (4) / (3) and the central government (1) within *Social Field* of rural water supply. We argue, that not only women's position become weaker on the local level of community within gender relations, but at the same time on a societal level. We have discussed the repressive character of the ruling party's governance towards women in order to stabilize its seemingly uncontested, authoritarian rule. But we can even go beyond that. If the central government is occupied in stabilizing its power through the subtle repression of women, hampering their realisation of what is withheld from them, why not interpret the current water policy in the rural areas in the same way? The same government is at stake, thus the same interests too. Water is an ideal means to subtly impose power as not only the female, but the whole population depends on it. By granting slowly improvement of water access to the rural population, the later is made grateful and beholden. Everyone appreciates the implementation of

water pumps in the rural areas as it is vital to survival, and we admit that one is tempted to be blinded by this fact. Women and men were happy to have safe tap water in their village, less people fall ill or die due to unsafe water and life improves overall a bit. But we have to look at these improvements in a broader perspective too: On the back of a repressive political system this is the strategical minimum that the authoritarian regime is granting its population. Basic needs are allowed, heavily financed in addition by outside international donors and implemented by international NGOs. But any NGO or civil societal organization that wants to go beyond basic provisions is massively hindered to do so. Changes and improvements in terms of human rights issues, democracy, gender issues (in its real political sense of the term), civil society development is forbidden by law and oppositional political formation is suppressed (Human Rights Watch 2010). There are “*one hundred ways of putting pressure*” (ibid 2010). In this light, the improvement of water access is only partly positive. In line with Bourdieu’s analysis of hidden power mechanisms, it might even be interpreted as a fake improvement – as a blinding improvement. Safe drinking water is surely contributing to an overall increased basic standard of life, but at the same time, real political freedom is deliberately denied by the central government. Due to the subtle mechanisms of power within the society as a whole, this power setting is not identified as such.

To come back to our conceptualization of the *Social Field*, the government’s position is unquestionably a powerful one. It is the winner of the game, even though or even *because* of the effectiveness of its invisible power. The mechanisms of hidden violence assure it is in pole position. It successfully blinds its population and dazzles NGOs and international community.

Never the less, there is one point that remains doubtful: By definition, *Symbolic Violence’s* mechanisms are based on the fact that *both* sides have incorporated the power structures and accept it as given. We have seen above, this is certainly true for the rural population. But is it true for the ruling party too? Isn’t the central government misusing its power position on purpose? As a spontaneous reaction, we would probably state that this is the case. The government plays around with the ignorance and blindness of its population. In this case, only the population would be blind, but not the government that suppresses intentionally. On the other hand, if we follow Bourdieu to the very end of his theory, the members of government too are a product of collective history that structures their *Habitus* as rulers. It may be possible, that the members of government see their control and repression more like a paternalistic rule of women and population and perceive it as their duty to rule them this way. They do their duty as women do their duty fetching water. Admittedly, this seems a too easy explanation and could be naively used as an excuse for autocratic rule which is of course intolerable. We do not have any material to interpret this and it remains a

hypothesis that would require further investigations. But it should not be completely left aside in our analysis here.

5.3.3 Within the *Field*: The Role of NGOs in Water Development

As a last issue within the *Social Field* of rural water supply, we will now turn our attention towards the role of the NGOs (2) involved into the implementation of water supply infrastructure and the relations they have with the other players.

In the first point, we argue for the inclusion of NGOs into our conceptualization of the *Social Field* and with this allocate them a certain power position within this *Field*. We do this following the discussion held in the very first chapter on the common development discourse where we criticised that in the dominant development discourse the fact is often neglected that development agents too hold a certain power position within the development setting, be it conscious or unconsciously. By introducing NGOs as social actors with specific interests and *capital* to bring into the game, we claim to stand back and escape from the blind spots of Eurocentric and hegemonic visions but rather reveal them. By doing so, NGOs are not anymore understood as standing outside of a power setting but *inside* and *between* rural population and its government, and therefore are holding a very critical position.

The second point is the object at stake within our *Social Field*. In a first instance, we have said that access to safe drinking water for rural population and with it an increase in standard of living is at stake – an objective that is in full favour of the rural population. NGOs contribute financial means and know-how to put this goal into practice, political authorities assure that implementations are in line with the national policy and rural population contribute to it labour and physical support. But bearing in mind the power relations within this society as discussed previously, we can not neglect or exclude their effect here. Rather we argue that it is especially there, that power relations become most important. Thus, in line with the facts discussed earlier, we argue that the goal of rural water supply is not in favour of the rural population, but a means to an end of the ruling party's power strategy.

The third point is, therefore, the role NGOs play within such hidden power play. In rural water supply, we have powerful and powerless positions. The central government certainly holds a powerful position. The rural population is at the other end of the scale, in a powerless position. Then NGOs must be somewhere between the two poles, but not outside. As we know, the

government doesn't allow its female population to become more independent and request for political freedom. This is of course valid for the population as a whole. We argue therefore, that the government uses and misuses rural water supply to strengthen its power with a clientelistic policy: (1) As its population gets water, the government escapes criticism from the population and the international community. Rather it can present improvements in basic needs. (2) These basic needs improvements crush claims for more political freedom for the population as everyone is happy with access to water. (3) But these improvements stay on a purely welfarist approach that rather ties gendered *Habitus* and keeps, especially women, within a 'naturalized' connection to water that hampers their rise against suppressive rule. (4) Basic need provision therefore is the minimal concession the government is willing to make in order to be dazzle its population from the overall repressive political agenda.

In this context, we dare to claim that NGOs engaged in water projects as WHH/Orda are fully in line with the government's restricting policy. Of course it is important that people have access to safe drinking water, but NGOs fail to back the rural population in much more profound ways – the right for political freedom, the right to change their government, the right to request that the government's actions have to be in favour of the whole population and not on behalf of its own interests. We therefore interpret the role of NGOs within this power setting as very conflicting and ambiguous: On the one hand, they bring a lot of improvements on local level. People drink safe water. Fewer people fall sick or die due to waterborne diseases. Water pumps reduce time and energy investment of women, reduce their hardship and make their life easier. These are certainly very venerable achievements. But all this is taking place in an overall repressive political system - in a society where hidden power mechanisms work especially well in favour of the powerful, supported by the powerless. In this context, NGO's commitment to basic need provision turns on a broader perspective *against* the rural population. The naturalized connection between women and water is welcome to the government's scheme of power maintenance, and NGOs fail to recognise this as a means to suppress the rural masses.

6 Conclusion

Before concluding on the interpretation we suggest here, a preface has to be made. We do not claim to have found the right and only answer, rather our interpretation is one of several possibilities in a polyphonic interpretation. We have looked at Amharic social reality under a specific angle, here, with the theoretical prerequisites of Bourdieu's perspective. Our starting point was general unease with the current development discourse that holds for several reasons discussed critical implication. Sensitized for subtle and unreflected power relations, we have suggested looking at our subject through Bourdieu's 'glasses' because they are specialized to reveal hidden social inequity and unequal social power relations. Our interpretation is thus a version that puts its attention on societal analysis rather than the evaluation of technical improvements. Additionally, our interpretation includes all societal levels, from the very micro level of daily practices, to the macro level of societal conditions. This might seem to be a bit cheeky, a bit audacious for a MA thesis project with a limited framework. But by staying faithful to Bourdieu's approach, we may claim that he allows us, even more, he calls upon us to include local social practices into a broader societal picture and vice-versa. Thus, we deduce that Bourdieu's theory is neither applicable nor relevant by looking exclusively at local level actors but is rather based on the amalgamation of the entirety of society. Another audacious step we are allowed to do with Bourdieu's permission is the deriving of societal conditions from the very local level. It is true; we have spent only a little time in the country, and have only had a restricted insight into the society. But when following Bourdieu's line, we never the less are allowed to use our local, restricted observations to link them with the broader societal structures that we know through literature research. In this sense, we dare to be a bit bold and to interpret our unpretentious observations on the ground in a broader sense.

Coming now to our interpretation, we summarize it as follows: The modern water supply infrastructures implemented in the rural Amhara region are in many ways a good thing. Amharic rural life is hardship for everyone living in such vulnerable circumstances. It seems evident, that efforts to increase water supply coverage in Ethiopia are of urgent need. Beneficiaries are thankful and express gratitude towards the gracious donors and granting government that promote improved access to drinking water in such rural areas. Commonly, especially women are put in the foreground in rural water management and NGOs insist in their participation in water scheme projects, as they hope to empower them in their status as main beneficiaries of improved water projects. But by doing so, women's connection to water is taken as a natural 'fact' and built upon, what strengthens the gendered *Habitus*. But not only does such *Habitus* restrict women options to act, it does at the same time nothing to reveal another general trait of rural *Habitus*: The just as

'naturalized' submission of the rural population under its government's rule. This is much in favour of the political regime since it is engaged in an increasingly autocratic, repressive rule, hidden in institutional structures and societal mechanisms. Within this general power setting comes in the water project of NGOs to increase water supply coverage in the rural areas. But the NGO's position can't be neutral and outside the general competitive atmosphere in such a situation. Rather NGOs get involuntarily but largely unconsciously involved in the power project of a repressive political system and dance the tune of the government's attempt to grant welfare and general basic need provision but undermines endeavours of its population to strengthen civil society and request for more personal and political freedom. This makes clear, that the purely positive assessment of water supply improvements on local level can by no means be the final end of discussion. Such a narrow development perspective fails to engage in a serious commitment on behalf of the rural population's situation and in particular for women's social role in society.

We therefore argue against a purely positive evaluation of rural water supply improvements in rural Amhara but rather head for a much more political interpretation of the picture. It is enough to listen and remain attentive to all kinds of statements, from all kinds of people while travelling the country to discover that the shiny façade of the development discourse might uncover some shady skeletons. Although the focus of this MA thesis was on the rural population that pronounced rarely any open critique toward the government and its rule, I should not withhold the insight I got from another part of population I met in between, before and after my field stay in the rural villages. It was the young educated population - youngsters that waited in towns and cities for better job opportunities, study places, scholarships and with it more political representation, freedom and options that pronounced harsh critique towards the government – although always off the record. They became new actors in the *Field of power* as they have accumulated *cultural* capital in form of education and academic titles and request their legitimate share of influence. But many of them stated to be hampered to further their education or find a job without being a party member of the EPRDF. Others told of violent incidences with governmental forces during their University stays. Some came back from there and were told to have gone mad. Explanations why remained diffused. One young ex-student reported to have been arrested on the eve of the 2005- Elections at Addis Ababa University and having been detained for one month with other students in a camp under torture-like conditions due to his critical minded stance toward the common political discourse. Here it becomes evident that Ethiopian living is not as harmless as it seems to be when looking at happy women fetching water at a newly established water reservoir. There are violent cracks within this society and they are becoming more and more obvious. It is not only the subtle *Symbolic Violence* as functioning among the rural masses, but *blank* violence towards students and educated

youngsters that seem to pose a growing threat to the authoritarian regime and provoke it to act with less subtle measures than it has done until now.

The question remains critical: What position do NGOs have in such a setting? Until now NGOs and International Agencies such as the World Bank or EU and US governments seem to have closed their eyes and accepted the Ethiopian government's dictate in terms of selective aid. In regard of the geo-strategically important location of Ethiopia at the Horn of Africa, the international community doesn't want to annoy its only ally in proximity of failed or failing states such as Somalia and Yemen that stand under strong Islamistic influence and continue to pump enormous sums of aid into the country. With this MA thesis however, we hope to have made clear that development endeavours initiated and financed by external donors and designers are not as innocent as they might seem. They take place within an overall political situation, with different players and their respective interests that might not always be as venerable as drinking water supply of the rural poor.

Bibliography

Note: Following customary usage, Ethiopian authors are listed alphabetically by their first names. As Ethiopian names are not based on surnames and family names, but on first names (ex. Dessalegn) followed by the father's first name (ex. Rahmato), they are referenced by the author's first name, rather than by the father's first name.

- ABRAHAM B. (2009): Kobo Woreda Community-Led Sub-Projects implemented by Orda, WHH and EU in 2008/2009 (Map 3, personal transmission by the author)
- ADDI, Lahouari (2002): *Sociologie et anthropologie chez Pierre Bourdieu, Le paradigme anthropologique kabyle et ses conséquences théoriques*, Paris
- BADEN, Sally (1999): Practical Strategies for Involving Women as well as Men in Water and Sanitation Activities, Report No 11, Prepared for the Gender Office, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton
- BISESWAR, Indrawatie (2008a): A New Discourse on 'Gender' in Ethiopia, Research Article, *African Identities*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 405 - 429
- BISESWAR, Indrawatie (2008b): Problems of Feminist Leadership among Educated Women in Ethiopia, Taking Stock in the Third Millenium, *Journal of Developing Societies*, 24, 2, 125 – 158
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1972): *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, précédés de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle*, Genève
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1980): *Le sens pratique*, Paris
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1987): *Sozialer Sinn, Kritik der theoretischen Vernunft*, Frankfurt am Main
- BOURDIEU, Pierre, Loïc Wacquant (1996): *Reflexive Anthropologie*, Frankfurt am Main
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1998): *La domination masculine*, Paris
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (2002): *Ein soziologischer Selbstversuch*, Frankfurt am Main
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (2006): Objectification objectified, Henrietta L. Moore, Todd Sanders (eds.), *Anthropology in Theory, Issues in Epistemology*, Malden, Oxford and Carlton, 169 - 178
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (2009): *In Algerien, Zeugnisse der Entwurzelung*, Franz Schultheis et al. (eds.), Konstanz
- CLIFFORD, James (1993): Halbe Wahrheiten, Gabriele Rippl (eds.), *Unbeschreiblich weiblich, Texte zur feministischen Anthropologie*, Frankfurt am Main, 104 – 135
- DESSALEGN Rahmato (1999): Water Resource Development in Ethiopia: Issues of Sustainability and Participation, *Forum for Social Studies*, Addis Ababa, Available online: <http://www.ethiopians.com> (Accessed 2nd March 2010)

- DÖRFLER, Thomas, Olivier Graefe, Detlef Müller-Mahn (2003): Habitus und Feld, Anregungen für eine Neuorientierung der geographischen Entwicklungsforschung auf der Grundlage von Bourdieus „Theorie der Praxis“, *Geographica Helvetica*, 58/ 1, 11-23
- EBATO, Michiko/ Barbara van Koppen (2005): Gender Relations and Management of Multiple Water Use System in Adidaero Watershed, Tigray Region in Northern Ethiopia, *International Research Workshop on 'Gender and Collective Action'*, 17-21 October 2005, Chiang Mai, Thailand
- EGE, Svein/ Yegremew Adal (2002): *Farming assets in North Wälo, Statistics, Maps and Impressions from a travel to North Wälo, October 2000*, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Social Anthropology, Trondheim
Available online: <http://cram-forum.jrc.it> (Accessed 11th March 2010)
- ETHIOPIAN REVIEW: *Ethiopia, A Country of Grey and Gold – Economist*, Press Article published 3rd June 2010
Available online: www.ethiopianreview.com (Accessed 10th June 2010)
- FISCHER, Hans (1998): Feldforschung, Hans Fischer (eds.), *Ethnologie, Einführung und Überblick*, 4., überarbeitete Auflage, Berlin, 73-88
- FLICK, Uwe (1999): *Qualitative Forschung, Theorie, Methoden, Anwendung in Psychologie und Sozialwissenschaften*, Reinbeck bei Hamburg
- FRÖHLICH, Gerhard/ Boike Rehbein(eds.) (2009): *Bourdieu Handbuch, Leben – Werk – Wirkung*, Stuttgart
- HARK, Sabine (2009): Reflexivität (réflexivité), Gerhard Fröhlich, Boike Rehbein (eds.) *Bourdieu Handbuch, Leben – Werk - Wirkung*, Stuttgart
- HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (2010): “One Hundred ways of putting pressure”, *Violations of Freedom of Expression and Association in Ethiopia*, New York
Available on www.hrw.org (Accessed 12th August 2010)
- JURT, Joseph (2008): *Bourdieu*, Stuttgart
- KRAIS, Beate/ Gunter Gebauer (2002): *Habitus*, Bielefeld
- LEFORT, René (2007): Powers – *mengist* – and Peasants in rural Ethiopia: the May 2005 Elections, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45/2, 253 - 273
- von MASSOW, Fra (2000): ‘We are forgotten on Earth’: International Development Targets, Poverty and Gender in Ethiopia, *Gender and Development*, vol. 8, No. 1, 45-54
- MAYRING, Philipp (1996): *Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung, Eine Anleitung zu qualitativem Denken*, 3. überarbeitete Auflage, Weinheim
- MEDILINKS: Africa, Water Supply Coverage, 2000, (Homepage, Map 1)
Available online: <http://medilinkz.org> (Accesses 21st July 2010)

- MEYER, Ursula (2009): Interview Techniques, Qualitative Research Methods at Stake in Field Research, unpublished Report of MA Program Course on: *Environmental Social Geodata: From field to analysis*, University of Fribourg, Switzerland
- MOEBIUS, Stephan/ Lothar Peter (2009) : Die französische Epistemologie, Fröhlich, Gerhard, Boike Rehbein (eds.), *Bourdieu Handbuch, Leben – Werk - Wirkung*, Stuttgart
- NIEMANN, Steffen/ Olivier Graefe (2006): Wasserversorgung in Afrika. Politik, Bevölkerungsdruck und Machtdefizit, *Geographische Rundschau*, 2/ 2006, 30 - 38
- O'REILLY, Kathleen (2006): „Traditional” Women, „Modern“ Water: Linking Gender and Commodification in Rajasthan, India, *Geoforum*, 37, 958 – 972
- RELIEF WEB: Administrative Regions and Zones in Ethiopia (Map 2), produced by UN Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia
Available online: <http://www.reliefweb.int> (Accessed 15th May 2010)
- SCHULTHEISS, Franz (2007): *Bourdieu's Wege in die Soziologie: Genese und Dynamik einer reflexiven Sozialwissenschaft*, Konstanz
- SETEGNE (2003): The Role of Women in the 1996 and 2000 Elections: The Case of Addis Ababa, Unpublished essay, In: Indrawatie Biseswar (2008a): A New Discourse on 'Gender' in Ethiopia, Research Article, *African Identities*, Vol. 6, No.4, 405 – 429
- SHIVA, Vandana (1996): Science, Nature, and Gender, Ann Garry, Marilyn Pearsall (eds.), *Women, Knowledge and Reality, Explorations in Feminist Philosophy*, New York and London
- SINGH, Nandita, Prosun Bhattacharya, Gunnar Jacks, Jan-Erik Gustafsson (2003): Women and Water: A Policy Assessment, *Water Policy* 5, 289-304
- STEINER, Pascale (2001): *Bourdieu lesen und verstehen*, Institut für Ethnologie, Arbeitsblatt Nr. 19, Universität Bern, Bern
Available online: <http://www.unet.univie.ac.at>, (Accessed 19th January 2010)
- STRAND, Veronica (2004): *The Meaning of Water*, New York
- TAGESSPIEGEL (2009): Äthiopien nimmt Helfer unter Aufsicht, Press Article published January 8th, 2009
Available online: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de> (Accessed 13th February 2010)
- TAYE ASSEFA (2008): *Digest of Ethiopia's Policies, Strategies and Programs*, Addis Ababa
- TEGEGE Gebre-Egziabher/ Kassahun Berhanu (2007): A Literature Review of Decentralization in Ethiopia, Taye Assefa and Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher (eds.), *Decentralization in Ethiopia*, Social Science Forum, Addis Ababa, 9 – 68
- TESFAYE Tafesse (2008): A Review of Ethiopia's Water Sector Policy, Strategy and Program, Taye Assefa (eds.), *Digest of Ethiopia's National Policies, Strategies and Programs*, Forum for Social Studies, Addis Ababa, 313 – 336

- TURTON, Anthony R. (2000): Precipitation, People, Pipeline and Power in southern Africa, Toward a 'virtual water'-based Political Ecology Discourse, Philipp Stott, Sian Sullivan (eds.), *Political Ecology, Power, Myth and Science*, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 132-153
- UNICEF (2010): Statistics, At a Glance, Ethiopia
Available online: <http://www.unicef.org> (Accessed 24th August 2010)
- UNICEF (2010): Statistics, At a Glance, Switzerland
Available online: <http://www.unicef.org> (Accessed 24th August 2010)
- UNITED NATIONS (2010): General Assembly declares, Access to clean Water and Sanitation is a Human Right, *UN News Centre*, New York
Available online: <http://www.un.org> (Accessed 20th August 2010)
- WELTHUNGERHILFE (2007): ETH 1064 MDG Water and Sanitation Program in Rural Amhara, *Welthungerhilfe*, Addis Ababa
(Project description, personal transmission by *Welthungerhilfe/GAA*)
- WELTHUNGERHILFE (2008): MDG Water and Sanitation Program in Rural Amhara, WATSAN Baseline Survey Report of Kobo *Woreda*, North Wollo, *Welthungerhilfe/GAA* and Orda, Addis Ababa (Personal transmission by *Welthungerhilfe/GAA*)
- WORLD BANK (2004): Four Ethiopias: A Regional Characterisation, Assessing Ethiopia's Growth Potential and Development Obstacles, Background Report, The World Bank
Available online: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org> (Accessed 4th March 2010)
- WORLD BANK (2005): Scaling up Support to Water Supply and Sanitation in Ethiopia, *Water Feature Stories*, Issue 1, August 2005, The World Bank
Available online: www.worldbank.org/water (Accessed 5th March 2010)
- WORLD BANK (2006): Ethiopia, Managing Water Resources to Maximise Sustainable Growth, Country Water Resources Assistance Strategy, The World Bank, Washington
Available online: <http://vle.worldbank.org> (Accessed 15th June 2010)

Annexes

- Annex 1: MDG Water and Sanitation Program in Rural Amhara, Project description by WHH/GAA (2007) (page 27)
- Annex 2: Timetable as carried out in Field Research (page 48)
- Annex 3: Transcription of Pre-Test Interview in Lamba Girar, Weremenga Kebele (page 49)
- Annexes 4ab: Basic Question sets: Women and Committee members (page 49)
- Annex 5: Local terms of Political and Social Organizations (page 50)
- Annex 6: Google Earth Maps of study sites (page 50)
- Annexes 7ab: Observation Guides: Household and Water point (page 59)
- Annexes 8ab: Developed Interview Guides: Women and WatSanCo members (page 59)
- Annex 9: Overview on Interviews (page 60)
- Annex 10: Criteria of Selected Interviews (page 61)

**Annex 1: MDG Water and Sanitation Program in Rural Amhara,
Project Description by WHH/GAA**



ETH 1064 MDG Water and Sanitation Program in Rural Amhara
Grant Contract No: 9 ACP RPR 39/67

Cooperation of Welthungerhilfe (W), the Organization for Development and Rehabilitation in Amhara (ORDA), and with the financial assistance of the European Union (EU)

Welthungerhilfe in Ethiopia – “A Future without Hunger and Poverty”

Welthungerhilfe (formerly German Agro Action-GAA) works in Ethiopia since more than 30 years to help Ethiopians living a better, healthier and self-reliant life. Today, we have more than 10 local partner organizations and addresses important needs of more than 300,000 Ethiopian with resources amounting to 40 to 50 million Birr every year. Those resources are secured from the European Union, German and US governments as well as private donations from the German public. All interventions serve our common objective of:

“Improved economic and social development of vulnerable households and increased capacities of communities and local development partners to tackle root causes of food insecurity and poverty.”



In this endeavor we are working exclusively with our local partner organizations, which we actively support in planning, monitoring and implementing the interventions as well as in all administrative matters. Through this approach, we have helped local partners to grow and become self-sustaining and confident organizations. And we have reached good and solid implementation capacities that really help the poor in the way they want and in a cost-efficient way.

Core-elements that are part of all our projects are:

- ⇒ Moving towards community-led approaches
- ⇒ Detailed participatory & result-based monitoring incl. MDGs
- ⇒ Building capacities of local partner organisations
- ⇒ Promoting and developing technical innovations
- ⇒ Advancing crosscutting issues, like artemisia as malaria treatment

WASH Background

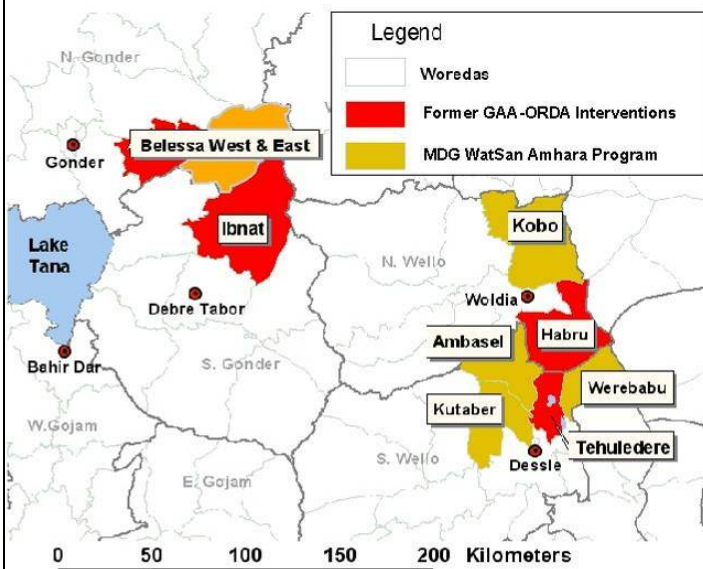
- **Ethiopia** has the second lowest rural water coverage (14.8%) and the lowest rural sanitation coverage (5.9%) worldwide.
- 60% of disease and 15% of total death are due to inadequate water supply and sanitation.
- Outbreaks of Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD)/ Cholera have aggravated the situation
- **Rural Amhara** is with 2.5% sanitation coverage and appr. 15.2% water coverage at the bottom of all regions in Ethiopia



Intervention Summary

“The program aims to increase rural access to basic water, hygiene and sanitation services through numerous sub-projects managed by rural communities of Amhara. For this purpose, solid capacities of Woredas & communities to plan, implement, manage & operate sustainable WASH sub-projects are built. The program also pursues an integrated water resource management approach to incorporate the enhancement of sustainable use of natural resources & small-scale irrigation. By this means, the objective is to reach the MDG (7/target 10) of rural water & sanitation on local level.”

Intervention Area



Facts & Figures

- **Partners:** EC- main donor, **W**-donor & advisory, **ORDA** – implementing partner, **Communities**-implementation & management of sub-projects
- **Intervention Woredas:** Kobo, Kutaber, Worebabu, Ambassel, East Belessa
- **Target Beneficiaries:** ~ 280,000 in Water supply, ~ 450,000 in Sanitation and ~ 5,000 in Irrigation
- **Program Staff:** ORDA – 1 Program Coordinator, 3 Capacity Building Officers, 5 Water -& 5 Sanitation Experts + support staff; GAA – Program Officer & Program Assistant
- **Program Period:** Jan.2007 to Dec. 2011
- **Budget:**

EC	€ 2,887,500	75%
W (GAA)	€ 641,842	16.67 %
Communities	€ 320,658	8.33%
Total	€ 3.850,000	100%



Goals and Objectives

Overall Goal:

- ✓ Contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development in five target Woredas of the Amhara Region in Ethiopia.

Objectives:

- ✓ Solid Capacities of the communities and Woreda administrations to initiate, plan, implement, monitor and sustain water and sanitation projects are built.
- ✓ Reaching the MDGs of halving the population living without access to safe water supply and sanitation in an IWRM approach.

Implementation

The action aims to deliver affordable, locally adapted and lasting basic WASH services to the vulnerable rural population. It contains a large number of demand-driven sub-projects with the following foci:

1. **Capacity Building:** Advice, trainings, material provision, technology transfer, experience sharing;
2. **Water Supply:** low-cost development of springs (SPD), hand-dug wells (HDW), deep wells (DW), semi-urban water supplies (SU) & roof water catchment (RWC) at institutions;
3. **Sanitation & Hygiene:** community-led & participatory hygiene & sanitation transformation (CLEAN PHAST), village hygiene communicators (VHC), school clubs, household latrines, public VIP-latrines, EcoSan-trials & composting;
4. **Irrigation:** cost-efficient micro to small scale irrigation schemes;
5. **Environment:** Reforestation, area closure and gully rehabilitation for environmental sustainability.

Approach and Strategy

Community Based Water and Sanitation:

An innovative community-led project cycle management enables communities to identify, plan, implement and sustain their own WASH sub-projects. After making a proposal, locally elected Water & Sanitation Committees (WatSanCos) receive grants to invest, implement & manage these sub-projects. By providing comprehensive capacity building packages, this concept enhances local self-help potentials, participation & ownership. As a sustainable outcome, communities operate & maintain the schemes by their own resources & through support of private and government actors.

Achievements up-to Mid-2008

Result 1.1 Community Capacity Building:

- ✓ Program Promotion ⇨ 29KPT & 72WatSanCo established
- ✓ 58 artisans trained & equipped ⇨ 10 sample schemes constr.
- ✓ ~435KPT-members trained ⇨ 29Kebele WASH Plans
- ✓ 360WatSanCo-members trained ⇨ Mg't of 72 s.-project

Result 1.2 Woreda Capacity Building:

- ✓ Familiarization & Participatory Planning Workshops
- ✓ 4 ToTs on CL-Planning, Proposals, Management, H&S

Result 2.1 Water Supply:

- ✓ 81Proposals submitted ⇨ Appraised ⇨ 72Approvals
- ✓ Completed construction of 6HDW & 4SPD
- ✓ Ongoing construction of 72HDW & SPD, 2DW, 1SU

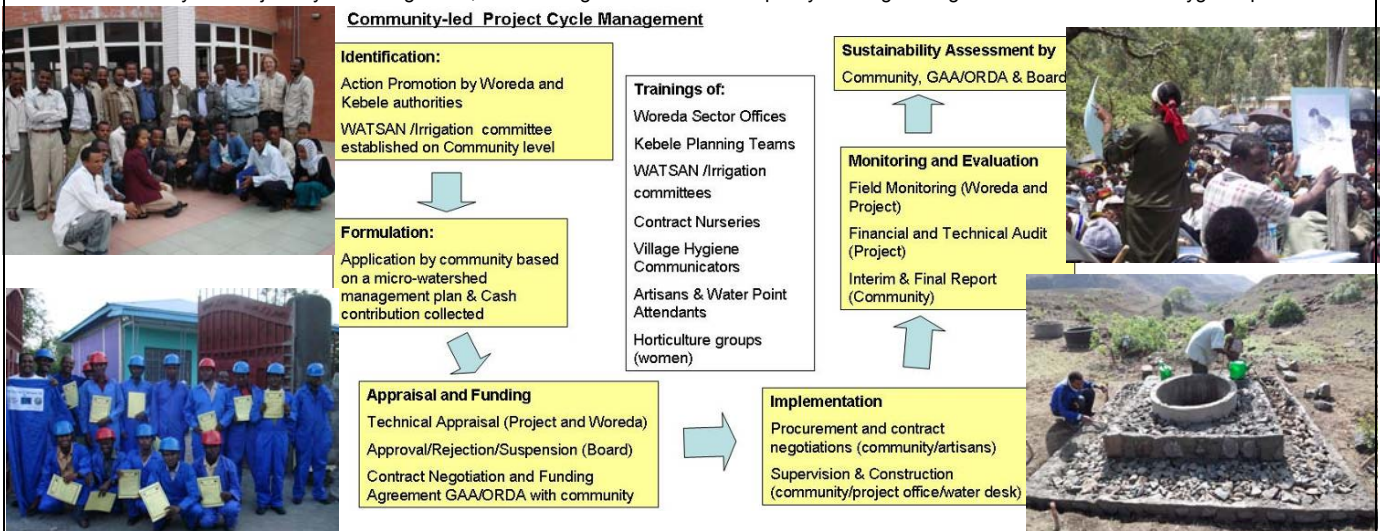
Result 2.3 Hygiene & Sanitation:

- ✓ H&S promotion in 29Kebeles ⇨ start behaviour change
- ✓ ~320 trained VHC facilitate CLTS, PHAST, H&S action
- ✓ Ongoing construction: 15VIPL, 5EcoSan, ~1200 ITPL
- ✓ 16School Clubs supported on WASH, HIV/AIDS, Gender

Opportunities: Enabling environment in nation & W, WASH movements, empowered communities & -contributions

Threats: Low capacities of Woredas & communities, price increase/ inflation, approach-complexity, EC-VAT-rule

Center: Community-led Project Cycle Management, Surrounding: Woreda & local capacity building -left/right- HDW construction & hygiene promotion



Contact

W-Regional Office: Bernhard Meier, Joachim Schwarz, Tel: 011-6624731, P.O.Box: 1866 Addis Ababa, gaa.eth@ethionet.et

W-Program Office: Hendrik Smid, Woldesenbet Gebre, Tel: 033-1124670, P.O.Box: 1518 Dessie, gaa.dessie@ethionet.et

Annex 2: Timetable of carried out Field Research

29 June - 20 September 2009 → (12 Weeks)

Date	Activity	Location
	PREPARATION PERIOD	
1st week: 29 June	Arrival at Addis Ababa (30.06.09) Briefing of project to the responsible persons of the Program Introduction to WHH/GAA in AA	Addis Ababa
2nd week: 6 July	Visits of WHH project in and around AA Field trip with GAA staff to Arsi Negelle (3 days)	Addis Ababa Arsi Negelle
3rd week: 13 July	Preparation for field trip to Amhara (10 days) Departure for Dessie (Travel via Dessie, Kutaber, Hayk, Wuchale) Departure for Kobo Visit of different project sites (Mengello Nacha, Weremanya)	Dessie and area Kobo and area
4th week: 20 July	Kobo <i>Woreda</i> Visit of further project sites (Zobebe mountain, Mariam Sifir, Ras Wuha, Inkoyber Rama) Return to AA via Dessie	Kobo and area
5th week: 27 July	Preparation of Field Research Last discussion with GAA headquarters Briefing of concept	Addis Ababa
	FIELD STUDY PERIOD	
6th week: 3 August	Beginning of Field Study Departure at AA on 2 August Dessie: Searching for translator, Discussion with GAA office, Discussion with two interested students as possible translators Departure for Kobo Meeting with translator Mrs. Meseret Mamo Discussion with ORDA staff in Kobbo Preparation for village stay	Dessie Kobo
7th week: 10 August	Village 1: Stay at Mengello Nacha Observations, interviews	Mengello Nacha
8th week: 17 August	Village 2: Stay at Zobebe Mountain Observations, interviews	Zobebe Town
9th week: 24 August	Stakeholder analysis interviews in Kobo Interviews with Heads of different <i>Woreda</i> offices	Kobo
10th week: 31 August	Village 3: Stay at Inkoyber Rama Observations and interviews	Inkoyber, Rama

11th week: 7 September	Last interviews with Stakeholders in Kobo Final discussion with ORDA staff Departure at Kobo on 10 th September New year holydays (3 days)	Kobo Bahar Dar
EVALUATION PERIOD		
12th week: 14 September	Return to AA Discussion with WHH/GAA Head Preparation of Workshop Presentation of first results Departure for Switzerland (19.09.09)	Transfer to Addis Ababa

Annex 3: **Transcription of Pre-Test Interview**

Saturday, 18 July 2009

Location: Lamba Girar, Weremenya *Kebele*, at the water point
Type: Focus Group Discussion: water guard, two sons, 1 community member
Water point: Spring capture
Translator: Mr. Ketsela, ORDA project manager, Kobbo
Time: 17:00, 10 minutes
Remarks: no recording, pre-test Interview

Names: Abebe (water guard), Desate (Comm. Member), Atalu (villager), Samau (sons of water guard)

Guard: What is your function at the spring?

To prevent the spring from damage, holding the key

What are the opening hours of the spring?

6 a.m. – 9.30 a.m. Water fetching, cloth washing, shower

12 a.m. – 2 p.m. animal

3 p.m. – 6 p.m. water fetching, cloth washing, shower

Was elected as water guard because he is a strong person (whose answer?)

Comm. Member: What is the composition of the committee?

- Chairperson
- Secretary
- Account
- Store man
- Auditor

Elder son: How many persons in the household?

5 persons (father, mother, son, daughter, son)

You have good English!

I am in 8th grade at school in Robit, I am 20 years old. Now the school is on break, but I will go back to school after the break.

Are your sister and brother as well going to school?

Not my brother, but my sister is at 4th grade

Has your father been schooled himself?

No, there was no school at the time.

Beobachtungen, Gedanken

Sohn (20) hilft seiner Mutter manchmal bei Wasser holen,

Sein jüngerer Bruder wirkt krank, gebrechlich, wickelt sich in Tuch ein, verhüllt sein Gesicht

Sehr mager, hält sich im Hintergrund

Sohn (20) fragt mich scheu: How old are you?

Beobachtungen allgemein:

Haartracht der Frauen:

manchmal geflochten bis Anfang Hinterkopf, über der Stirn eine Querreihe Zöpfchen, am

Hinterkopf offenes, buschiges Haar, halblang, dicht

Manche Frauen haben auch ganz kurze Haare oder sogar geschorene Köpfe, ganz ungeschmückt, sehr jugenhaftes Aussehen, manche davon binden ein Band um den Kopf (Haarersatzfunktion)

Annex 4a:

Interview Questions: *WatSanCo members*

Introduction of myself, explanation of purpose of interview

- What is your name and your position in the committee?
- Composition of Committee? Functions? Gender?
- What is the meaning of the name of this site? Spring?
- Did the name exist already before the establishment of the water point or only with its introduction?
- When are the opening hours of the water point? Who is controlling them?
- What are the responsibilities of the water guard?
- How would you describe the qualities of an ideal water guard?
- How much is the salary for the water guard? Is it sufficient for life cost coverage?
- How is it covered/ paid? In money? In crops? In privileges?
- How many households are using this water point? How many persons approximately?
- Is there a regulation about how many liters per household/ per day?
- Is the water sufficient for the needs of the beneficiaries?
- Did the consumption of the households increase/ decrease since the establishment of the well? Spring?
- What are the reasons for that?
- Are the beneficiaries paying for the use of water? How much? Per time unit? Per volume unit?
- How is the maintenance of the infrastructure organized? Who is taking care of repairs?
- Any problems so far with maintenance/ repairs? How did you solve it?
- Who came up with the initiative to capture the spring? To drill bore hole?
- What were the critical issues around water use before the infrastructure was built?
- Did you observe any new conflicts around water use arising since the introduction of the infrastructure?
- Is there more or less conflict than before around the use of the water?
- What are the main reasons for conflict now and then?

- What is/ was the quarrel about?

- What about neighboring households not having access to that water point: Do they have their own water point?

- Did you observe any occurring conflicts due to envy between communities with different access to water?

- How are such tensions solved?

-

Annex 4b: Interview Questions : *Women*

Introduction of myself, explanation of purpose for interview

- What is your *name*? Where is your *house*?
- How many times do you come to the *water point* in one day?
- Do you come alone to fetch water or is anyone *helping* you?
- How many *jerry canes* of water do you get per day?
- How many *litres* is one jerry cane?
- How many *persons* are living in your household? Are using the water?
- Can you tell me, *who* it is beside you? Adults? Children?
- Does your *husband* sometimes help you to fetch water? Or children? Who else?
- How long is this *water point* already established?
- Where did you get the water *before*?
- Are still the *same people* fetching water at the water point as were fetching at the spring at times?
- Were you taking the same *amount* of water when fetching at the spring as you are fetching now? Less? More?
- What is the *reason* for the difference? Access? Availability? Increased consumption?
- Do you think you have more time to do *other things* in the household now that you have easier access to water?
- How are you using this *time*?
- What are the major *health problems* in your community? Family?
- Do you observe *changes* of health problems from when you were fetching at the spring?
- Did you get any *training* how to use the water point? What did you learn?
- Are your children going to school? How many of them?
- Where is the next school? Up to what grade?
- Have you been schooled yourself? Up to what grade?
- Would you send your children to school would there be one in your area?
- Why? Why not?

Annex 5: Local Terms for Political and Social Organisation

Local terms of *administrative* regional organisation

Political administrative organisation	Local terms	Examples (referring to case study)
National State		Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian
Regions (9)	<i>Kililoch</i>	Ex. Amhara
Zones	<i>Zones</i>	Ex. North Wollo
Districts	<i>Woreda</i>	Ex. Kobbo Woreda
Municipality	<i>Kebele</i>	Ex. Weremenya Kebele Ex. Zobeke Kebele Ex. Rama Kebele

Local terms of *social* local organization

Social organization	Local terms	Examples (referring to case study)
Village	<i>goti</i>	Mengello Nacha (Weremenya) Mariam Sifir (Zobeke) Inkoyber (Rama)
Extended family	<i>gibbi</i>	Relatives, 20-30 households
Household	<i>gojjo</i>	Mother, father, children

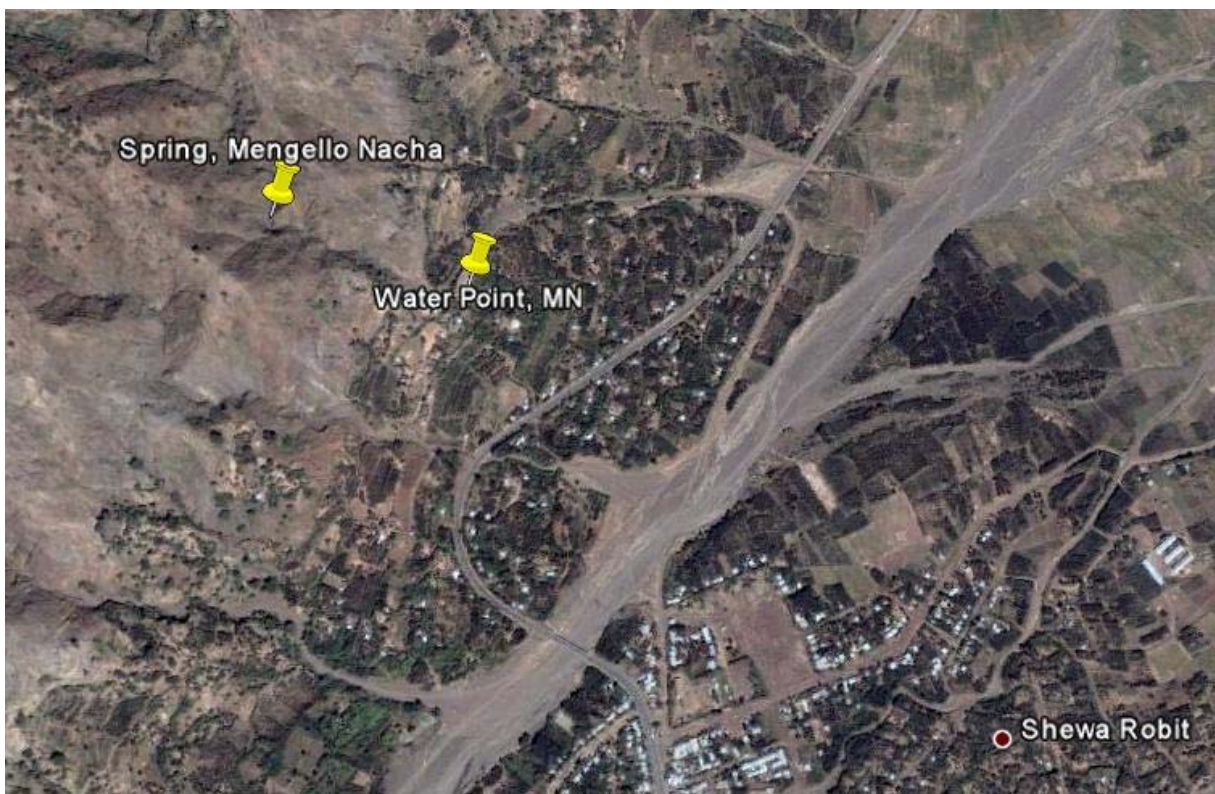
Source: Local informants, Ethiopedia and Wikipedia 2009

Annex 6:

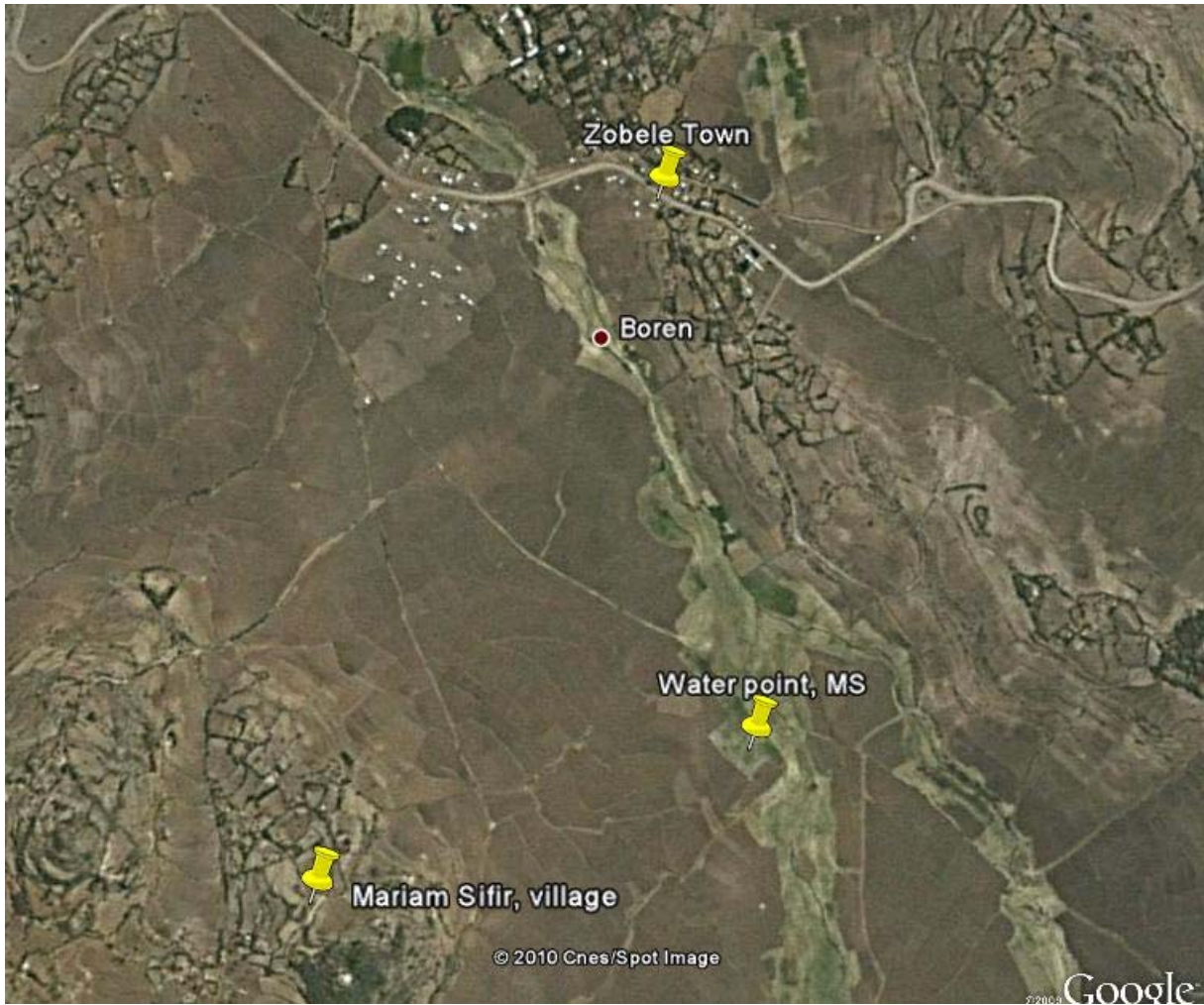
Google Earth Maps of the Research Sites



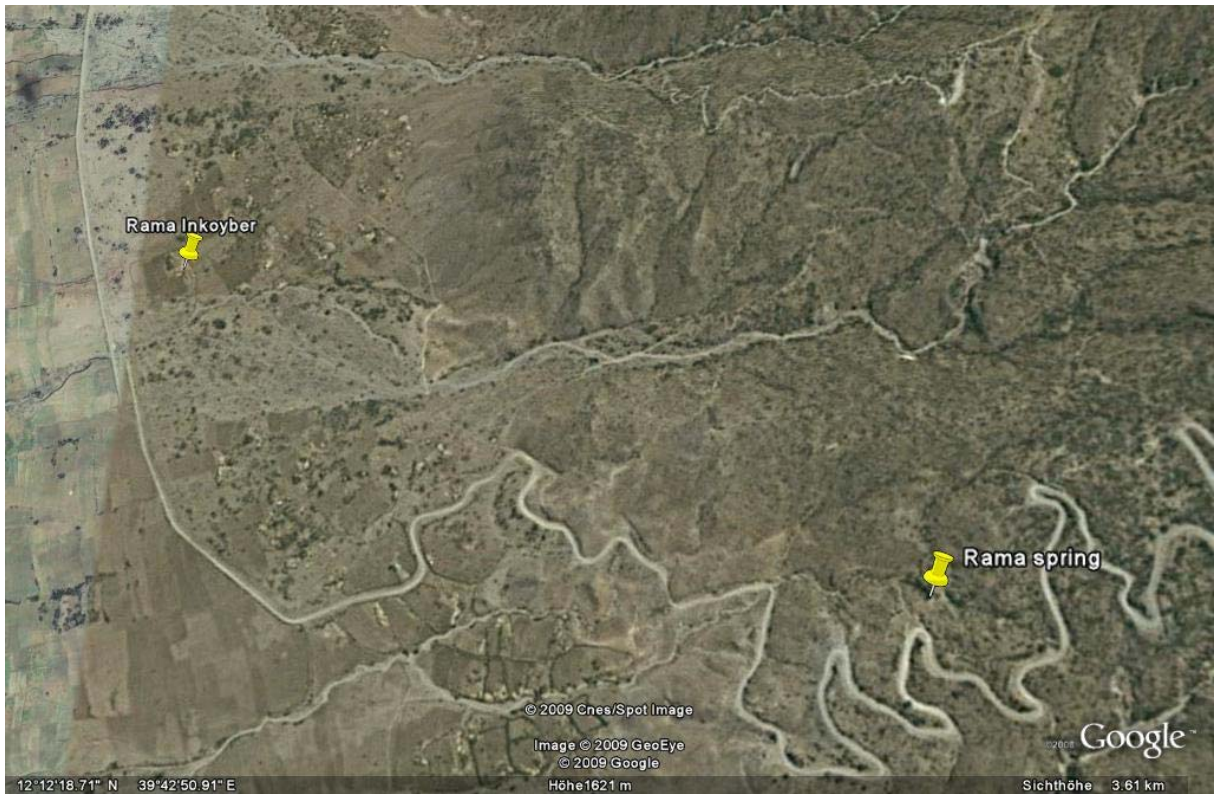
Map 1: Kobo Town, District's capital, North Wollo, Ethiopia (March 2010)



Map 2: Mengello Nacha, Weremenya Kebele, North Wollo, Ethiopia (March 2010)



Map 3: Miriam Sifir and surrounding plateau, Zobele Kebele, North Wollo, Ethiopia (March 2010)



Map 4: Inkoyber with natural spring, Rama Kebele, North Wollo, Ethiopia (March 2010)

Annex 7a:

Observation Guide: *Water Point*

Ort: an der Wasserstelle
Ortschaft: Name von Ortschaft
Zeitpunkt: Morgens, mittags, abends

Raum: *der physische, physikalische Ort*

- Detaillierte Beschreibung der gesamten Wasserstelle
- Beschreibung der topographischen Lage
- Beschreibung der Vegetation, Umgebung, bewohnten Gebiete
- Beschreibung von Gerüchen, Lichtverhältnissen, Geräuschen...
-

Akteure: *die beteiligten Menschen*

- Wer ist innerhalb der beobachteten Zeitspanne zugegen?
- Wer ist aktiv, wer ist passiv?
- Wie stehen die beteiligten Personen zueinander in Beziehung?
- Alter? Geschlecht?
-

Aktivitäten: *ein Set von zusammenhängenden Handlungen*

- Was sind die Hauptaktivitäten während der beobachteten Zeitspanne?
- Welche sich wiederholenden Aktivitäten werden ausgeführt?
-

Gegenstand: *die physikalischen Dinge, die vorhanden sind*

- Mit welchen Geräten wird hantiert?
- Wie werden sie verwendet?
- Wer verwendet sie?
-

Handlung: *einzelne von Menschen ausgeführte Handlungen*

- Detaillierte Beschreibung einzelner Handlungen
- Wer führt sie aus? Wer ist beteiligt?
- Gibt es Ablenkungen? Welche?
-

Ereignis: *Set von zusammenhängenden Handlungen*

- Unvorhergesehene Geschehnisse? Ausserhalb der Routine?
- Wie wird damit umgegangen? Wie in den allgemeinen Ablauf von Handlungen integriert?
- Wird die vorige Handlung unterbrochen? Weitergeführt?
- Wie lange dauert das Ereignis?
-

Zeit: *der Ablauf, der über die Zeit stattfindet*

- Wann beginnt die beobachtete Zeitspanne? Was war vorher? Was folgt nachher?
- Reihenfolge von Handlungen innerhalb der beobachteten Zeitspanne
- Zeitbudget, wie viel Zeit für welche Handlung?
-

Ziel: *die Dinge, die Menschen zu erreichen versuchen*

- Welches ist das Gesamtziel der ausgeführten Handlungen innerhalb der beobachteten Zeitspanne?
- Welche Auswirkungen hat das Erreichen dieses Ziels auf den Alltag?
- Innerhalb welcher Zeitspanne kann das Ziel erreicht werden?
- Wird das Ziel erreicht? Wenn nicht, was ist die Konsequenz davon?
- Was ist der Grund für das Nichterreichen?
-

Gefühle: *Emotionen, die empfunden oder ausgedrückt werden*

- Werden Gefühle ausgedrückt?
- Wie werden sie ausgedrückt? Über Sprache? Über Gesten?
- Haben die ausgedrückten Gefühle einen Adressaten? Wem gegenüber?
- Welche Gefühle werden ausgedrückt?
- Mit welcher Intensität werden Gefühle ausgedrückt?
- Was ist die Reaktion der Mitwelt auf das Ausdrücken der Gefühle?
- Wie oft werden Gefühle ausgedrückt?
- Von wem?
-

Annex 7b:

Observation Guide: *Household*

Ort: Im Haushalt
Haushalt: Name von Personen
Zeitpunkt: Morgens, mittags, abends

Raum: *der physische, physikalische Ort*

- Detaillierte Beschreibung des gesamten *compounds*, Nachbarschaft incl.
- Beschreibung des Innern eines Hauses
- Beschreibung der Umgebung, Lage (
- Beschreibung von Gerüchen, Lichtverhältnissen, Geräuschen...
-

Akteure: *die beteiligten Menschen*

- Wer ist innerhalb der beobachteten Zeitspanne zugegen?
- Wer ist aktiv, wer ist passiv?
- Wie stehen die beteiligten Personen zueinander in Beziehung?
- Alter? Geschlecht?
-

Aktivitäten: *ein Set von zusammenhängenden Handlungen*

- Was sind die Hauptaktivitäten während der beobachteten Zeitspanne?
-

Gegenstand: *die physikalischen Dinge, die vorhanden sind*

- Mit welchen Geräten wird hantiert?
- Wie werden sie verwendet?
- Wer verwendet sie?
-

Handlung: *einzelne von Menschen ausgeführte Handlungen*

- Detaillierte Beschreibung einzelner Handlungen
- Wer führt sie aus? Wer ist beteiligt?
- Gibt es Ablenkungen? Welche?
-

Ereignis: *Set von zusammenhängenden Handlungen*

- Unvorhergesehene Geschehnisse? Ausserhalb der Routine?
- Wie wird damit umgegangen? Wie in den allgemeinen Ablauf von Handlungen integriert?
- Wird die vorige Handlung unterbrochen? Weitergeführt?
- Wie lange dauert das Ereignis?
-

Zeit: *der Ablauf, der über die Zeit stattfindet*

- Wann beginnt die beobachtete Zeitspanne? Was war vorher? Was folgt nachher?
- Reihenfolge von Handlungen innerhalb der beobachteten Zeitspanne
- Zeitbudget, wie viel Zeit für welche Handlung?
-

Ziel: *die Dinge, die Menschen zu erreichen versuchen*

- Welches ist das Gesamtziel der ausgeführten Handlungen innerhalb der beobachteten Zeitspanne?
- Welche Auswirkungen hat das Erreichen dieses Ziels auf den Alltag im Haushalt?
- Innerhalb welcher Zeitspanne kann das Ziel erreicht werden?
- Wird das Ziel erreicht? Wenn nicht, was ist die Konsequenz davon?
-

Gefühle: *Emotionen, die empfunden oder ausgedrückt werden*

- Werden Gefühle ausgedrückt?
- Wie werden sie ausgedrückt? Über Sprache? Über Gesten?
- Haben die ausgedrückten Gefühle einen Adressaten? Wem gegenüber?
- Welche Gefühle werden ausgedrückt?
- Mit welcher Intensität werden Gefühle ausgedrückt?
- Was ist die Reaktion der Mitwelt auf das Ausdrücken der Gefühle?
- Wie oft werden Gefühle ausgedrückt?
- Von wem?
-

Annex 8a: Developed Interview Guide: *Women*

- **Characterization** of Household, Basic Water Consumption
- **Social organization** of water procurement
- **Social practices** around water supply
- **Consumption** pattern of the Household
- **Health** Situation of Household
- **Schooling** pattern of the Household
- **Economic strategies** of Household
- **Gender- labour division**
- **Generational organisation** of labour
- **Changes** of patterns through new water point

Introduction of myself, explanation of purpose for interview

Characterization of Household, Basic Water Consumption

- How many times do you come to the *water point* in one day?
- How many *jerry canes* of water do you get per day?
- How many *litres* is one jerry cane?
- How many *persons* are living in your household? Are using the water?
- Can you tell me, *who* it is beside you? Adults? Children?

Social organization of water procurement

- Do you come alone to fetch water or is anyone *helping* you?
- Does your *husband* sometimes help you to fetch water? Children? Who else?
- Are you using animals (camels, donkeys) as transport means?
- Why? Why not?
- How long is this *water point* already established?
- Where did you get the water *before*?

Social practices around water supply

- What time are you coming to the water point usually? Morning? Evening? Rush hour?
- The main purpose to fetch water: For what other reason are you coming to the water point?
- Cloths washing? Cattle watering? Social meeting? Personal hygiene? Drinking?
- On what other occasions are you meeting your neighbours?
- Is it exclusively women's gathering or is your husband and children as well coming together for these other occasions?
- Would you like to tell us about what subjects the discussions are often centring at the water point? At the coffee ceremony? At fire wood collection?

Consumption pattern of the Household

- Are still the *same people* fetching water at the water point as were fetching at the spring at times?
- Were you taking the same *amount* of water when fetching at the spring as you are fetching now? Less? More?
- What is the *reason* for the difference? Access? Availability? Increased consumption?

Health Situation of Household

- What are the major *health problems* in your community? Family?
- Do you observe *changes* of health problems from when you were fetching at the spring?
- Did you get any *training* how to use the water point? What did you learn?

Schooling pattern of the Household

- Are your children going to school? How many of them?
- Where is the next school? Up to what grade?
- Have you been schooled yourself? Up to what grade?
- Would you send your children to school would there be one in your area?
- Why? Why not?

Economic strategies of Household

- What are you growing on your farm?
- What is the main crop on your farm?
- Is it for self consumption or are you selling on the market?
- What are the major challenges in terms of food security in your community?
- Do you think you have more time to do *other things* in the household now that you have easier access to water?
- How are you using this *time*?

Gender- labour division, generational organisation of labour

- What are your responsibilities in the household?
- What is the duty you spend most of your daily time on?
- What are your husband's duties?
- What are typically the duties of children?
- Why is water fetching woman's work?
- Is there any blurring of that division imaginable, practicable for you?
- What does your husband think about that?

Changes of these patterns through new water point

- Did you observe any changes of your own water consumption since the new water point is established?
- Any changes in your health situation?
- Any changes in the organization of your daily work in your family? With your husband and children?
- ...

Annex 8b: Developed Interview Guide: *WatSanCo*

Introduction of myself, explanation of purpose of interview

Characterization of the committee and its members

- What is your name and your position in the committee?
- Composition of Committee? Functions? Gender?
- ...

Background of the water point

- What is the meaning of the name of this site? Spring?
- Did the name exist already before the establishment of the water point or only with its introduction?
- Who came up with the initiative to capture the spring? To drill bore hole?
- What were the critical issues around water use before the infrastructure was built?

Organization of the water point

- When are the opening hours of the water point?
- Who is controlling them?

Function of Water guard

- What are the responsibilities of the water guard?
- How would you describe the qualities of an ideal water guard?
- How much is the salary for the water guard?
- Is it sufficient for life cost coverage?
- How is it covered/ paid? In money? In crops? In privileges?

Beneficiaries of the water point

- How many households are using this water point? How many persons approximately?

- Is there a regulation about how many liters per household/ per day?
- Is the water sufficient for the needs of the beneficiaries?
- Did the consumption of the households increase/ decrease since the establishment of the well? Spring?
- What are the reasons for that?

Financing of the water point, maintenance, repairs

- Are the beneficiaries paying for the use of water? How much? Per time unit? Per volume unit?
- How is the maintenance of the infrastructure organized? Who is taking care of repairs?
- Any problems so far with maintenance/ repairs? How did you solve it?

Conflicts and tensions

- Did you observe any new conflicts around water use arising since the introduction of the infrastructure?
- Is there more or less conflict than before around the use of the water?
- What are the main reasons for conflict now and then?
- What is/ was the quarrel about?
- What about neighboring households/ communities not having access to that water point: Do they have their own water point?
- Did you observe envy between communities with different access to water?
- How are such tensions solved?
-

Annex 9: Audio Files

Folder A: Mengello Nacha

	Person's Name	Date/ Time	Length	Discussion Content
Mengello A1	Mr. Desalegn WatSanCo Member	11 August 09 8:00	49m 53s	Water point challenges
Mengello A2	Three women, Ieschi and her two neighbors	12 August 09 14:05	25m 47s	Family planning, education, school fees
Mengello A3	Old mother of Ieschi	12 August 09 14:54	24m 08s	Life in passed times, rain and water issues
Mengello A4	Mullu and friends	13 August 09 10:29	31m 46s	Hygiene and Sanitation
Mengello A5	Mullu	13 August 09 10:50	18m 24s	Injera eating, atmosphere
Mengello A6	Mullu	13 August 09 11:33	6m 05s	Gibbi drawings
Mengello A7	Mr Addis, Kebele committee member	13 August 09 18:55	12m 39s	Village situation, water, spring situation before
Mengello A8	Priest Moges and wife Ieschi	13 August 09 21:12	24m 52s	Welfare talks, thanks

Folder B: Mariam Sifir, Zobebe

	Persons Name	Date/ Time	Length	Discussion Content
Zobebe B1	Mr. Yared, Kebele Planning Team Member, Natural Resources	18 August 09 15:06	33m 54s	Organization of Zobebe Kebele
Zobebe B2	Mariam Sifir water users	19 August 09 17:37	12m 38s	Fighting between Mariam Sifir water point users
Zobebe B3	myself	19 August 09 18:21	15m 48s	Personal thoughts at MS water pump
Zobebe B4	Shashitu	20 August 09 12:10	2m 11s	Coffee ceremony, coffee pounding
Zobebe B5	Shashitu and women	20 August 09 13:30	27m 44s	Water situation and management
Zobebe B6	Meseret	20 August 09 13:41	6m 57s	What is a gibbi?
Zobebe7	Woman at Shashitu's gibbi	20 August 09 15:29	21m 11s	Dirt in the MS water, women's daily activities, celebration preparation
Zobebe B8	Treasury of WatSanCo, Water Guard	20 August 09 16:19	15m 23s	Financial system, numbers, water guard's payment
Zobebe B9	Old Grand mother	20 August 09 18:53	35m 59s	Household talks, worries about rain, old mothers sickness, magic
Zobebe B10	Mrs. Workenesch and Meseret's neighbor's two sisters	21 August 09 12:43	14m 55s	Sanitation training, <i>shinti bet</i> , Health Extension Worker (?)
Zobebe B11	See 10	21 August 09 12:44	1m 09s	Certificate on Model Household
Zobebe B12	Old lady, sister of Meseret's neighbor	21 August 09 13:25	15m 28s	Safety Net support, water in Zobebe town, America-centrism, Aid perception
Zobebe B13	Raswuha, Chairman of WatSanCo	21 August 09 15:09	27m 14s	Management of Water pump
Zobebe B14	Geml (camel!)	22 August 09 10:32	3m 13s	Camel barking sound

Folder C: Stakeholder Analysis, Kobo

	Persons Name	Date/ Time	Length	Discussion Content
St Analysis C1	Mr. Ali Said, Woreda Water Office	26 August 09 11:06	26m 55s	Along prepared questions
St Analysis C2	Mr. Thelahun, Woreda Health Office	27 August 09 9:04	20s	<i>(No recording, mistake with recorder)</i>
St Analysis C3	Mr. Ketsela, ORDA Office	8 September 09 15:02	57m 11s	Findings and results
St Analysis C4	Mrs. Atalla, Mrs. Genetti, Head and Staff of Woreda Office of Women Affairs	8 September 09 15:44	11m 47s	<i>(Refusing of Interview due to translation problems)</i>
St Analysis C5	Mrs. Atalla, Mrs. Genetti, Mrs. Alem, Head and Staff of Woreda Office of Women Affairs	9 September 09 9:54	1h13m55s	Women's hardship, harmful traditional practices
St Analysis C6	Mr. Allamu Takuari, Woreda Administration	10 September 09 7:42	22m 41s	Water management on the Woreda level

Folder D: Inkoyber, Rama

	Persons Name	Date/ Time	Length	Discussion Content
Rama D1	Ato Nega, Chairman of WatSanCo	31 August 09 17:49	42m 42s	Construction site for reservoir, context of project
Rama D2	Mr. Marsha, Kebele Manager Rama	1 September 09 16:19	26m 17s	
Rama D3	Rama village meeting	2 September 09 12:19	1h21m37s	Water point organization, construction, labor contribution
Rama D4	Lady and her father-in-law	2 September 09 14:32	1h23m04s	Twin's birth, fighting for water, mass exodus to Saudi Arabia
Rama D5	Mrs. Schischig, Treasury of WatSanCo plus some committee men	2 September 09 18:06	1h17m02s	Women's perspective of water situation
Rama D6	Gennet, young student	3 September 09 11:27	49m 18s	Water in high land Rama, students life, education
Rama D7	Mrs. , injera woddet and some other neighbors (see 5)	3 September 09 19:15	36m 04s	Water situation, conflict with neighbor about spring water
Rama D8	Meles, young boy	3 September 09 20:02	20m 17s	Exodus to Saudi Arabia, youth's perspective
Rama D9	Ato Nega and wife Ergo	4 September 09 12:45	9m 56s	Farewell talks and thanks

Annex 10: Selection of Interviews for Analysis

Selection of interviews analysed with ATLAS/ti

- Criteria:
- Interviews with substantial content on relevant topics
 - Equal represented of study sites (Mengello, Zobebe, Rama)
 - Equal representation of social positions (Committee, Official, Beneficiary)
 - Equal representation of Gender (Women, Men)
 - Equal representation of Generations (young/old)
 - Beneficiaries of water scheme (yes/no)

	Interview Code	Interview partner (s)	Committee	Official	Beneficiary	Fem Mal	Young old
1	Mengello 1	Mr. Dessalegn WatSanCo Member	Committee		X	men	middle
2	Mengello 2	Three women (Ieschi and two neighbours)			X	women	young
3	Mengello 3	Old mother of Ieschi			X	woman	old
4	Zobebe 9	Old Grandmother in neighbouring village			no	woman	old
5	Zobebe 10/11/12	Mrs. Workenesch, two older neighbours			X	women	old young
6	St Analysis 4/5	Mrs. Atalla, Mrs. Genetti, Woreda Office for Women Affair		Official		women	young
7	St analysis 6	Mr. Allamu Takuari, Head of Woreda Administration		Official		men	middle
8	Rama 3	Rama village meeting	Committee		no	men	middle
9	Rama 4	Mrs. Yelfim and old uncle-in-law, Ato Balay			X	woman man	old young
10	Rama 5	Mrs. Schischig and WatSanCo Members	Committee		no	men women	middle