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By the Community, for the Community

An Investigation of Participatory Video with Karrayyu Oromo pastoralists, Ethiopia

Beth Selina Cullen

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Durham University, Department of Anthropology

2011

Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate the potential of Participatory Video (PV) as a method for facilitating collaborative research; and, by this methodology, produce an ethnographic description of Karrayyu Oromo community, lifestyle and culture which is accessible by and useful for community members, as well as researchers.

The Karrayyu are one of the last Oromo groups to practice pastoralism and Oromo traditions such as the *Gadaa* system and *Waaqeffata,* the Oromo religion. However, they are struggling due to a range of pressures, including the recent introduction of a large scale irrigation scheme which aims to convert them from pastoralism to agriculture. This thesis attempts to document aspects of Karrayyu culture and way of life, as well as attitudes towards the transition from pastoralism to agriculture.

The overall research approach falls under collaborative anthropology. Community members were involved throughout, from designing research questions and areas of inquiry, to gathering data and analysis. Although I specified a methodological approach I did not define the research area or specific research questions. Video was used as a tool to engage participants as co-creators of knowledge, thus shifting the power dynamics of knowledge creation away from purely researcher driven enquiry. Throughout this thesis I merge ideas taken from collaborative ethnography, engaged anthropology and participatory research in order to provide a theoretical background for the study of PV.

This research seeks to generate a more in-depth, critical and reflexive understanding of PV as a research tool. The thesis explores PV as a method and its potential uses for anthropological research. I focus on power dynamics and representation, PV and indigenous knowledge, PV and vertical communication, and PV as a form of cultural brokerage. I argue that PV answers calls for collaborative forms of research and offers opportunities for a new form of "engaged" anthropology, whilst also acknowledging the challenges raised by the use of PV.

As well as investigating the use of PV, this research aims to make a positive contribution to the Karrayyu community. PV enabled participants to convey their reality as they see it, which was particularly important for members of a marginalised group who have been denied opportunities to represent their culture and history, and who currently have little influence over the policies that affect them. The thesis explores issues of representation, attempts to address access to and ownership of knowledge, and raises questions about the relevance and application of research for indigenous groups like the Karrayyu.

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List of Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DA	Development Agent
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
ETV	Ethiopian Television
GTF	Gudina Tumsa Foundation
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
KA	*Kebele* Association
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OWWCE	Oromia Water Works Construction Enterprise
PA	Pastoralist/Peasant Association
PV	Participatory Video
TGE	Transitional Government
TPLF	Tigrean People's Liberation Front
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation

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This thesis has been crafted to honour the Karrayyu community, their knowledge and traditions that they are so eager to share with others.

Deep peace of the
running waves to you.

Deep peace of the
flowing air to you.

Deep peace of the
quiet earth to you.

Deep peace of the
shining stars to you.

Deep peace of the
Son of Peace to you.

(A Celtic Prayer)

Chapter One: Introduction

I visited the Karrayyu Oromo pastoralists for the first time in September 2008. I had been told that the Karrayyu are guardians of the ancient Oromo tradition and represent to many what Oromo culture was once like. I left the Karrayyu in April 2010 filled with sadness. I could see huge areas of ploughed land, that until recently had been pasture for Karrayyu herds. Government administrators watched over the Karrayyu as they learned how to plough the arid land; animals and people drinking and washing in water that is brought by newly built irrigation channels. The Awash River was once their main water source, but they no longer have access to it due to developments along the river bank. The water is being pumped back to them but it comes with a price, the conversion from pastoralism to farming. Many see this development as yet another change to Karrayyu territory and culture. Previous studies have focused on the continuity of their way of life through their apparent ability to adapt to huge changes; the Karrayyu, like other pastoralist groups, are described as remarkably flexible. But this is perhaps the end of continuity for the Karrayyu. They believe they are watching the death of their culture. Many of the Karrayyu I spoke with anticipate that their traditional life will slip away with the coming of farming. They say their culture depends on the freedom, collective values and mobility that come with the pastoralist way of life. This thesis is an attempt to document Karrayyu culture and way of life, in collaboration with members of the community, before, as they say, it is too late.

> 'Now the irrigation, which is going to take away our Oromoness, is coming and we feel as if we are going to lose our identity because our culture is attached to our way of life. Our animals are key factors for our life. If we start farming when the irrigation comes there will be no more animals. No more animals means no more traditions, no more *Gadaa*[1], no more 'we-ness'. In the past we worshipped properly in the traditional way and our *Waaqa*[2] heard us, but now I doubt if we are heard'. (Bulga Jilo, a Karrayyu elder).

[1] *Gadaa* refers to the Karrayyu socio-political system organised by generation sets, the rituals of that system and has many resonances for Oromo

[2] *Waaqa* is the Oromo word for God and relates to their traditional religion, *Waaqeffata*

Pastoralists represent 12% of the Ethiopian population (Helland, 2006), or 9.5 million people belonging to more than 29 ethnic groups. They raise about 40% of all cattle in Ethiopia, 75% of goats, 20% of equines and 100% of camels, and occupy about 40% of the land, practically all in the lowlands (Kassa, 2002). As a recent report states 'Although pastoralism plays a significant role in the Ethiopian economy, this sector with huge economic, social and environmental roles and benefits has been largely marginalised by the development policies and strategies in the past' (SOS-Sahel, 2007: 1). Pastoralists face increasing challenges to survive in an environment marked by dwindling water and pasture resources and struggle against outside forces affecting their way of life. Despite being a significant proportion of the Ethiopian population they remain largely outside the national decision-making processes in water development and land use planning (Kloos et al., 2010: 254).

Objectives of study and approach

This research has two main aims: to investigate the potential of Participatory Video (henceforth referred to as PV) as a method for facilitating collaborative research; and, by this methodology, produce an ethnographic description of the Karrayyu Oromo community, lifestyle and culture which is accessible by and useful for community members, as well as researchers. Participatory Video was used to direct the research process and my insights and understandings of the Karrayyu developed through the PV work. The collaborative approach, the participatory video work, and descriptions of Karrayyu culture are interconnected and inform one another.

Before writing the PhD proposal I took a course in Participatory Video with InsightShare, an organisation with over 15 years experience facilitating PV projects. I was interested in how PV could be used as a potential way of representing indigenous knowledge. I had read the work of Sol Worth who taught members of the Navaho community to use cameras to ‘produce a visual statement of their own view of their culture’ (Worth & Adair, 1972: 254). I wanted to investigate whether this methodological approach could fit with the theory of collaborative ethnography and attempts to decolonize research processes. Participatory Videos are statements about how people see their world and issues which are important to them, as opposed to conventional research approaches which are usually ‘defined and conducted by individuals whose theories and prescriptions are derived from the apprehension of their world and their

history, their social neuroses and their value systems' (Soyinka cited in Hoppe, 1993: 623). PV is an emergent field within research and development and more in-depth understandings of the method are needed. There is 30 years of practice history but the use of PV is still evolving in an academic context, there is a small amount of literature, and as such a wide scope for contributions to this field.

The research began with certain questions: can anthropologically informed use of PV stimulate collaborative approaches to the production of knowledge and analysis? Can PV be used to provide routes to and representations of other people's knowledge and experiences that would be inaccessible through conventional anthropological methods? I began with a research proposal which outlined a participatory approach using PV as a method but did not define the specific research questions. This was intentionally done because if one is to undertake participatory research then the questions and area of study should be chosen in collaboration with research participants, to ensure that the results are directed by and of use to participants, not just the researcher. This might appear to run against the grain of conventional research practice where one is supposed to formulate a hypothesis, aims and objectives from the beginning often whilst in the University environment. Intellectual issues and pre-occupations are of central concern in the initial planning of a research project. Conventionally one has to have a concrete idea of the area of study; 'It is a fundamental intellectual necessity for the researcher to be able to identify, define and formulate a "problem" for investigation' (Ellen, 1984: 158). As such, research objectives are usually defined before going to the field and increasingly so due to the requirements of funding bodies.

Rose (1990) writes that during graduate school anthropologists are 'groomed' or 'socialised' into their profession. He argues that there is a focus on texts and production of academic knowledge which is carefully controlled by the discipline. First we read, then experience the world in the light of that reading, then publish the results of our reading and experience within the culture of the university, the profession. We therefore embark on fieldwork with preconceived disciplinary, theoretical as well as personal influences. One cannot, of course remove these influences: 'Objective knowledge is impossible, since the researcher is always part of the world he or she studies, knowledge-making cannot be neutral and disinterested, rather it is a political process in the service of particular purposes' (Reason & Bradbury, 2006:

6). As Cliggett points out, the very wish to allow local people to define the research topic 'emerges from a theoretical perspective' (2005: 33). With this in mind, I wanted to try an approach that aimed to represent 'the other' by placing 'the other' at the centre of the process of knowledge production.

As part of the anthropological approach it is necessary for the researcher to participate in the life of the community. However, I believe to adequately represent a 'culture' it is essential to involve community members in the research process. Some may contend that research, particularly research that uses participant observation and other qualitative approaches, naturally involves the participation of community members as informants and translators. However, there are different degrees of participation for different purposes, and although collaborative efforts are key to the production of anthropological knowledge they are frequently hidden in outcomes of anthropological research. Sanjek (1993: 13) refers to the lack of recognition and appreciation towards assistants and key informants as 'anthropology's hidden colonialism' and asserts that: 'ethnographers and assistants together made anthropology', it is a shared process of knowledge production (1993: 16).

My aim was to work with members of the Karrayyu community from the beginning of the research process, from designing the research questions and areas of inquiry, to gathering data and analysing it. I wanted to avoid shallow attempts at involving community members in so-called participatory research whilst still meeting predesigned agendas. I believe that this kind of approach yields a different quality of ethnographic finding whilst still adhering to the basic tenet of anthropology: to more deeply grasp the 'other's' point of view and vision of the world. However, such collaborative approaches are not always welcomed by academics. 'In the academy, one might conclude, the “native’s point of view” is still largely unwelcomed from the natives themselves' (Sanjek, 1993: 16).[3] Attitudes towards, and resistance to, collaborative approaches to research will be discussed throughout this thesis.

This research seeks to generate more in-depth, critical and reflexive understanding of PV as a research tool. Video cannot be viewed as neutral, it is itself a form of power in terms of

[3] Throughout this thesis the term 'native' is used to highlight the neo-colonial nature of traditional anthropology

representation and access to resources. Film is already used for applied purposes, particularly in the realm of development, for example as an extension tool for promoting and encouraging ‘good’ practices. In such contexts film is used to communicate the views and ideas of those in power, who have access to such resources. This research explores whether the use of film can be reversed and used as an effective way for local people to communicate with local development workers, local government officials, local communities, and researchers. The use of PV in academic research raises interesting questions. If the films are undirected and entirely driven by ‘them’ are they still of interest to the anthropologist? How effective is PV as a way of communicating the point of view of a marginalised community in a way that is understandable, accessible and relevant to 'outsiders'? Film can be a way of bridging gaps by trying to increase understanding, however it also has the potential to reinforce misunderstanding, and as a tool can potentially be hijacked or misused. These issues will be explored and linked into wider debates regarding participation.

As well as investigating the use of PV, this research aims to make a positive contribution to the Karrayyu community through building on previous ethnographic knowledge and enabling the Karrayyu to give voice to their experiences and document their culture, knowledge and perspectives for future generations. The Karrayyu have an awareness that they are witnessing the decline of their way of life and culture, and this is one of the main reasons they agreed to participate. In this way it is hoped that PV allows people to convey their reality as they see it and is perhaps a way of providing a more authentic narrative as well as a critique of mainstream discourse. This is particularly important for marginalised groups like the Karrayyu who have been denied opportunities to represent their culture and history, and who currently have little say in the policies that affect them. The growth of participatory research approaches and methods indicates that there is an acknowledged need for collaborative and community-based projects which 'address the given populations research needs' (Crate, 2008: 573). This research raises the issue of representation, attempts to address access to and ownership of knowledge, and the relevance and application of research for indigenous groups such as the Karrayyu.

Concepts of 'culture' and 'community'

I refer to Karrayyu 'culture' partly due to ease of terminology; as Clifford said 'Culture remains a deeply compromised idea I cannot yet do without' (1988: 10). The old notions of territorially fixed communities and stable, localised cultures have been widely criticised. Increasingly categories such as ‘culture’ are recognised as analytical tools which are not as tangible as we imagine them to be. Wolf stresses that we should move away from ‘endowing nations, societies and cultures with the qualities of internally homogeneous and externally distinctive and bounded objects’ (1982: 6). It is important to consider that both geographically and culturally the Karrayyu are bound up with national and global processes. 'The Karrayyu society has always been linked through conflict and co-operation with other pastoral, agrarian and town based groups' (Frejaques, 2003: 290). In addition cultures are internally fragmented and made up of a multiplicity of voices, some more dominant than others (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). An awareness of the relationship between culture and 'power' is crucial as the idea of culture emphasises the shared, the agreed on and the orderly, and not everyone experiences 'culture' in the same way.

However, I continue to use the term 'culture', with an awareness of the fact that it is problematic, because the concept of '*Aada Karrayyu*' is clearly defined, 'Every aspect of Karrayyu society is guided and decided according to prescriptive norms of *Gadaa* and *aadaa* (culture)' (Jilo, 2009). Tablino in his study of the Gabra Oromo writes: *'Aada* means custom, the rules of life, tradition, the model of behaviour followed by the ancestors, the way one should behave towards people and with God' (1999: 245) He also writes: 'When we ask the Gabra the 'why?' of a certain behaviour, the answer is invariably the same, '*Aada tenna*' (It is our custom)' (ibid.: 246) The same is true of the Karrayyu, '*aada*' is something every community member is aware of, it is discussed as well as practised. As Tablino has written: 'Children are taught *aada* by experiencing it, participating in it ... This holds true in work and in ritual, in the organisation of society, in prayer, in the construction of the houses, in everything' (ibid.).

Like 'culture' the concept of 'community' is also contested. Amit & Rapport discuss the term community which they believe is 'to vague, too variable in its applications and definitions to be

of much utility as an analytical tool' (2002: 13). Watts observes, 'community' is 'rarely subject to critical scrutiny', it 'is often invoked as a unity, as an undifferentiated thing with intrinsic power that speaks with a single voice', and concludes 'Communities are of course nothing of the sort' (2000: 37). Murphree writes: 'Communities are not, however, monoliths, undifferentiated entities. They consist of categories of people distinguished by age, sex, interest and power. Nor do they exist in a political or economic vacuum; they are linked in various ways with the larger society that surrounds them' (Murphree, 1994: 403). Other authors highlight that ‘use of the term “community” creates an image of unity through the "papering over" of differences that might prevail within actually existing communities" (Agrawal & Gibson 2001: 9). For example Lienhardt's (1961) work on the Dinka has been criticised for being overwhelmingly centred on males, 'only once is a woman's view mentioned and it is in affirmation of men's relation to cows, saying nothing of how women experience cattle' yet he uses terms such as 'the Dinka' or 'Dinka' throughout his book (Clifford, 1986: 17). It is for these reasons that the idea of 'community' is questioned in participatory theory, participatory methods are often used to deconstruct such ideas and explore the invisible, the weak and the marginalised.

Although I worked with a small group of community members I still refer to 'the community' or '*uummata*' in *Afaan Oromo*. The definition of 'community' refers to a group whose members live in a specific locality, share government, have a common cultural and historical heritage and share common characteristics or interests. It also highlights that the group may be perceived, or perceive itself as distinct in some respect from the larger society in which it exists. Keeping this in mind I refer to the Karrayyu community because they are clearly defined, exist in a specific locality, and certain institutions define membership to the community. A sense of Oromoness is an important part of Karrayyu identity, defined by language, the traditional belief system, *gosa* (clan*)* and *tuuta* (generation set) membership. These are elaborated in Chapter Five. Karrayyu can tell who is and isn't a member of the community based on language, names, dress, and hairstyles. They can distinguish members of the Afar community, who are generally considered enemies, but who have similar way of life and ways of dressing through subtle differences that would be imperceptible to an outsider. People can tell if someone is Karrayyu based on the way they walk and hold themselves. Le Wita writes that it is these implicit understandings, which

encompass invisible social categories which are often unspoken or denied by members, that govern whether you are a member of a social group (Le Wita, 1994).

An emphasis on 'community', 'Karrayyu culture' and social harmony emerges throughout the thesis, partly because this is something that the community members I worked with were keen to emphasise. This may be seen as a weakness of the research approach, but I believe that it leads to interesting insights into how members of the Karrayyu community understand their situation and want to be represented. Harmony is a key component to the collective way of doing things, which is fundamentally important for pastoralism as a system. The majority of participants stressed their wish to maintain pastoralism. Nevertheless, I acknowledge 'the community' is not necessarily united in interests or speaks with one voice. People in any community have different perspectives and priorities, the representation of which is mediated by power relations. I attempt to address these issues to try and overcome oversimplification of a complex community. I spent time in other areas within the *woreda* to gain a broader understanding of the differences in lifestyle and conditions within the community. Underlying tensions and divergence of opinion, emerge particularly in relation to the changes that are taking place within Karrayyu society, an emphasis on harmony and collectivity is one way of dealing with this. I will discuss this in more detail later in the thesis.

The Karrayyu are aware of the impact of change, the fragility of their culture and community: and are acutely aware of the importance of defending their place and identity. As an anthropologist aiming to work alongside people it is important to understand and be sensitive to these factors. 'Recent work has moved beyond debates about authenticity, essentialism, and social constructionism to examine the historical, social, political and economic contexts shaping how and why indigenous groups decide to project and promote particular images of themselves' (Hodgson, 2002: 1040). The concept of 'culture' and the idea of 'community' is vital to Karrayyu and wider Oromo identity, due to the history of colonialism and attempts to destroy Oromo culture. To criticise or weaken Oromo ideas of culture has a heavy impact. Throughout this thesis I aim to portray both Karrayyu representations of their 'culture' and ‘community’, and my own observations from an outsider perspective, and I attempt to place representations of Karrayyu identity within ongoing historical and political processes.

Collaborative Anthropology

The overall research approach falls under collaborative anthropology. It is important to define what constitutes collaboration in anthropological practice. Cervone writes: 'It can refer to the building of a collaborative relationship established once in the field, often at the request of community members. It can also refer to a methodological approach according to which community members become the main contributors in defining the relevance of the study and ultimately what knowledge about themselves they want to produce' (2007: 101). Both terms imply a profound redefinition of the ethnographers position in the field. Lassiter defines collaborative ethnography as: 'An approach to ethnography that deliberately and explicitly emphasises collaboration as every point in the ethnographic process, without veiling it - from project conceptualisation, to fieldwork, and especially, through the writing process' (2005: 16). I will discuss the process of collaboration in detail throughout the thesis, and the broader implications of collaboration for anthropology as a discipline.

Collaborative approaches to anthropology are particularly important for indigenous groups like the Karrayyu. The relationships between anthropologists and indigenous people are shifting. 'In the past 'primitives' were merely the object of representation, but with the spread of literacy, many of them are now able to read ethnography written about their culture and history... they have gained the power to protest against outsiders' representations if they find them objectionable' (Kuwayama, 2003: 8). This was the case with the Karrayyu, many educated young people had read work by anthropologists about their community and culture, and took issue with certain aspects. They pointed out mistakes, misinformation, and things they didn't agree with. They also objected to the approach taken by researchers. Lack of participation and ownership of knowledge, and lack of benefits for the subjects of research, are some of the most criticised aspects of traditional Western research of indigenous people. ‘Indigenous people have probably been the most 'abused' subjects of research by traditional European-based social science' (Dominguez, 2008: 13). To address this more non-oppressive research is needed where different 'ways of knowing' can coexist and new methodologies can arise. The El Dorado Task Force stated: 'the anthropology of indigenous peoples and related communities must move towards "collaborative" models, in which anthropological research is not merely combined with advocacy, but inherently advocative in that research is, from its outset, aimed at material,

symbolic and political benefits for the research population, as its members have helped to define these' (cited in Gregor & Gross, 2004: 690). The collaborative model has started to be acknowledged within anthropological circles as conventional approaches are increasingly questioned. Lassiter notes: 'collaboration with research subjects is today becoming one of the most important ethical, theoretical and methodological issues in anthropology' (2005: x).

In many ways whether to take a collaborative approach to research or not relates to our reasons for conducting research. Anthropology is a controversial discipline in this respect, due to its history and the way in which anthropological findings have been, and are, used. Anthropology deals in the knowledge of others and as such anthropologists have ethical and political responsibilities. ‘The very existence of an autonomous discipline that specialises in the study of others has always been somewhat problematic. People everywhere today, especially ‘third world’ peoples, increasingly resist being subjects of inquiry, especially for purposes not their own’ (Hymes, 1974: 5). Unequal power relations inherent to anthropological practice continue to be highlighted, particularly the wider conditions that make anthropological work possible: namely the standard of living enjoyed in industrial countries when compared with the rest of the world's population. Sanford writes: 'It is the very unequal power relations produced by wealth that enable anthropologists to travel the world and carry out research. We are few and we are privileged' (2006: 6). Before embarking on fieldwork I struggled with the question of whether I had a right to conduct a study; ‘anthropologists increasingly find the business of inquiry and knowing about others a source of dilemmas’ (Hymes, 1974: 5). It is recognised that we should consider the consequences for those among whom we work of simply being there, of learning about them, and of what becomes of what is learned. It is also important to ask questions about who benefits most from the research process. I felt that the only way I could conduct research was by taking a participatory approach; trying to work ‘with’ and 'alongside' people.

Collaborative research explicitly takes a different approach to conventional research where the researcher is expected to remain detached. It entails forming close ties and relationships with community members based on trust and commitment. This inevitably involves emotions which may affect all participants and therefore have an impact on the research. Devereux insisted that what happens within the observer must be made known if the nature of what has been observed

is to be understood. My experiences, emotions and relationships have undoubtedly influenced the research. Devereux also believed that observers in the social sciences have not learned how to make the most of their own emotional involvement with their material (cited in Behar, 1996: 6). I have been immersed in this experience, I have experienced intense and sometimes very difficult experiences which have altered my view of the world. I have attempted to understand the Karrayyu experientially, I have been privileged to share both times of happiness and great sadness. I spent time listening to their fears and concerns for the future. I experienced their struggles, against what seem at times like insurmountable odds and I felt anger, sadness and despair which at times became overwhelming. In Behar's (1996) words I was collaborating in anthropology 'that breaks your heart.' These feelings affected my fieldwork and my understanding of the Karrayyu community and have ultimately cemented my belief in collaborative and engaged approaches and their importance.

Ethiopian Political and Historical Context

To understand the Karrayyu situation the Karrayyu must be placed within the wider Ethiopian context. Ethiopia is characterised by varied topography from rugged mountains to lowland plains. Differences in altitude result in considerable regional variations in both climate and vegetation. The climate is temperate in the northern and central highlands, with the lower lying areas to south and south-west experiencing sub-tropical and tropical climates (See Figure 1). People living in the highland areas are predominantly mixed farmers engaged in livestock and crop production, whereas the arid lowland areas are largely populated by pastoralists. Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa with an estimated population of seventy-five million; approximately 85% of the population live in rural areas (CRDA, 2005). Ethiopia has a diverse cultural heritage with over eighty ethnic groups. Numerically the main ethnic groups are the Oromo, the Amhara and the Tigray.

The Karrayyu belong to the Cushitic speaking Oromo ethnic group, which makes up an estimated 34.5% of Ethiopia's population (CIA, 2011) although this figure is much debated. 'The Oromo have always been historically, linguistically and culturally different from the Abyssinians or Ethiopians' (Jalata, 1993: 100). Despite their numbers the Oromo have little political power. The Amhara (26.9%) and Tigreans (6.1%) are dominant politically, both

historically and currently (CIA, 2011). Orthodox Christianity from the fourth century and Islam from the eighth century have been the major religions (Pankhurst & Gebre, 2000: 3). Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity predominates in the highland areas, and Islam is more dominant in the lowlands of Ethiopia; a range of indigenous religions are also practised.

Figure 1: Physical Map of Ethiopia. Source: www.ezilon.com

It is widely stated that Ethiopia, in contrast to other parts of Africa, was never colonised by Europeans, apart from a brief period of Italian occupation. However, other processes of colonisation have taken place; the issue of colonisation is controversial. Bohannan & Curtain write that Ethiopia is an 'empire built by conquest and maintained by the dominance of the Christian Amhara' (1988: 342). Ethiopia historically consists of a core Abyssinian State which has been consolidated over centuries by the Amhara and the Tigreans. Despite their comparatively small population, the Amhara have dominated: Amharic is designated as Ethiopia's official national language and is the working language of government, the military and of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, under

the Amhara Emperor Menelik II, the Abyssinian state conquered and incorporated other non-Abyssinian peoples, including the Oromo. This transformed Abyssinia into an empire state increasing its size by two-thirds. Menelik II was succeeded by Emperor Haile Selassie who consolidated Menelik's empire. Haile Selassie's government 'conscientiously avoided any reference to ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity' and 'Amhara culture was implicitly presented as the defining trait of the 'Ethiopian' nationality' (Keller, 1998: 111). Haile Selassie's period of rule was interrupted by a brief but influential period of Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941 during which Haile Selassie was exiled. He returned to Ethiopia in 1941 and ruled until 1974.

Haile Selassie's regime ended with a revolution; the Derg military government took power and allied itself to the Eastern Bloc introducing seventeen years of communist-style totalitarianism. The Derg regime exercised absolute control over Ethiopia's political, economic and social life and promoted co-operatives, villagisation and resettlement. Harrison (2002: 599) states:'all Ethiopian adults will have lived with at least one extremely coercive government; either the communist military rule of the Derg or both this and the imperial regime of Haile Selassie.' In 1991 the regime was defeated by a coalition of opposing guerrilla forces marshalled by the Tigray dominated Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). During the transitional period the EPRDF established a Transitional Government (TGE). 'The TGE embarked on a process of political and economic liberalisation, including a regionalisation policy, wrote a new constitution and set the stage for multi-party regional and national elections' (Campbell, 1996: 14). National elections were held in May 1995 and the EPRDF-led government was elected, although the elections were boycotted by the opposition.

Under the EPRDF a federal structure was introduced based on nine ethnically determined regions: Amhara, Tigray, Oromia, Afar, Somali, Harari, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR). (See Figure 2) This still forms the current administrative structure, but it has faced criticism. The SNNPR, for example, contains over 45 indigenous ethnic groups who are now represented under one region. This has not been well received by many groups within Ethiopia (International Crisis Group, 2009). As Porter writes: 'Decentralisation is commonly presented as a means to popular participation by the poor and powerless, but the reality can be very different' (Porter, 2003: 138).

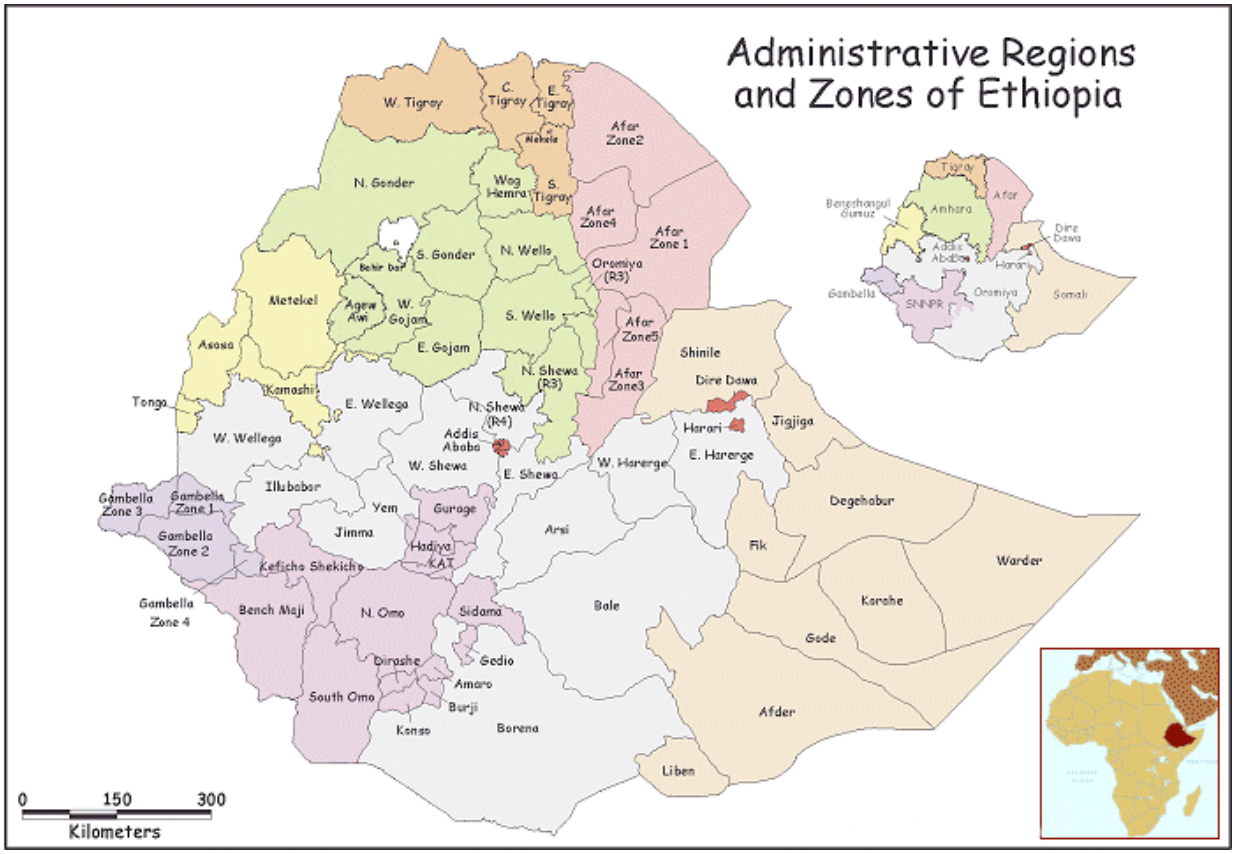

Figure 2: Political Map of Ethiopia showing Federal Regions.
Source: www.ethiopiaencyclopedia.blogspot.com

The system has several levels: federal, regional, zone and *woreda*, below the *woreda* is the *kebele* level which is often approximated to a 'village.' The *Kebele* Administration is 'most people's immediate point of reference for legal and other administrative matters' (Harrison, 2002: 595). However, the EPRDF have recently introduced another administrative level, the *gott*, at sub-*kebele* level. *Gott* vary in size but usually encompass between 60 and 90 households. Each *gott* is divided into smaller groups of roughly 30 households called *garee'* (Human Rights Watch, 2010a: 17). It is argued that these changes result in government being more representative of local interests but, as Turton has commented in his work with the Mursi, 'Paradoxically, the EPRDF's radical restructuring of Ethiopia as a federation of self-governing "nations, nationalities and peoples," has enabled it to incorporate peripheral groups like the Mursi into "structures of control" much more successfully even than its immediate predecessor, the Derg' (2005: 270). Several commentators argue that the present government has not relinquished the dictatorial tendencies of the Derg, and continues to stifle free expression. The current regime is cited as 'rapidly becoming one of the most repressive and

dictatorial on the continent' (Epstein: 2010) The dominance and centralisation of power in the north is still a cause of social and political unrest and there is strong opposition from various ethnic groups as many of the conquered peoples still chafe under the domination of the Ethiopian State (Levine, 2000: 26).

The conduct of the 2005 election raised concerns worldwide, although it was not widely reported. In 2006, due to widespread reports of human rights abuses, donors providing support to Ethiopia, including the African Development Bank, the European Commission, and the World Bank, declared publicly that they would withdraw budget support and channel it through non-budgetary means to the poor (Gilmore, 2006). During my fieldwork, a Charities and Societies Proclamation was passed by the Ethiopian government which states that CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) 'are expressly barred from doing any work related to human rights, governance, and a range of other issues'. This means that NGOs, both local and international, are 'barred from work relating to human rights, democracy building, gender, children's rights, conflict resolution or justice sector issues' (Human Rights Watch, 2008: 4). There were serious concerns regarding the conduct and results of the recent 2010 general elections in which the EPRDF won by a majority of 99.6 per cent. Human Rights Watch (2010b) condemned the elections calling them an 'orderly façade.' It has been impossible for me to ignore the political context within which I am working and these factors must be acknowledged as they have a major affect on the current social and political climate in Ethiopia.

The Karrayyu

The Karrayyu are one of the last Oromo groups, along with the Borana, to maintain Oromo traditions such as the *Gadaa* system and the Oromo traditional religion, *Waaqeffata*. However, they have largely been ignored by academic researchers. 'The Karrayyu present themselves as a research attraction in view of the fact that they are the least-studied pastoral community in the Awash Valley region' (Helland cited in Gebre, 2001: 24). The Borana Oromo, found in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia (See Figure 3), receive much attention in Oromo studies and are often cited as the last remaining group to maintain Oromo traditions. 'Of all the Oromo people, the Borana alone still retain the old nomadic way of life and the ancient *Gadaa* socio-political system' (Kidane, 2002: 3). The Borana are believed to inhabit the Oromo 'homeland' and therefore to have maintained the old traditions, particularly the socio-political *Gadaa* system; they are thought of as prototypically Oromo and they are pastoralists so receive attention from researchers development agencies focusing on pastoral issues. (Baxter *et al*., 1996) Although the focus on the Borana is understandable, this has left the Karrayyu, and other Oromo groups, under-researched.

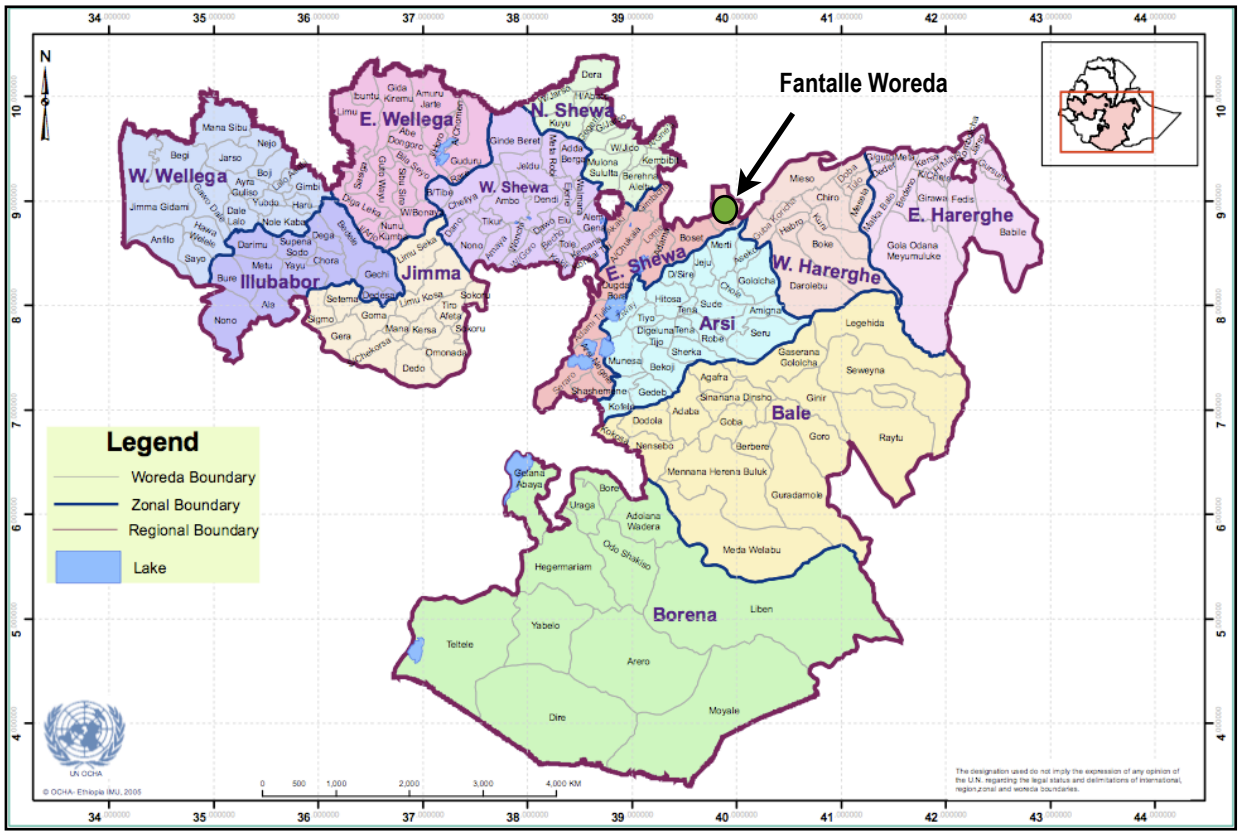

Figure 3: Map of Oromia Region. Source: www.ethiodemographyandhealth.org

Before working with the Karrayyu in Fantalle woreda (Figure 3) I spent six months living and working with Tulama Oromo in North Shoa. North Shoa borders the Amhara region and the colonising influence and 'Amharisation' policies have significantly affected Oromo culture and traditions. The Shoa Oromo found themselves 'as peripheral to the Oromo cultural heartland, being referred to as "Amhara using Galla language" which ... points to their subdued position under the hegemony of the Amhara culture' (Arnesen, 1996: 212). North Shoa Oromo were previously pastoralists but converted to agro-pastoralism: 'Through the migration and expansion to the west and north, the Oromo underwent a gradual transition from a predominantly pastoral and semi-nomadic society to a sedentary mixed farming way of life. This transition had a great impact on the organisation of the Oromo society' (ibid.). In North Shoa only remnants of the *Gadaa* system remain and, although some still practice *Waaqeffata,* the majority have converted to Orthodox Christianity.

With this in mind, the Karrayyu are remarkable in their ability to maintain their culture despite their proximity to the 'centre' of power. As Abram writes: 'There remain, on the edges and even in the midst of ever expanding monocultures, small-scale local cultures or communities where the traditional oral, indigenous modes of experience still prevail' (1996: 137). The Karrayyu are bypassed because nobody expects there to be a group so close to the capital who has retained these traditions, particularly the *Gadaa* system, and they are often mistaken for Afar. Gebre wrote that his ethnographic account of the Karrayyu was generated from primary sources 'because as far as I know there are no ethnographic references on the study group' (2001: 151). Since then other researchers have documented aspects of Karrayyu social and political life, but in-depth studies remain few.

The time I spent in Ethiopia, before working with the Karrayyu, provided me with valuable knowledge and a greater understanding of Ethiopia and dynamics between different regions. Through my travels I gained a more nuanced understanding of different Oromo groups, and a greater understanding of the political element which is ever present. Jalata asserts: 'To write about the Oromo people is an uphill struggle because Oromo history, culture and civilisation have been victimised by Ethiopian colonialism ... for more than a century' (1993: xi). These processes are still at work, if in more subtle ways. Alternative representations of culture and history or marginalised groups such as the Karrayyu can be regarded as 'political', particularly

if the people themselves are involved. But, as Baxter noted 'if Oromo studies are to develop they must depend on research carried out in Oromo lands among Oromo people and, increasingly by Oromo scholars' (1986: 55).

I quickly discovered that working with the Karrayyu would be more politically sensitive than working with Tulama Oromo. While the Karrayyu are part of the larger Oromo nation, they still represent a minority group and fall outside conventional state structures, both in terms of livelihood and governance. As Menzies has noted, making the decision to work with such a group ‘will be a political act irrespective of the researcher's intentions' (2001: 26). In addition 'the government's administrative structures reach into every community and even every household. Families must often register visitors with *kebele* officials ... It is almost impossible for outsiders to visit a rural village without generating questions- and potentially serious repercussions- for local residents from local security and *kebele* officials' (Human Rights Watch, 2009: 7). I was never restricted from carrying out research, but I had to be careful because using PV to work with a pastoralist community could be interpreted as 'rights based' work. 'There are few if any NGOs working directly with pastoral communities on rights issues. Pastoral rights is a highly politically charged subject; most NGOs thus prefer to either avoid working in this area altogether, or do so out of the spotlight' (Flintan, 2010: 169).

Chapter Two: Participatory Video & Collaborative Ethnography

This research explores PV as a method and its potential uses for anthropological research. Investigation of method has important theoretical and methodological implications. PV as a method is under-theorised. White (2003: 29) writes ‘The power of [participatory] video is not yet fully explored. Additionally it is not adequately theorised nor are informed links made between theory and practice’. Ginsburg comments that the majority of the literature does not address broader theoretical questions (Ginsburg, 1991: 92). In order for PV to become an accepted anthropological method 'its theoretical status has to be articulated in terms that relate to the current theoretical and methodological concerns of anthropology more generally' (Henley, 1996: 6). Throughout this thesis I merge ideas taken from collaborative ethnography, engaged anthropology and participatory research in order to provide a theoretical background for the study of PV. I argue that PV answers calls for collaborative forms of research and offers opportunities ‘for a new form of “engaged” anthropology’ (Deger, 2006: 37).

Collaborative and Engaged Anthropology

Collaborative, engaged and participatory research approaches address issues of central importance to anthropology and as such are gaining prominence. During the 1960s and 70s anthropology became subject to increasing criticism and was seen to 'facilitate colonialism and other oppressive relationships, to contribute to the abuse of indigenous peoples by romanticised descriptions of their cultures that failed to take account of their threatened status, and to permit racially and culturally alien outsiders to produce and market false, misleading, and even exploitative caricatures of other societies' (Gregor & Gross, 2004: 688). These criticisms led to the rise of Postmodernism which rejects objective modes of inquiry and challenges conventional ways of acquiring knowledge. From a postmodernist perspective 'science is not a universal narrative but, according to some scholars, a particularly Western one, with false claims to universality and objectivity' (ibid.: 690). It is now acknowledged that objectivity is not a neutral position; it is historically, culturally, and epistemologically specific. This cultural and epistemological bias in research design, data collection, analysis and representation favours certain kinds of knowledge and ways of expressing this knowledge (Holmes & Crossley, 2004).

Ethnography is particularly vulnerable in its claims to objectivity because the ethnographic encounter is by its very nature subjective. Since the rise of postmodernism new methods and ways of approaching anthropological enquiry are emerging. 'Postmodern approaches challenge the methodological assumptions associated with rigourous, modern social science enquiry' and require new standards for evaluating knowledge (Rosenau, 2001).

Collaborative approaches to anthropology are seen as a potential way forward. Ethnography is, by definition, collaborative, as many point out. But as Lassiter highlights 'collaborative ethnography moves collaboration from its taken-for-granted background and positions it centre stage' (2005, 16). Collaborative ethnography, as defined by Lassiter, does not refer to collaboration between fellow professional researchers, but establishes as a main goal the writing of ethnography with local community consultants as active 'collaborators' in that process. Lassiter writes that a deliberate and explicit collaborative ethnography is founded on four main commitments: 'ethical and moral responsibility to consultants; honesty about the fieldwork process; accessible and dialogical writing; and collaborative reading, writing, and co-interpretation of ethnographic texts with consultants' (ibid.: 77). Collaborative ethnography therefore provides an overall approach and framework to conducting research but it does not outline specific methods. This thesis expands on collaborative ethnography by using PV as part of the research process.

Collaborative ethnography is similar to other participatory research approaches including: 'community-based research', 'action research', 'participatory action research', or 'participatory community research'. These labels denote a wide and diverse range of application and implement collaboration to varying degrees, but 'the underlying spirit is that of working, learning, and moving towards positive social change together' (Lassiter, 2008: 73). Participation demands democratic, peer relationships as the form of enquiry. This affirms people's rights and ability to have a say in decisions which affect them and which claim to generate knowledge about them. 'Local communities are not simply the source of raw data for academic theorising elsewhere' rather they are 'key players in the construction of knowledge about their societies' (Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000: 16). Participatory methods are often characterised as being reflexive, flexible and iterative, in contrast with the rigid linear designs of most conventional science. 'One of their key strengths is seen to reside in exploring local

knowledge and perceptions' (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995: 1668). As a result the practical and theoretical outcomes of research are grounded in the perspectives and interests of those immediately concerned, and aim to advance understanding that will be useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives.

Participation, however, has faced increasing criticism, (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Participatory processes vary in the degree to which they display participation or seek meaningful action, and the degree to which they extract information for decisions that empower participants to plan for themselves (Juarez & Brown, 2008). Participatory processes are affected by power dynamics, both in terms of facilitation and within the communities or groups concerned, they are vulnerable to being hijacked. These criticisms also apply within a research context. For example, just because a participatory method is used this does not mean that a participatory approach is taken. This is discussed by Cornwall and Jewkes who state that: 'in 'shallow' participation, researchers control the entire process. With increasingly 'deep' participation there is a movement towards relinquishing control and developing ownership of the process to those whom it concerns' (1995: 1669). For these reasons, as well as using participatory methods, this research is grounded within a wider collaborative theoretical framework which is made explicit throughout.

Despite criticisms, researchers and those working within applied contexts should not simply dismiss participatory and collaborative approaches. While one has to acknowledge that they are not solutions, they do present potential ways forward that need to be explored in more depth through practice. These approaches can go a long way in terms of ‘pioneering new ways to facilitate others' expression of their understanding... while informing them of our thoughts’ and can contribute to advancing mutual comprehension (Sillitoe, 2002: 5). The demand for methods which facilitate mutual understanding and access to other ways of knowing is growing with the increasing realisation that Western scientific models do not hold all the answers. ‘We have since the Reformation, the beginning of the era of modern science, and the Industrial Revolution made enormous strides in our material welfare and our control of our lives. Yet at the same time we can see the costs of this progress in ecological devastation, human and social fragmentation, and spiritual impoverishment’ (Reason & Bradbury, 2001: 6). Many writers and commentators are suggesting that the modernist world view or paradigm of Western civilisation

is reaching the end of its useful life and that a fundamental shift is needed in our understanding of the universe and our place in it. There is a growing concern with the errors of our time, which are built into our ways of thinking. This has led to a re-evaluation of alternative knowledge systems. ‘The pluralistic approach to knowledge systems requires us to respect different systems – to embrace their own logic and their own epistemological foundations. It also requires us to accept that one system need not and must not serve as the benchmark for all systems’ (Shiva, 2000: viii). As a result there is a greater recognition of indigenous knowledge. A re-evaluation of the value of indigenous knowledge can be seen within development contexts where there is greater emphasis on incorporating local knowledge, experiences and perspectives, through the use of participatory approaches.

These shifts are particularly relevant for those working with indigenous groups, many of whom have born the brunt of the imposition of Western knowledge and 'advances'. Since the 1970s there has been a growing alliance between anthropologists and the struggles of indigenous peoples; anthropologists have started to take more definitive stands. Indigenous movements increasingly challenge the First World to examine its institutions, structures and values. Engaged anthropology has risen as part of this trend and attempts to address the epistemological problems related to the production of ethnographic knowledge. It questions detached approaches to anthropological enquiry and states that commitments to communities may mandate engagement and advocacy on our part, rather than a scholarly neutral stance (Kirsch, 2002: 193). Cervone (2007) argues that the premise of a detached, neutral observer has become unsustainable. Due to the situations that many indigenous groups face today ethnographers are often required to state their alignment with communities before being allowed to work with them. Cervone (ibid.) draws on her own experiences when pointing out that attempts to maintain the position of detached observer could lead to serious problems in data collection. A researcher's position is key to producing more nuanced and critical analyses of contemporary indigenous societies. Cervone (ibid.) notes that in this context engagement is not just driven by ideas of decolonizing the discipline, it can become an epistemological necessity. This approach also takes the position that engagement is a primary responsibility of the researcher rather than an optional mode of dissemination (Kirsch, 2002). Collaborative ethnography echoes this concern. 'Collaborative ethnography is first and foremost an ethical and moral enterprise, and subsequently a political one, it is not an enterprise in search of

knowledge alone' (Lassiter, 2005: 79). As well as committing to a general obligation not to cause harm to those who we study, we also have a more profound obligation to find ways in which the knowledge obtained from research can be helpful to them. Anthropologists cannot ignore the continued neglect and suffering of the people with whom they work. It is fundamentally important to the future of anthropology as a discipline to develop ethically appropriate and sustainable approaches to fieldwork.

Despite dramatic shifts in the nature of anthropological enquiry, such approaches still face criticism and are subject to much debate. Many anthropologists still advocate a so-called detached scholarship (Gross & Plattner, 2002). The main argument is that engagement with study communities can undermine the integrity of anthropological research. This goes back to the belief that scientific knowledge should be separated from emotional, political or moral concerns. Arguments between those who support the non-interference ethic and those who believe anthropologists should become involved in the world they study to bring change has led to ‘an enduring and unhelpful split between applied and academic anthropology’ (Sillitoe, 2006: 15). Anthropology must resolve these disputes, particularly because there is increasing pressure for anthropology to demonstrate its relevance. Melissa Parker stresses that ‘it is a matter of some urgency that mainstream anthropologists revise their views. It is no longer enough to describe and analyse what is happening or to empathise.' (Parker, 2003: 178). For engaged and collaborative approaches to become more accepted within anthropological circles the belief that research with an applied or action oriented aim is somehow non-academic or even a-theoretical needs to be challenged. As Cervone writes: 'it is important to dismantle the myth that engaged research, especially when it involves political commitment, leads anthropologists to blindness, political propaganda, and “social work”' (2007: 102). Researchers can collaborate with communities, contribute to academic knowledge and engage with 'real world' issues without losing critical perspective.

I use 'collaborative ethnography' as my overall theoretical framework because it does not emphasise problem solving as part of the collaborative process but leaves it open as an option, depending on the needs and wants of participants. As an approach it therefore provides a way of meeting academic requirements whilst also providing opportunities to answer community needs. Lassiter believes the whole point of a collaborative approach is to 'produce collaborative

meanings and collaborative action', thereby balancing the demands of producing relevant knowledge with the desire to 'make a difference' in local communities (2005: 151-54). Collaborative ethnography presents an opportunity to narrow the gap between academic and applied anthropology and offers a range of possibilities, from knowledge based collaborative research projects to politically committed activist research. Collaboration, however, does not necessarily have to equate with activism. This research began as an investigation of collaborative research processes, but it could lead to more applied endeavours in the future, as discussed in later chapters. A balance is hopefully achieved between producing a more in-depth understanding of PV, and the Karrayyu community, addressing methodological and theoretical issues which can contribute to anthropological knowledge, as well as producing something of benefit to the Karrayyu community.

Film and Anthropology

Before looking at PV in detail it is interesting to look at the role of film within anthropology and the different ways it has been used in the discipline. Grimshaw's book 'The Ethnographer's Eye' (2001) highlights the link between the birth of cinema and that of anthropology. The Lumiere brothers presented their cinematographe to a public audience for the first time in London, in February 1896. Shortly after this Haddon shot what are believed to be the earliest ethnographic films made in the field (Long & Laughren, 1993). The Torres Straits expedition of 1898 marks the symbolic birth of modern anthropology (Grimshaw, 2001: 15). Grimshaw writes: 'The close coincidence of dates linking the symbolic births of cinema and of modern anthropology is intriguing' (ibid., 16). Despite their early synthesis, cinema and anthropology diverged and developed as separate traditions, and yet 'they share a remarkably similar process of evolution' (ibid.: 17) Ruby expands on this when he states that film and written ethnography are 'culturally related' because they are 'founded upon the western middle class need to explore, document, explain, understand, and hence symbolically control the world, or at least that part of the world the middle class regards as being exotic' (1980: 165). It is useful to gain an overview of historical uses and attitudes towards the camera within anthropology because they mirror wider trends and ways of thinking. In addition the 'developments and innovations in ethnographic film-making provide an important and substantial part of the pre-history to participatory video' (Cain, 2009: 59).

Anthropologists and sociologists originally, and still do, use photography and film as tools to gather and record 'objective' data. Visual records can provide evidence of social rituals and everyday life; they can survey and document environments and practices and thus contribute to detailed ethnographic data, for example John Collier's work on the Cornell Fruitland Project and the Vicos Project (Collier, 2009). Photography and film have been used in field documentation mainly as tools for "anthropological note-taking" (MacDougall, 1995: 122). Early anthropology was dominated by realist concerns and emphasis was laid upon direct observation. What the ethnographer witnessed in the field became an ultimate standard of proof. The problem of objectivity dominated Victorian science, investigators increasingly worried about their influence on the object of investigation. 'Policing the subjective was an intellectual, practical and moral problem; and in a Victorian world of self-restraint and technological innovation, machines offered to minimise intervention' (Grimshaw, 2001: 21). Photography and film were regarded as important scientific tools in the acquisition of reliable fieldwork data due to the widespread belief that the camera guaranteed a certain objectivity.

Photography and film were connected with anthropology in colonial efforts 'to categorise, define, dominate, and sometimes invent' (Scherer, 1992: 33). Film, like photography, assumed an important role in the expansion and consolidation of empires, as well as in documenting the colonised. Although anthropology was initially conceived as an unbiased evaluation and classification of cultures it excluded that of the white Westerner. Some argue it degenerated into a version of ‘race science’ which placed the white male at the pinnacle of historical progress (Baker, 1998). Haddon and Rivers shot footage of indigenous Torres Straits islanders around the turn of the century which was widely viewed by scientists and lay-people alike. One of the most profound effects of this representational practice has been the production of a gaze which deprives the object of historical agency, individual voice, and psychological complexity; and places the viewer in a position of superiority with the power to scrutinise. The camera as a form of power was recognised from an early point in its history. In an analysis of photographs of Middle Eastern women, Graham-Brown (1988) points out that colonial photographers were motivated to keep local subjects ‘at the lens-end of the camera’ and quotes one who, in 1890, complained that ‘it was a mistake for the first photographer in the Pathan [Afghanistan] country to allow the natives to look at the ground glass screen of the camera. He forgot that a little learning is a dangerous thing’ (cited in Lutz and Collins, 1991: 145).

Film continued to be used as an anthropological tool by a number of prominent anthropologists. In 1930 Franz Boas used a motion picture camera and a sound recording machine to record Kwakiutl Indians on his last field trip to a people he had studied for more than 40 years. Boas had used still photography in the field since 1894, but his use of the motion picture camera was of a much shorter duration. Boas wrote nothing about film as a scientific tool or his views on the role of the cinema in society. He used it on his last trip in order to record the 'bits of information he felt were missing from his knowledge of the culture' (Ruby, 1980) Boas felt an urgent need to salvage as much of the traditional culture of the Kwatiutl as possible. This reflects one of the major ways in which film and photography has been used in anthropology.

Salvage anthropology began in the nineteenth century as people became aware of the destructive impact of European civilisation on native peoples. The ‘vanishing savage' became an issue of huge concern and led to the formation of Ethnological Societies. An awareness of declining cultures on the frontier of an advancing civilisation set the tone and the method for much that was anthropology in the earlier years of the discipline (Gruber, 1970). Film played a key role in salvage anthropology and continues to do so today. The Human Studies Film Archive forms part of the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology and seeks 'to acquire, identify, and preserve visual data of the traditional ways of life and human heritages of the world' (Sorenson, 1982: 12). 'To date priority has been given to research film studies among isolated and unique ways of life where traditions are in danger of disappearing, and to salvaging film records of such ways of life which would otherwise be lost or damaged' (ibid.). Sorenson argues 'films that reveal different ways of life and different ways of realising basic human potential are of humanistic interest and scientific importance. The visual data they present reflect conditions important to the understanding of the human condition; they present perspectives on cultural and behavioural heritage; and they reveal special expressions of the human ability to adapt, interact and respond' (ibid.).

Ethnographic film, as a continuation of the salvage tradition, constructed idealised images of the pure and primitive man. Such cultures were viewed as a window into Western culture's own past: living evolutionary remnants. This "taxidermic" impulse persisted well into the 50s (Rony, 1996). Marshall’s film ‘The Hunters’ (1957) of the Ju/'hoansi (!Kung San Bushmen) has been criticised for representing !Kung culture as static, and Marshall himself describes it as 'a

romantic film made by an American kid' (1993: 39). Durington writes that the film 'either instigated or continued a legacy of aberrant and stereotypical readings of indigenous peoples in the genre' (2009: 191) Marshall later criticised the film and turned his attention to making films that were more 'academic'. Similar criticisms can be found of later ethnographic films such as Tim Asch's films of the Yanomamo. Asch later acknowledged that some of the Yanomamo films could 'powerfully reinforce Western prejudices and stereotypes of the "primitive". He concluded that the lack of Yanomamo voices in the films contributed to distancing them from viewers' (Martinez, 2004: 225). Such reviews and criticisms of ethnographic cinema have played an important role in forcing us to ‘see’ the exoticist bias in anthropology, and the divide between the observer and observed which was, and arguably still is, fundamental to anthropology as a discipline.

Film has been used to explore key issues within anthropology, for example observer effect. During the 1930s. Bateson and Mead studied the people of the Balinese village of Bajoeng Gede, and film was used as the primary research tool (Jacknis, 1988). Bateson, along with Mead, wrote about ways of dealing theoretically and practically with the 'observer effect'. They used right-angled lenses and a variety of other dissimulating strategies to ensure that their subjects' behaviour would not be affected by the presence of the camera (Henley, 1996: 18). Ruby described Mead and Bateson's work in the 1930s as being 'the first methodologically self-aware anthropology' (Ruby, 1980: 166). But the camera was still regarded as an objective tool: 'Each single photograph may be regarded as almost purely objective' (Mead & Bateson, 1942: 53). Both Bateson and Mead had strong inclinations towards objective data. Mead often maintained that the camera could be used to avoid observer bias. 'A static camera mounted on a tripod that does not tilt, pan or zoom in any way move is assumed to be the most 'scientific' technique and one that is less distorting and more 'truthful' in the recording of 'natural' behaviour than other camera techniques. Moreover, the camera must be allowed to run as long as possible and used in as unobtrusive manner as possible so that it records unaffected streams of culturally significant behaviour' (Mead, 1976: 21) Mead stated that these technologies are the best means of establishing the human sciences as a science containing verifiable data (Mead, 1976).

Subsequently there were major shifts in the use of film and camera as objective recording devices. In an essay regarding Mead's place in visual anthropology Sol Worth wrote: 'Film is not a copy of the world out there but someone's statement about the world" (cited in Jacknis, 1988: 173). This statement reflects a growing awareness of the subjectivity and artifice involved in the practice of film making. 'The idea of the camera as an impassive and distant recording device analogous to the telescope was already very dated by the 1970s' (Henley, 1996: 7). By this time a variety of film-making approaches had developed: cinema verite, direct cinema, observational cinema and so on. What they all had in common was a commitment to making films that followed the activities of the characters rather than directing them according to some predetermined script. Henley refers to all of these as 'observational cinema' (1996), an approach to film which has been 'widely criticised as a form of scientism in which a supposedly detached camera served to objectify and dehumanise the human subjects of its gaze', although it is important to note that these critiques have also come under question recently (Grimshaw & Ravetz, 2009: ix).

The criticisms of observational cinema contributed in the 1980s to a concern about anthropology's 'visualist bias' (Fabian, 1983). The emphasis on observation was criticised for leading the fieldworker to adopt a 'contemplative stance', an image suggesting detachment, indeed voyeurism, '"the naturalist" watching an experiment' (Grimshaw, 2001: 6). Fabian (1983) argues that the process of collecting knowledge from this stance is objectifying and dehumanising. This was also realised by some of those using visual methods. Worth wrote: 'the use of these technologies to record the lives of others for our purposes and the purveying to others of our own cultural products and technologies (usually for our own profit) raises serious ethical issues' (1981: 8). Growing criticism of ethnographic film-making focused on 'the relationship of the camera to regimes of knowledge/power' and the 'colonialist objectifications and appropriations that are produced in films about cultural others' (Deger, 2006: 37).

Ruby argued that ethnography and documentary film are related because they are both 'what "we" do to "them". The "them" in this case are frequently the poor, the powerless, the disadvantaged, and the politically suppressed' (1980: 165). The ethics of observation has also been discussed by non-anthropologists working with cameras, be they photographers, journalists or cameramen. BBC's Fergal Keane describes the observer role as the 'ritual guilt to

our trade' (Campbell, 2003: 70). Perhaps one of the most well known examples of the complex issues raised by such work is that of photographer Kevin Carter. He became internationally known for his Pulitzer prize-winning photograph of a vulture eyeing an emaciated Sudanese child struggling toward a feeding station. As well as receiving prizes, the ethics of the photograph and Carter's non-intervention was widely debated. 'The man adjusting his lens to take just the right frame of her suffering might as well be a predator, another vulture on the scene' (St Petersburg Times, cited in MacLeod, 1994). Carter tragically committed suicide shortly after receiving the Pulitzer. It has been suggested that he was 'transformed, infected rather than affected, by what he had to bear' (Kleinman & Kleinman, 1996: 7-8).

Many, whether they are anthropologists, filmmakers or journalists, increasingly regard observation and documentation as ethically questionable. It means 'getting outside a man and studying him as if he were a gigantic insect; in what they would call a dry and impartial light; in what I would call a dead and dehumanised light' (Chesterton, cited in Sacks, 1995: xvi). Such critiques have partly been prompted by a questioning of the scientific paradigm combined with growing political pressure from 'the observed', including anthropology's traditional subjects. The issue of one-way, non-interactive communication inherent in film was challenged by a cinema tradition that emerged from the 'Third World' in the late 1960s which became known as Third Cinema. Third Cinema questioned the traditional model of the white/Western/ male filmmaker (or ethnographer) documenting and representing the 'other' and contributed to the development of alternative models of engagement. Perhaps most importantly Third Cinema aimed to provoke a response from its audience. This has influenced PV which aims to initiate action through film, to empower the marginalised and to communicate with those in power. Political movements in Latin America in the 1960s were crucial to the development of participatory video and participatory research generally. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, cited as one of the creators of participatory action research, instigated challenges to mass media and contributed to a worldwide movement towards the use of citizen's media, including participatory video.

Empowerment of indigenous peoples and struggles for self-representation has led to a growing emphasis in anthropology on voice, dialogue, and conversation with research subjects. This shift can also be seen in ethnographic film, with filmmakers like Jean Rouch. In 1980 Ruby

wrote 'it would appear that, with the exception of Rouch, most anthropological filmmakers are naive empiricists and positivists. They, like journalists and documentary filmmakers are concerned with discovering ways of objectively recording data or 'what happens', free from the distortions of personal bias, subjectivity or theory' (1980: 168). In opposition to this Rouch's intention was to produce a 'shared anthropology' in which those in front of the camera shared the power with the director. He envisioned a ‘participating’ camera that will ‘pass automatically into the hands of those who were, up to now, always in front of it. The anthropologist will no longer monopolise the observation of things’ (Rouch, 1975: 102). Stoller writes about the night Rouch played back his first film to its subject-audience in Ayoru, Niger in 1954: 'That night Rouch and the people of Ayoru witnessed the birth of "participatory cinema" in Africa and ethnography became, for Rouch, a shared enterprise' (Stoller, 1992: 43).

Rouch acknowledged his "debt" to earlier filmmakers Robert Flaherty and Dziga Vertov in his essay, The Camera and Man (1974: 31). Flaherty, often cited as the 'progenitor of ethnographic film', had experimented with collaborative approaches to film-making. He spent long periods of time living in the community he filmed and held ongoing conversations with the films subject-participants 'screening the films together, and discussing and planning additional scenes during the filming of 'Nanook of the North' (1922). He 'initiated filmic feedback as a form of stimulation and rapport'. He reported that 'the Inuit performed in front of the camera, reviewed and criticised their performance, and were able to offer suggestions for additional scenes'. He wrote in his diary about the making of Nanook: 'My work has been built up along with them; I couldn't have done anything without them. In the end it is all a question of human relationships' (Flaherty cited in Ruby, 2000: 76). Rouch, inspired by early filmmakers like Flaherty, 'developed a type of film-making where a filmmaker gets into a community rather than standing outside it as an observer and this helped to set the stage for the later development of participatory video (Cain, 2009: 61).

Developments within anthropology and film-making have led to dramatic reconfigurations of research approaches, the use of methods and the process of knowledge production. This includes the development of methods such as Participatory Video and collaborative approaches to research which experiment with alternative methods of representation and push the boundaries of conventional research practice.

Participatory Video and Anthropology

Despite ethnographic filmmakers' acknowledgement of the need for a 'participant camera' and experiments with collaborative film-making, participatory film-making in anthropology is marginal. PV is perhaps the ultimate realisation of a visual 'shared anthropology' because it actually involves handing the camera over. Making the technology available to the protagonists of ethnographic study, and seeing what they do with it, is the opposite of using the same technology for documentation purposes (Henley, 1996: 13). But anthropologists, particularly visual anthropologists, seem reluctant to do this. Chalfen & Rich write that although many 'hand the camera over' projects continue to appear in community-based projects 'few are research-based and fewer have any grounding in the sociocultural sensitivity characteristic of anthropological efforts. Almost none are carefully documented in writing' (cited in Pink 2009: 57). Despite its widespread use in applied contexts there has been no uniform movement to promote and practise PV. Different individuals and groups have set up pockets of PV work, usually moulding it to their particular needs and situations. Methods vary from practitioner to practitioner. There is no fixed way to undertake PV, other than it involves the authorship of the group itself and that it be carried out in a participative and democratic way. This quality of flexibility enables PV to be applied to a variety of situations. However, as the applications of PV are scattered and infrequently documented it is difficult to identify a trend in its development (White, 2003). It is evident that the use of PV in development projects is increasing and is becoming an important tool for facilitating communication (Boeren, 1994: 149). However, few studies have been published which deal exclusively with PV in anthropological context; the majority of literature comes mostly in the form of newsletters and reports or practical guides, (Gregory *et al.*, 2005; Harding, 2001; Lunch & Lunch, 2006; Shaw & Robertson, 1997; White, 2003). Ginsburg comments ‘It is particularly surprising that there is so little discussion of such phenomena in contemporary anthropological work, despite the fact that video cassette recorders, video cameras, and mass media are now present in even the most remote locales’ (1991: 93).

Perhaps the lack of anthropological engagement with PV is because it is largely seen as an applied tool. It also has firm associations with empowerment and advocacy which may put academics off. The uses of PV for applied work have been apparent from its conception. The

‘Fogo Process’ has been referred to by many as the birth of PV (White 2003, Lunch & Lunch 2006). The Fogo Process evolved in 1967 through Don Snowden’s work with a small fishing community on the Fogo Islands, off the eastern coast of Newfoundland. The project pioneered the idea of using media to enable a people-centred community development approach and used film to assist communities to come to terms with some of their problems, to realise they had problems in common and move towards building co-operation and development. The films allowed community members to communicate with politicians and politicians’ points of view was filmed and shown back to the communities. This brought about a two-way flow of knowledge between community members and decision makers; a model of development communication practice that was far ahead of its time (Lunch & Lunch, 2006). The Fogo Process is under-reported because 'Snowden focused on doing, not publishing' (Richardson, 1999). PV is placed within the realm of what Pink calls 'applied visual anthropology' which 'usually takes the form of a problem-solving practice that involves collaborating with research participants and aims to bring about some form of change' (Pink, 2009: 11-12). In fact, an applied agenda can be found in the history of film generally; its potential as a powerful tool for raising awareness, leading to change or intervention has been recognised from its early days (Cain, 2009).

The earliest anthropological work which actually involves handing the camera over is probably that of Sol Worth and John Adair who during the 1960s worked with the Navaho to investigate how meaning is communicated through visual images. They expressly chose to work with people who had never used film before. Worth and Adair realised that handing the camera over entailed a radical innovation in the way film could be used as a research tool. Worth believed the medium could be used ‘to see whether the visual world offers a way of communication that can be used not only for us to communicate to them, but so that we might make it easier for them to talk to us’ (Worth, 1965: 19). This would change the one-way flow of most anthropological communication and potentially provide a way of breaking down hierarchical researcher/researched relationships. However, Worth and Adair later came under some ‘philosophical and ethical fire’ for the Western-oriented bias that underlay the project (Chalfen, 1997: xiv). Of more direct relevance to participatory video was the idea that ‘Many people today are seeking not only new ways in which they can know one another but new ways to present themselves to one another’ (Worth & Adair, 1997: 7).

An applied potential is also evident in Eric Michaels' work with Aboriginal communities in the 1980s to which new electronic media were being introduced but literacy was minimal. Michaels wanted to investigate whether an oral society would find audiovisual production a more suitable means of communication and participation than writing. He facilitated Aborigines' use of video in a way which empowered his informants and 'collapsed what many academics would distinguish as "pure/theoretical" research with "applied/policy" research' (Michaels, 1985: 56). Edmund Carpenter also used film in his work with tribal groups in Papua New Guinea who had little exposure to writing, radio, or cameras. Carpenter's use of film contrasts with that of Michaels and Worth as he critiques its use as a method. 'Since around 1960, I've put cameras into a variety of hands. The results generally tell more about the medium employed than about the cultural background of the author or cameraman ... These media swallow culture' (Carpenter, 1973: 191). Carpenter collaborated on MacLuhan's Understanding Media (1964) and takes a very critical view of the use of film.

There has been more recent work within anthropology in a number of different contexts, mainly linked to an applied agenda. PV is referred to using a variety of labels: 'development video', 'community video', 'grassroots video', 'indigenous media', to name a few. 'Video in the Villages' project was founded by Vincent Carelli's Brazilian non-governmental organisation *Centro de Trabalho Indigenista* (CTI) in 1987 to work with several Brazilian Indian groups. CTI used photography and video to foster indigenous cultural and political self-awareness and autonomy; Indians produced videos they jointly conceived with the organisation. The project enjoyed growing fame among donors, activists and anthropologists, but: 'although anthropologists have an active role in working with Indians who document their experience on video, there is no pretence of ethnographic or social scientific method ... These videos have an activist, political rationale ... They are intended to explain to as-large-as-possible, often non-Indian audiences why video is a useful tool for Indian cultural survival' (Aufderheide, 1995: 83). Anthropologists have however studied, documented and commented on the project, including Patricia Aufderheide (1995) and Dominique Gallois (Gallois & Carelli, 1992).

Another example is the work of the anthropologist Terence Turner with the Kapayo of Brazil. Turner provided video cameras and video editing facilities to the Kapayo who used them to exchange messages and political speeches between villages, document their rituals and dances,

and their protests against the Brazilian State's hydroelectric dam at Altemira (Turner 1992). Their productions in turn provided Turner with material for academic analysis. Faye Ginsburg has conducted extensive studies of Australian Aboriginal use of visual media in attempts to preserve their culture (1991, 1993, 1994). Ginsburg's research integrates cultural activism, politics, film and cinema into theoretical anthropology. She argues that Aborigines are empowered by new media and have experienced a 'self-conscious social transformation' through the utilisation of film. Carlos Y Flores's work focuses on the role of indigenous video, shared anthropology and collaborative film-making with Maya-Q'eqchi communities in Guatemala (Flores, 2004). Film-making aimed to bypass barriers of monolingualism and high illiteracy in the area. Flores had a collaborative relationship with local video makers and explored how anthropology and ethnographic film-making could simultaneously be of help to researchers and communities. Anthropologist Elizabeth Wickett (2007a, 2007b) has studied the use of 'development video' in applied contexts, mainly in Egypt and Pakistan. She argues that 'video can capture voices and communicate ideas to planners and policy makers better than any other communication tool' (2007a: 123), and that 'video has the capacity to expose the indigenous interpretations of development issues in the field' (2007b: 73).

Most of these recent works comment on existing projects where indigenous populations are already using media for themselves, with the exception of Turner's work with the Kapayo. In most of these studies the anthropologist is not responsible for handing over the camera and discussion of the use of PV as a primary research technique is limited. In this research I have instigated the use of video as a research method, and PV is utilised as the primary research tool. The avoidance of PV by anthropologists highlights certain issues. Anthropological discussion of indigenous media has centred on observer effect and the impact of mass media on indigenous cultures. Anthropologists agonise over the fact that the 'presence of a tape-recording, note-scribbling stranger among an isolated people alters their behaviour' (Horgan, 2000); and the introduction and application of modern technologies is seen as problematic. Ginsburg (1991: 96) describes a 'Faustian dilemma' in local and indigenous peoples use of PV: 'on the one hand, they are finding new modes for expressing indigenous identity through media ... On the other hand, the spread of communications technology threatens to be a final assault on culture, language, imagery, relationships between generations, and respect for indigenous knowledge'.

Critiques of video highlight that it involves a process of change and distortion and is therefore 'subversive of non-Western modes of knowledge' and its articulation (Weiner, 1997: 198). Weiner believes that indigenous ways of seeing, knowing and relating to the world are irrevocably transformed by modern Western technologies. Rather than celebrating technology as a means of enabling local participation in representational struggles, he sees indigenous media as hastening the loss of a 'pre-cinematic' relationship to the world. Weiner also suggests that these technologies impact in ways that cannot be seen by outside audiences, or even by the people involved (Weiner, 1997). Worth also indicated that the introduction of such media entails certain dangers: 'In teaching people to read we implicitly teach them what to read … The use of a mode of communication is not easily separable from the specific codes and rules about the content of that mode'(Worth, 1981: 97). A central problem, therefore, is that our technologies may carry with them 'our conceptions, our codes, our mythic and narrative forms' (ibid.: 99). This requires attention and may explain why anthropologists are reluctant to engage with the introduction of such technology.

Power dynamics and control over representation

There are undeniably problems inherent in indigenous media; in addition to the arguments made above, the use of video also raises certain practical issues. Lunch comments that as well as having the potential to reinforce 'the prevailing myth of the cultural superiority of the "developed world"', such tools are often 'beyond the means of local resources' (Lunch, 2006: 7). It is important to investigate whether the use of such technology is really feasible and sustainable, and whether local people feel it is a realistic and practical way for them to communicate their views.

However, the use of PV as a research tool may also have advantages. As Henley (1996) writes, film-making is generally a much more intrusive activity than other forms of anthropological field research and runs the risk of a greater impact on communities involved. Due to this film has the capacity to bring to the surface the ambiguities in the power relations between observer and observed much more starkly than a researcher armed with a notepad. A film-maker often has to negotiate much more specifically the terms under which his/her activity can take place. 'In order to gain the consent of the protagonists, the film-maker will often have to accept that

their voices, representing their particular views, will have prominent place in the final film' (Henley, 1996: 12). Arguably this can lead to greater control over representation, rather than less. In addition film-makers can perhaps be held accountable more than those producing text because the end result is visual and possibly more widely accessible. Film is also ‘usually a more open representation than a written text so, despite the best efforts of its maker, it can remain recalcitrant to definitive analytical closure' (Henley, 1996: 12). These qualities can be used as a basis for encouraging collaborative processes.

It is also important to recognise that ‘for most cultures and societies, the question is not whether they will encounter and come to live with these new visual media but when and how’ (Worth, 1981). There are few remaining corners of the world where people exist in a ‘pre-cinematic’ state. Deger (2006: 55) points out that for decades indigenous people have ‘figured as the subjects of visual representation by visiting anthropologists, filmmakers, and tourists. They are already involved with visual technologies as subjects and viewers’. Ethiopia has been the focus of Western media, particularly during the famine of 1984-5 (Philo, 1993), and conjures specific images for many in the West, usually of the ‘exotic’, the impoverished, and the marginalised. Film, largely produced by Westerners, is widely used in Ethiopia in development efforts, both as a fund-raising tool and in extension work. Many Ethiopians are aware of the way they are portrayed and this raises the question of how they choose to represent themselves, and what stories they choose to tell, when the camera is handed over. To deny people the right to take part in these processes denies them both the power to represent themselves and the ability to make decisions about the use of such technology. Hughes-Freeland (1992: 42) notes: ‘New technologies do not necessarily dispense with old techniques and strategies. Studies in how new technologies are appropriated indicate a cultural specificity within media where many have predicted the end of cultural plurality. We should not assume that technology everywhere brings about the same relationships between power and practice.’ It is important not to veto the use of technology such as video without consulting local communities who may have very different ideas about how it may be used.

Perhaps ethnographic filmmakers struggle with the idea of handing over the camera, not because of the effect it may have on communities, because they are already using cameras in such contexts; but because involving local communities as co-collaborators leads to difficulties.

'The challenge comes from having to defer to the cultural authority of the people with whom you are working on a given film - oftentimes the people about whom the film is being made. It means abrogating your authority as a narrator, as an author, as a film-maker, and subsuming your own personal narrative desires, expressive desires, aesthetic desires, or even documentary desires to the people with whom one is working' (Askew in Coover, 2009: 239). Lutz and Collins echo this when they write that handing over the camera 'violates the prerogative of the Western surveyor to control the camera as well as other means of knowledge production' (1991: 145). The struggle to relinquish control and allow others a voice lies at the heart of participatory processes. Resistance to handing over the process relates to ideas within academia about how research should be done. The challenge to anthropologists is to embrace such opportunities and see what knowledge is produced as a result.

PV and Indigenous Knowledge

As well as communicating more explicit messages, the subjective style of film-making advocated by Worth 'often captures feelings and reveals attitudes, and concerns that lie beyond the conscious control of the filmmaker' (Worth/Gross, 1981: 3). Worth stated 'we have found that peoples with differing cultures make movies differently. When given instructions only in the technology of the camera and film, they tend to structure their movies according to the rules of their particular language, culture and myth forms … and according to their social roles and cultural attitudes' (Worth/Gross, 1981: 93). This has been recognised by people working with inexperienced filmmakers in a range of cultural contexts. I believe that this has relevance for indigenous knowledge studies.

The term 'indigenous knowledge' is problematic, and has inspired extensive debate recently (McIntosh, Colchester & Bowen, 2002; Kuper, 2003; Kenrick & Lewis, 2004). I use the term to locate this research within wider work on indigenous knowledge and development. The term 'indigenous knowledge' is used as defined by Sillitoe: 'any knowledge held more or less collectively by a population, informing understanding of the world … It is community based, embedded in and conditioned by local tradition. It is culturally informed understanding inculcated into individuals from birth onwards, structuring how they interface with their environments. It is also informed continually by outside intelligence. Its distribution is

fragmentary' (Sillitoe, 2002a: 9). I also draw on Barth's (2002: 1) definition of knowledge as 'what a person employs to interpret and act on the world' which includes 'feelings (attitudes) as well as information, embodied skills as well as verbal taxonomies and concepts: all ways of understanding that we use to make up our experienced, grasped reality'.

Although there have been many studies on specific areas of indigenous knowledge, research into how to communicate this knowledge has often been neglected, particularly non-textual methods of representation (Mundy & Compton, 1995). Indigenous knowledge is usually documented and disseminated by outsiders, who make their own interpretations in the process. However, 'the methodological task of capturing sympathetically the concepts expressed in local idioms and the import of others' activities is considerable … In reducing everything to words we constrain understanding' (Sillitoe *et al.*, 1995: 22). It has been suggested that PV potentially provides an opportunity for rural people to document their own knowledge and practices in a way which will retain some of their original qualities, perhaps more effectively than the written word. MacDougall has suggested that film can act as a means of communicating understandings that are accessible only by non-verbal means (Barbash & Taylor, 1996). This is important because there are aspects of knowledge, experience and practice that people find difficult to express verbally. Hastrup (1993: 732) argues that 'the largest proportion of cultural experience lies beyond words'.

Indigenous knowledge is frequently passed on by informed experience and practical demonstration, and is shown rather than spoken. 'Knowledge of the physical world does not flow exclusively or primarily through the intellect … it is a different approach to knowledge than the one dimensional, literate approach to knowing' (Canada cited in Castellano, 2000: 29). This kind of knowledge is therefore difficult to represent using conventional research techniques which approach data in a structured, linear way. It is recognised that there is 'a need for methods that attend to the range of sensory experiences that inform knowledge and action, by reaching beyond the limits of text, the verbal and the material, to engage new media, lived experiences, performative, haptic and embodied knowledges' (Pain, Kindon & Kesby, 2007: 28). PV potentially provides an opportunity to communicate information in creative, practical, and sensory ways. Practical and tacit knowledge has been investigated using video (Grasseni, 2004), and the value of this approach is recognised. However, the ethnographer, rather than

local people, is usually behind the camera. The extent to which PV can be used as an effective means of documenting tacit forms of indigenous knowledge will be investigated.

As a medium based on visual and verbal communication PV 'has great potential to enhance indigenous means of communication - also primarily visual and verbal' (Lunch, 2004: 4). Oral traditions and narratives are expressions of culture, contain ideas and information, and are ways of explaining and negotiating the world. Their effectiveness for transmitting knowledge is widely acknowledged. However, these traditions are often overlooked or undervalued in a hierarchy of knowledge which places greater value on written traditions. PV could play a role here. It has the potential to incorporate folk media and traditional modes of communication in a sympathetic format. PV could perhaps be a way of synthesising 'local knowledge' with 'western technology' for the benefit of local people. There is a growing concern in Ethiopia that certain knowledge is being lost due to formal education systems, migration to urban areas and the influx of western lifestyles. By combining the traditional with the modern, PV could reinvigorate these traditions, particularly among the young.

PV and Vertical Communication

A primary argument for using PV in an applied context is that it can be used to strengthen vertical communication with decision-makers (Lunch, 2006). Local communities are often excluded from the planning and preparation of development programmes due to the dominance of the written word at every stage of the process, and meetings which they cannot attend (Slim & Thompson, 1993). PV does not depend on formal literacy so provides an alternative form of representation. Due to its mobility it can be used by local people to communicate their issues to development practitioners and policy makers who are hard to reach. This extends to enabling communities to use PV to communicate with researchers and get their perspectives included in the research process and outcomes.

People reliant on verbal communication are perhaps at a disadvantage in a world reliant on written communication. A document can communicate complex thought processes, it can be read, thought about and digested before readers respond. People reliant on conveying their views verbally often have to give immediate responses without time for contemplation. PV can

potentially provide a similar function to that of a written document by allowing filmmakers time to reflect, demonstrate their knowledge and articulate themselves clearly. PV is therefore perhaps more representative of deeper feelings about a subject, than a one-off exchange and can possibly provide more equality in terms of communication. PV is also a consciousness raising tool, which can potentially empower people in a variety of ways. ‘The earliest uses of moving pictures were not to entertain but to put reality in a new light for the sake of better perceiving it’ (Ferlita & May, 1977: 9). Videos can act as a mirror and enable people to reflect on their situation and develop self-confidence. The process assists participants to recognise that they have something worth saying. This process provides fruitful opportunities for knowledge production. This is recognised by others who have used and commented on the playback process. Rouch wrote: 'By studying this film [Horendi, about possession dances in Niger] on a small moviescope viewer with my informants, I was able to gather more information in two weeks than I could get in three months of direct observation and interviews' (Rouch 1975: 11).

PV not only aims to have an impact on the consciousness of those involved in making the film; it also reaches out to others and invites a response. In Snowden’s early work PV was designed as a two-way communication process. This fits with ideas from ‘Third Cinema’ which question the role of the audience and the nature of their engagement. Third Cinema intends to make the spectator participate more fully, perhaps until he/she ceases to be a spectator altogether. ‘The transformation that Third Cinema effects on the spectator is to relocate them back into the broader social struggle from which they have been severed, so that the active spectator is no longer engaged in purely aesthetic activity’ (Wayne, 2001: 10). Third Cinema, like PV, is about calling for change in the world. This squares with participatory and action research approaches. However, like other participatory media, ‘video can only be successfully used in a politically tolerant environment. The success of video for the promotion of social change depends to a large extent on political will.’ (Boeren, 1997: 152) The political situation is difficult in Ethiopia and it is important to address whether local people and development practitioners themselves feel that PV is an appropriate tool.

PV as a Form of Cultural Brokerage?

Pink (2009) writes that applied visual methods, such as PV, often involve the representation of one culture to another. The experiences and values of a society or group are presented to a specified audience, which might be or include those people themselves. It involves creating a platform upon which their experiences can become both obvious and comprehensible to an audience who will inevitably use their own identity and subjective position to make sense of them. It is therefore argued that applied visual methods involve a distinctive form of 'cultural brokerage'. This research aims to investigate whether PV is a successful means of 'cultural brokerage'.

Intentions of filmmakers can be interpreted differently by different audiences. Differences in interpretation can be due to a number of factors, for example a person's cultural, social, and environmental background. 'Consciousness is derived from realities that people live, and people living in entirely different realities develop consciousnesses which are not comparable within the same scale of assessment' (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991: 13). People's understanding can also be influenced by levels of exposure to media. The majority of Karrayyu have had limited exposure to film and this may affect how they see films, even if the films are made by members of their own community. Very little research has been done on the perception of films by inexperienced viewers (Boeren, 1994: 116). Anecdotes recorded by people working for Colonial Film Units in Africa (Giltrow, 1978) indicate that inexperienced audiences look at all the details on the screen, they have problems identifying and 'tracing' the main action as opposed to the peripheral activity, and they take things literally. One aim of this thesis is to analyse how members of the Karrayyu community respond to and understand the films.

Use of visual methods can also 'involve creative and consciousness generating processes whereby individuals and groups express (and as such re-constitute) their identities to themselves' (Pink, 2009: 17). The PV process can potentially be used to understand processes of identity construction. There is also the question of how 'outsiders' view the videos. It is often argued that PV is a successful means of portraying identity, practices, moralities and experiences, and of representing the problems of the disempowered, by insiders to outsiders. However, this needs to be investigated. As Hamilton says in reference to the 'long landscape

pan found in virtually all Aboriginal videos…Western viewers simply can't "see" what there is in the landscape; it's just a long boring shot of nothing. But Aboriginal viewers "read" this leisurely image through codes arising within their mythological systems, linking space, place and ancestral meaning' (Weiner, 1997: 218). This would suggest that there is a wide margin for differences in interpretation, both between community film makers and the wider community, and between local people and outsiders.

Difference in interpretation of films by 'insiders' and 'outsiders' can be compared to both anthropological research and development processes where people, depending on their position, have very different perspectives on and assessments of the same situation. The anthropologist works to try and overcome such differences, in an attempt to understand people's worlds from an insider point of view. In development situations there is often a need for cultural brokers/ mediators to bridge divides between insiders and outsiders, anthropologists often perform this role. The use of PV is an attempt to overcome these differences and provide a tool that does not require 'outsider interpretation'. But if there are differences in interpretation then the use of PV faces the same problems experienced in other areas of IK research and participatory research: if 'their' research is to have relevance it usually demands facilitation by 'us', although the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy is not straightforward. This also presents an interesting area of inquiry. An understanding of differences in interpretation can be useful for both research and applied contexts. PV films can perhaps be used to highlight differences in knowledge and can possibly provide ways of exploring differences in perception. Ginsburg (1994: 6) writes 'looking at media made by people occupying a range of cultural positions, from insider to outsider… [offers] us a fuller sense of the complexity of perspectives on what we have come to call culture'.

Chapter Three: Research Site & Methodology

Research Site

The Karrayyu are located in the Awash River basin, within the Great Rift Valley, in the eastern central part of Ethiopia. Whilst travelling along the main highway from Addis Ababa towards Djibouti the altitude changes as you move from the highland plateau to the low-lying Awash basin. The effects of altitude are made visible in the changes in landscape, climate and lifestyle. After Adama the landscape changes dramatically; cactus and succulents stand out against black lava fields which are evidence of ancient volcanic activity. Driving over the hill at Qorke you see down to Matahara, the vast expanse of Lake Nogoba (known as Lake Basaka) spreading out in front of you with Fantalle mountain, a dormant volcano, to the left. Karrayyu territory, known as Fantalle *woreda*, takes its name from the mountain, and is an important landmark for the community. The land is arid low-lying savannah covered with acacia trees.

The Karrayyu have an estimated rural population of 43,833 across 18 *kebele*s (East Shoa Zone Finance and Economic Development Office, 2009). These figures are, however, unreliable. No exact records of Karrayyu population size exist; the census report counts them together with other ethnic groups resident in the area. For generations the Karrayyu survived with relatively little interference from the Ethiopian state, but since 1950s the Awash Valley has been the target of 'development'. This has led to the introduction of roads, a railway, and the growth of urban areas. Basic infrastructure opened the area up and led to the rapid onset of irrigated agriculture. Karrayyu territory has shrunk markedly as a result. The area within which the Karrayyu can now move is very limited. In 2001 Gebre wrote: 'their total territory is no larger than 1,000 km². The maximum distance in any one direction is no greater than 40 km, which any healthy herd could cross in just one or two days' (Gebre, 2001: 108).

Land dispossession due to the establishment of a national park and agribusiness has resulted in loss of access to traditional grazing lands, water points and sites of religious importance. They have been pushed to the driest areas of their once large territory and are attempting to survive on marginal areas of land. The balance between people and the environment has been disturbed and the land they have left is seriously degraded. In some areas no vegetation can grow even if

it rains. In addition they are affected by changes in the climate: lack of rains and rising temperatures lead to frequent drought. The majority of Karrayyu households face food insecurity throughout the year and many rely on food aid to survive.

The Karrayyu share their border with a number of different groups, leading to added pressure. In the south are the Arsi Oromo agro-pastoralists; in the west and north-west there are the sedentary agriculturalist Tulama Oromo and Argoba, with Itu Oromo and Afar pastoralists to the north and the east. Conflict over grazing, watering resources and boundary claims, particularly with the neighbouring Afar and Argoba, has intensified and many people die every year as a result of such fighting. Afar and Argoba are generally considered to be traditional enemies of the Karrayyu. Karrayyu have largely peaceful relationships with Tulama and Arsi Oromo and have particularly strong links with Itu Oromo through intermarriage and mutual alliances. However, Karrayyu ties with the Itu are increasingly strained as more Itu migrate into Karrayyu territory, leading to a surge in population and greater pressure on the resource base.

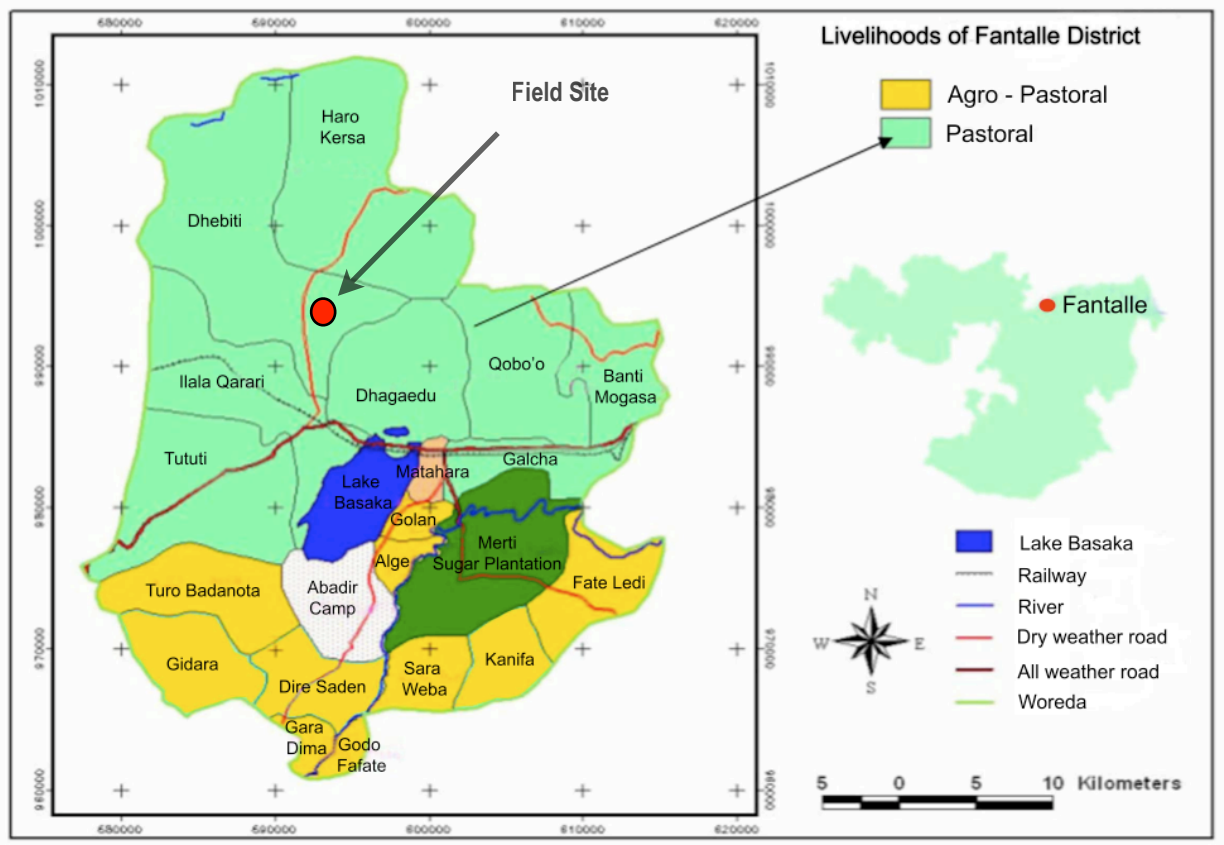

Figure 4: Map of livelihood distributions of Fantalle *woreda.* Source: Author

Despite these difficulties, the Karrayyu continue to practice pastoralism. Out of 18 rural *kebele*s in the district, 8 practise exclusively pastoralist livelihoods. The other 10 *kebele*s are predominantly agro-pastoralist and depend on mixed crop and livestock production, with varying proportions of each. (See Figure 4) According to data obtained from the District Rural Development Office (2006), pastoralists constitute 60.4% of total population in the district.

The Karrayyu are shifting towards crop cultivation but farming is largely unsuccessful due to low rainfall and lack of knowledge and resources. The irrigation scheme being introduced by the Oromia regional government aims to convert the remaining pastoralist kebeles to farming over the next two years and is being promoted as a solution to Karrayyu problems.

Ironically, despite these developments, the rural areas of Fantalle *woreda* are among the least developed parts of the country. Infrastructure is poorly developed and there are limited basic facilities such as road networks, markets, schools, health clinics and other social amenities. Educational provision to the Karrayyu has been extremely limited. The first schools were built in 1994 by Gudina Tumsa Foundation (a local NGO), but before this it was very difficult for children to attend school. The first Karrayyu University graduates are only now emerging.

My introduction to the Karrayyu

I did not set out with the intention of working with the Karrayyu; my connection came by chance. As Deger writes: 'All fieldwork, I suspect, hinges on chance encounters that profoundly determine the course of research' (2006: 1). I was introduced to Ethiopia by a local NGO focusing on natural resource management. Before beginning fieldwork I had already made two visits to the country, one in 2005 (01/06/05 - 10/06/05) and the other in 2008 (15/03/08 - 16/04/08) and had already decided on and had spent time in my prospective field-site. Through these trips I gained valuable insight into local issues, a greater understanding of the country and grassroots development. I arrived in Ethiopia in September 2008 intending to conduct my PhD fieldwork in North Shoa Zone, Oromia Region.

Through the NGO, I had been given the choice of working in two potential field sites in different regions: Oromia and Amhara. After reading about Ethiopia and reviewing the

ethnographic literature I made the decision to work with Oromo people, although I knew very little about the Oromo at the time. On arrival in Ethiopia in 2008 I settled in Addis Ababa to take lessons in *Afaan Oromo*. By chance I met Roba Bulga who studied languages at Addis Ababa University and was willing to teach me. At the time Roba was working on a documentary film, 'Jeans and Marto', which is focused on his story and aims to highlight challenges facing the Karrayyu. Through the language lessons we became friends and Roba invited me to visit his family. My first visit to his village was four weeks after my arrival in Ethiopia and so my relationship with the Karrayyu began. Roba also introduced me to Fantalle Gile, his brother (or cousin in Western terms), who became key to this research. If I had not met Roba my fieldwork and the resulting thesis would have been very different.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork took place over 14 months between March 2009 and April 2010. I spent roughly 12 of these months living with Roba's family in Dhebiti *kebele*, which means 'place of thirst'. The majority of my fieldwork was spent in Dhebiti and Haro Qarsa which are neighbouring *kebele*s. According to official statistics, Dhebiti has a total population of 3,844 people and Haro Qarsa, a population of 1,077 people. The average household size in Dhebiti is 12, and 6 in Haro Qarsa (East Shoa Zone Finance and Economic Development Office, 2009). Dhebiti is located roughly 19 km away from Matahara, the nearest town which serves as the capital for the *woreda* and hosts the main market used by the Karrayyu community. Dhebiti is accessed from the main highway along a rough road constructed to enable trucks to travel from a sugar plantation in the Afar region to the Matahara sugar factory. The area is rural and located in what was once the Karrayyu wet season grazing area, meaning it is one of the driest parts of the Karrayyu territory with no permanent water source, aside from boreholes.

The majority of Karrayyu pastoralists are semi-settled and maintain a family residence in a given area. They herd stock as mobile groups between the more permanent settlements (Figure 5) and temporary camps (Figure 6). A traditional grass house was constructed for me Roba's village where I lived for the majority of fieldwork.

Karrayyu houses (*mana*) are usually circular in shape made from a timber frame and covered with grass. Most houses consist of three sections: the entrance hut, the kitchen, and the sleeping area. These are joined together by connecting doorways. Within the small inner sleeping section the family socialises and stores food, fuel and other household possessions. Small livestock are often accommodated within the entrance hut or kitchen area. Houses in cattle camps are more temporary structures.

Figures 5-6: Examples of permanent and temporary residences. Source: Author

Roba's immediate family's village consisted of a total of six houses with 25 permanent residents. The numbers often changed, Roba's family take care of a number of children on behalf of relatives, and members constantly move between different camps as conditions require. A short distance away live Fantalle Gile's family who are members of the same *balbala,* meaning 'people from the same door'. Fantalle's village consists of four homesteads with 17 residents. This village was more constant in terms of numbers, although Fantalle's elder brothers were often away following work opportunities in town. Over the valley was the rest of the extended family. This village was much larger consisting of up to 16 households.

Figure 7: Aerial view of village and settlements of extended family.
Source: Google Earth

I did not manage to record the total number of inhabitants. It was difficult to keep accurate records as families are large and members move from place to place. Changes happen quickly and you easily lose track. During fieldwork four family members died, seven children were born, and there were innumerable comings and goings.

I lived in Roba's village and had access to all households in the three villages (Figure 7). I also regularly visited and spent time in other villages in the surrounding area including the nearby *Gabalaa* village, where the leaders from the current *tuuta (Gadaa* group) in power for *Baaso* moiety reside with their families. In addition, the local shop in Dhebiti, which sells very basic supplies, was an important place for meeting community members from the wider area.

I used local buses with community members to get from the village to town. Buses run on market days, Tuesday and Thursday, and a minibus runs every day which supplies '*khat*'[4] to Dhebiti and Haro Qarsa *kebele*s. In Ethiopia only a small percentage of the population owns private vehicles; the majority use mini-vans, pickup trucks and public buses as their primary mode of transportation. In contrast, almost all foreigners own or lease vehicles, or hire drivers. It was sometimes difficult to get places on the minibus due to high demand, leading to difficulties transporting food supplies. I often relied on help from Gudina Tumsa Foundation (GTF), a local NGO, which has a camp in Dhebiti. Living in Dhebiti enabled me to understand the difficulties of life in a rural area. 'Getting to market to sell produce, getting to school, obtaining medical attention, finding employment; buying spare parts, farm inputs and consumer items not available locally, trying to arrange a loan at the bank ... can be difficult tasks for the rural poor', particularly for those members of the community who lived in off-road settlements (Porter, 2002: 288).

I rented a room in Matahara town, 19 kilometres from the rural site, where I stayed when I needed a break, fieldwork was physically and emotionally demanding. Far from being a getaway, this house was frequented by members of the family and general community if I was in town. I spent more time in town towards the end of fieldwork because I needed access to electricity for video editing. I also contracted typhoid several times which made living in the village increasingly difficult as I could no longer share food and water. Living in Matahara town for a period was advantageous because it enabled me to gain an understanding of the lives of Karrayyu who live permanently in town, and their interactions with Karrayyu living in rural areas.

Community members frequently commented on the difference between me and other researchers, because I actually lived with the community. Previous researchers either worked from the camp of GTF, or based themselves in town and made brief trips to the villages to conduct interviews. The choice of where to live influences how community members perceive ones agenda, and level of commitment. Although GTF is an Oromo organisation it is Protestant and regarded by the community as having a religious agenda, the staff are referred to as 'Pente'.

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[4] A plant which is chewed and used as a stimulant.

These labels are extended to anyone who spends time in the camp. Living in town does not enable one to gain an understanding of the Karrayyu way of life. There is a definite urban/rural divide. As Roba Fantalle, a Karrayyu graduate, said: 'The other researchers just waited for market day when the people come to town, they stayed in the shade and made them speak about things. They never knew about the things people talked about when they responded to their questions'. Residing in a traditional house, with a Karrayyu family played an essential role in the establishment of trust and in developing an 'allegiance' with the community.

Participants

It is important to acknowledge the relationships I formed with members of the Karrayyu community, without whom this research would not have been possible. I struggle with the distance created between anthropologists and the people they study, 'the maintenance of a distinction between 'self' and 'other', between 'us' and 'them' and of cultural boundaries' (Bolton, 1995: 40). The people I worked and lived with are important to me, not just from a research point of view, but as part of my life. Fieldwork leads to deep connections which deserve to be acknowledged rather than rendered invisible. Behar (1996) asserts that the era of the objective observer of other cultures is past and that a sense of attachment to the people under study is not only a natural and altogether human outcome of entering into the lives of others; but that the subjective feelings actually yield a more humane and sympathetic understanding of another people's customs.

Acknowledgment of participants is an essential part of decolonizing anthropology, and enables the reader to understand the dynamics behind the fieldwork process. As De Neve (2006: 79) points out: 'every anthropologist's reflections on a society are always and necessarily informed by the reflexivity of those whom s/he studies and interacts with, and it is the latter's reflections, ideas and opinions that set the framework for the ethnographer's own interpretation and analysis'. Acknowledgement requires a shift in terms from 'informant' to 'participant', I share the discomfort many anthropologists experience 'using terms such as informant, respondent or research subject as textual references for people they have known as friends, neighbours, advisers etc.' (Amit, 2000: 3).

I was assisted throughout the research by a number of formally educated Karrayyu, including students in the last stages of secondary education and a number of university graduates. All the students I worked with are the first members of their family to gain an education; their families are all pastoralists living in rural areas. The majority of my educated friends are male as there are still few female Karrayyu students with a University education. There is currently only one female university graduate, Aliya Hawas. We formed close friendships and they contributed greatly to the research process, they understood the research aims and had valuable insight into the life of the community. I was keen to involve younger people because they have not been involved in previous research processes due to the prominent role of elders in the community. Young people sometimes criticised the dominance of elders and this gave me a greater understanding of power dynamics within the community. Interactions with students also gave me insight into the impact of formal education and how people experience this.

Significant people were Roba Bulga, Fantalle Gile, Roba Fantalle and Ashan Jilo. Roba Bulga and Fantalle Gile are from the same family, Roba Fantalle and Ashan Jilo are from different families, all residing in Dhebiti and Haro Qarsa *kebeles*. Roba Bulga played an important role in terms of my initial introduction but was based in Addis Ababa for the majority of fieldwork. He gave interviews, helped with translations and discussed ideas. Fantalle Gile assisted me throughout the research, he was essential to my acceptance by the community, and the success of the research. Unlike many of the Karrayyu who gain a University education, he continues to spend much time with his family in the rural area and participates in the traditional way of life. He could explain things to both me, and members of the community, in ways we could all understand. He also helped to develop the research approach so that it suited the interests of the wider community. He learned the PV methodology, assisted the PV training and spent long hours helping participants to plan and edit the films and add subtitles. He also took a great interest in the writing of the thesis. Another important person was Roba Fantalle. He was taken away from his family to study in town at a young age and went on to obtain a degree in Veterinary Medicine. During my fieldwork he was working for GTF, on a project aimed at developing community resilience against livestock health problems. He has valuable insight into development approaches and how they impact on the Karrayyu. Ashen Jilo studied Anthropology and Sociology at Addis Ababa University and now teaches Anthropology at Dila University. We had many valuable conversations about the pros and cons of anthropology, and

about Karrayyu encounters with anthropologists. I have referred to his degree thesis in my work.

Members of Roba Bulga and Fantalle Gile's family played an important role because I lived with them and they provided me links to the wider community. They have had more exposure to outsiders through Roba, and were receptive to having a *ferenji*[5] in their village. Roba's father, Bulga Jilo, allowed me to live in his village and acted as my 'father'. I became an adopted family member refer to Roba's parents as 'mother' and 'father' and they refer to me as their daughter in turn. My relationship with the family was negotiated and established over time. Initially the relationship was awkward; neither they nor I were sure of my place in the village and how we should behave towards one another. This was exacerbated due to the language barrier. This changed over time and through sharing daily life we became closer. Sharing food was extremely important as most foreigners would not eat Karrayyu food which creates a barrier. This is understandable as outsiders do not have immunity to local infections. I stopped eating communally after contracting typhoid, but it was an important part of my acceptance by the family. I also gave gifts of tobacco, coffee, sugar and *khat*, and paid for medicine, school fees, and food during drought times. In exchange, the family endured my questions and interviews, allowed me to accompany them, and protected me as I lived amongst them.

Bulga Jilo is the *damiinaa* or leader of his *gosa* (clan). He took a keen interest in the research and was a valuable source of advice and wisdom. Due to his position in the community he was vital in encouraging other elders to participate in the research. He facilitated my presence at key cultural events including *Gadaa* meetings, which are usually exclusively male. *Gadaa* meetings are attended by elders representing different *gosas* (clans) and *tuutas* (*Gadaa* grades) from the whole community. Many of the elders from the *Baaso Gabalaa* village participated in the research at some stage, either through interviews, viewing videos or agreeing to be filmed. I quickly became aware of the fact that certain male elders in the community were targeted by researchers to work as informants. They have become the official spokespeople or representatives for 'the community'. Interestingly Bulga Jilo, despite his encounters with researchers in the past, had never worked with them and although an influential member of his

[5] A term widely used in Ethiopia to refer to foreigners, mainly white people.

gosa he does not act as a ‘politician’ or representative of the community at higher levels. This was important because there is a learned narrative told by community members about their situation. I was keen to get around the 'standard story' by focusing on elders who had not previously been involved in research efforts. The majority of elders I worked with were pastoralists from Haro Qarsa and Dhebiti *kebeles,* but I also interviewed individuals from the agro-pastoral *kebeles*. A number of prominent elders living in town, who represent the community in a more official capacity, were also included both in interviews and the videos.

It was particularly difficult to interact with women initially, it took time to build relationships and trust. Men were more open and accessible but women kept their distance. It was initially very difficult for them to have a stranger in their midst. To get closer to women, I tried to participate in daily routines. This included carrying water, accompanying women when they collected firewood and milked animals, going with herders as they grazed their animals, travelling along the migration routes and spending time in cattle camps with the family. The local borehole was an important place for interacting with women outside the immediate family. I was, however, restricted from participating in more strenuous activities. I was perceived to be physically weak due to my *ferenji* status. My white skin was thought to be particularly fragile, Karrayyu women thinking of themselves as being literally 'thick skinned' in comparison. Although this was a way of taking care of me, in hindsight, I also think it was a way for female members of the family to assert control.

Women talked to me informally but in the early stages would not participate in formal interview processes involving recording equipment. Those who did felt nervous and would forget what they wanted to say. This is perhaps due to cultural restrictions on women speaking in public. There are conflicting attitudes towards women: they are respected but are also seen as being incapable of participating in research because they either 'don't know' or 'can't speak'. In the beginning I was worried that I would struggle to include women. Roba and Fantalle were key to facilitating my relationships with women and initially I relied heavily on female members of their clan. Roba and Fantalle's mothers welcomed me and provided me with food, company and assistance; as elder women in the family, their acceptance was crucial. I spent much time with younger women, including the wives of Roba and Fantalle's brothers and their sisters, who were the only women to take part in formal interview processes at the beginning.

Roba's sister Rado Bulga was particularly important for a number of reasons. She is the only woman who has voiced her views on camera. Although other women agreed to be filmed they were extremely nervous about talking on camera. In many ways Rado is a-typical. Despite being a wife and mother, she was determined to gain an education and battled hard to achieve this with the support of her husband. Rado's husband, Roba Waday, is from the plantation area and practices agro-pastoralism. He provided me with a link to that part of the community. His father is *Qaallu*[6] for *Dullacha* moiety. At the beginning of my research Rado and her husband were both studying in Matahara. I spent time in their household in Matahara which gave me an insight into the dynamics between town and rural areas and different livelihoods and coping strategies. I also gained access to members of the agro-pastoralist community through Roba's extended family, and Fantalle's friends. Community members are closely connected. Links through *gosa*, *tuuta* and marriage cut across geographical location and livelihood categories, and community wide interactions are facilitated by *Gadaa* ceremonies, and community meetings. When travelling with friends from the community; we would meet people from all over the area who I did not know, but who knew the person I was with. The community is small and close knit, and news travels quickly through traditional communication networks.

A turning point in the research came after a time of extreme suffering for the family. After I had been living in the village for about two months, Roba's eldest brother Jilo was killed during conflict with the neighbouring Afar. Jilo was involved in the PV work; he enjoyed learning and was excited about the project. That day he sat and ate breakfast in my house before going with the cattle. Later that morning fighting broke out on the border and I sat helplessly in the village with the children as men and women went to the fighting place. Men were called from all over the neighbourhood to push the Afar back and women followed carrying food and water to care of the wounded. Fighting went on into the evening and as night fell fighters started returning home. Due to mobile phone communication I received news of Jilo's death before other family members but had to stay quiet until the men returned to break the news. I will never forget the terrible sound of the laments from my family’s village contrasting with the sound of celebratory gunfire from returning warriors who had successfully killed Afar enemies. I became aware of

[6] Traditional spiritual leader.

the complicated dynamics of community life**.** I shared tears with the family at the death of Jilo, and again when other family members died, and this cemented our relationship.

The sharing of experience, and my connection to Roba Bulga's family, made a significant difference to how I was regarded by the wider community. Roba Fantalle said, 'You are an outsider but you came to the community, you sensed us and lived among us. You experienced the same problems as us. You starved with us, you got thirsty with us, you were in the middle of conflict with us, you shared life with us'. I became particularly close to female family members after the death of Jilo, the experience broke down barriers, and other members of the community followed suit. My relationships with female members of the community undoubtedly had an influence on my overall level of acceptance. Men are used to interacting with cultural outsiders so forging relationships with Karrayyu males is less significant. My interactions with women, and their initial reluctance to participate, made me realise the importance of their role in the community.

Confidentiality and Pseudonyms

It is often viewed as good anthropological practice to give one's informants pseudonyms, but throughout this thesis I have used people's real names. Participants names can be confusing because there are a limited number of Karrayyu names, particularly male names, meaning there are many people called Roba, Fantalle, Jilo and so on. Participants felt proud to have been part of the research, and were adamant that they wanted to be acknowledged. This was particularly true of those involved in the PV work, who were thrilled to put their names on the credits at the end of each film. The videos themselves means that participants are easily identifiable. The Karrayyu community is small and I am well known, many people were involved, directly or indirectly in the research and it is widely known where and who I lived with. Even if I had given people pseudonyms, this would not have been a guarantee of their anonymity, and making people anonymous would contradict the collaborative nature of the research.

The decision to name people, although it was what participants requested, did present me with a dilemma because some of what I write about is politically sensitive. To ensure participants were fully aware of the decision they were making the issue of pseudonyms was addressed a

number of times. I also checked what I had written with literate participants who decided it would be safer not to include people's names in the chapter which discusses the irrigation scheme. Participants also reviewed the edited films and were happy to include them in the thesis. Participants understood the research process and the intended use of the research, which was a key factor in enabling an informed decision. Certain participants had a better understanding of the sensitive aspects than I did, and they informed and guided me. This is an example of the reciprocal trust that can emerge as a result of taking a collaborative approach.

Language

Language is central to most forms of ethnographic research. I managed to gain a basic knowledge of *Afaan Oromo* and by the end of my fieldwork could communicate adequately. This was an important factor in my interactions with community members as most foreigners choose to learn Amharic, the 'official' language of Ethiopia. I was not, however, able to conduct interviews alone and relied on assistance. *Afaan Oromo* is key to Oromo and Karrayyu identity and it is difficult to understand cultural ideas and concepts without knowledge of *Afaan Oromo*, even when things are translated into English. Language in Ethiopia is also political. 'Amharic, which is the language of the politically dominant ethnic group, the Amhara, and mother tongue of less than 20% of Ethiopia's population, was imposed on the other ethnic and linguistic groups.' (Bulcha, 1997: 325-6). *Afaan Oromo,* one of the most widely spoken indigenous languages in Africa, 'has been until recently one of the prohibited languages in Ethiopia' (ibid.: 326). It only became possible to use *Afaan Oromo* after the collapse of the Mengistu regime in 1991 (Gamta, 1993). Such policies meant 'the Oromo could not develop independent institutions that would allow them to produce and disseminate their historical knowledge freely' (Jalata, 1996: 95). Use of *Afaan Oromo*, and the representation of Oromo history and culture, is of critical importance to Oromo groups.

Afan Oromo is primarily an oral language which had no written alphabet until relatively recently. 'On 3rd November 1991 the OLF convened a meeting of over 1,000 Oromo intellectuals to decide which alphabet to use. They decided unanimously to adopt the adapted Latin alphabet consisting of 34 characters referred to as *Qubee Afaan Oromoo* (Gamta, 1992).

Despite the adoption of a standard, uniform spelling, many non-Oromo researchers are not familiar with the alphabet and Oromo often use their own versions of *Qube* spelling based on the way they hear and interpret words. Different Oromo dialects have different pronunciation, vocabulary and spellings (1996 Baxter, Hultin & Triulzi: 11). Karrayyu, has been spelt in various ways in the literature: Kereyu, Karayu and Karaiyu. I try throughout this thesis to use *Afaan Oromo* spellings according to the Karrayyu dialect using *Qubee Afaan Oromoo*.

Overview of methodology

A range of methods were used as part of the collaborative approach and tailored according what was appropriate to different situations. A mixed method approach was taken which included: participant observation, semi-structured and informal interviews, life histories, participatory video and photography. Participatory Video shaped the overall research approach but other methods played a crucial role in developing information, or 'leads' which came out of the video process. I describe these methods here, with the exception of PV which is explained in depth in Chapter Five.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was used throughout. Participant observation requires the researcher to immerse her/his-self in the culture and daily life of a community, which demands intellectual, physical, emotional, political and intuitive engagement. Residing in the community made it possible to collect information slowly and informally and build up a well-rounded picture, rather than fragmentary insights. I was able to access people who usually remain invisible, such as the elderly, sick and disabled. I gained an understanding of seasonal changes, herd management practices, labour requirements including gender based activities, pastoral land-use patterns, migration and settlement patterns, cultivation practices, common property resources and market relations. I found it important to interact physically and to learn about pastoralism by doing. (Kohn, 1994) As Baxter writes, pastoralists are 'craft-workers': 'learning to care for stock requires a long apprenticeship on the job, in order to accumulate the experience and knowledge about stock, weather, water, trees, browsing, grazing, acquiring the emotional and physical strengths to endure hardships, and above all, knowledge of the en-ravelled social

relationships in which herding is enmeshed' (2001: 238). This contrasts to the academic world where the majority of knowledge does not usually include ‘know-how’. ‘Despite the extent of the freedom of academics to reflect on almost anything, the restricted horizons of their place in the social division of labour encourage a blind spot where practical and tacit skills are concerned.’ (Sayer, 1984: 15).

Engaging physically enables understanding of what Abram refers to as 'life-worlds'. 'The life-world is the world of our immediately lived experience, as we live it, prior to our thoughts about it ... The life-world is what we count on without necessarily paying it much attention, the world of the clouds overhead and the ground underfoot' (1996: 40). The world that a people experiences, and come to count on, deeply influences the ways they live. An understanding of the Karrayyu life world was essential to understanding the Karrayyu. During the initial stages of research I was quite unaware of the crisis the Karrayyu are facing as a group and the dramatic changes that have taken place in recent times. As I became more familiar with the area and community members I started to see the Karrayyu from a new perspective. It was a dramatic shift, as if I my eyes were suddenly opened. Establishing the wider social, cultural, ecological and historical framework was vital in understanding Karrayyu views and concerns.

Participant observation was essential for facilitating PV and helped me to understand how it could be tailored to the local situation. Knowledge of seasonal movements was crucial to logistics, for example arranging the use of cameras, and making sure that I was accessible to participants. I would have been unable to do this from town. Use of participant observation in coalition with interviewing and life story collection helped me to see the negotiations between ‘what people say they do’ and ‘what people actually do’.

Interviews

Initially I conducted 18 interviews about people’s experiences with cameras, television and researchers, and 20 interviews about PV, what people wanted to record and why. I later conducted 45 in-depth interviews on specific topics related to Karrayyu culture and social life with a range of participants, and towards the end of the research 10 interviews to get feedback on the PV process. These were all recorded using a digital voice recorder. Interviews ranged in

length from 30 to 120 minutes depending on the topic. Interviews were supplemented by in-depth informal unrecorded conversations which took place throughout fieldwork. For interviews I mostly used a semi-structured format which outlined key questions, but the wording and order were flexible. As research progressed interview topics became more defined, but still followed a semi-structured format. Fantalle Gile played an important role in interviewing. I directed the interviews, but he often asked questions and translated responses to me, particularly in the early stages. He encouraged participants to talk about the issues they felt were important, and adjusted the order of topics and questions accordingly. It was important to work with someone who understood the point of view of community members and could frame questions in a way they could understand and respond to.

I discovered that Karrayyu have a 'way' of talking, particularly elders. Answers to questions often began with a proverb which contained the essence of an answer, this is followed by an explanation, the explanation then comes back full circle to the answer, and is followed by a summary. Interviews were often long, and sometimes repetitive, but led to new discoveries, and drew my attention to some of the more subtle ways of conveying knowledge. As Steele has written, 'An investigator when confronted with that which is foreign to him discovers for the first time much that is in need of investigating pertaining to himself. His seeing, thinking, and valuing may need to be investigated. He may need to go through radical change himself, because of the catalytic nature of exposure to other ways of seeing, thinking, valuing, behaving, and believing' (Steele, 1962: 44). The use of ‘we’ was common and participants almost never used the word ‘I’. Speakers often attempt to draw the listener (or interviewer) into the conversation by placing them in the context of the story or conversation. This both includes the listener and emphasises the point the speaker is trying to make.

The interview process helped me understand why community members dislike taking part in questionnaires. Participants, particularly elders, do not respond well to a rigid linear structure. There is an expectation that youngsters should show respect for elders. Taking control of a situation through questions, which are decided by you and which direct the flow of a conversation, could be regarded as disrespectful. Traditionally it is the elders role to educate the youngsters, and this often takes the form of youngsters listening as elders discuss and debate issues. It was stated by both young and old that the majority of youngsters do not know enough

about certain aspects of the culture to give an adequate explanation. A Karrayyu informant stated in another piece of research: 'a generation younger than 30 years old knows very little about Karrayyu *Gadaa'* (Demie, 2006: 37). I found many of the younger people that I worked with to be knowledgeable, but I don't know how reflective this is of the community generally. Fantalle Gile knew how to approach elders and how to ask the right questions. I gradually came to understand that elder status does not necessarily relate to a person's age; it is based on knowledge and understanding of Karrayyu culture and history and reflects a person's ability to represent the community.

Life Stories

Life stories were also used as an alternative to imposing 'vertical' research methods such as questionnaires and surveys. They give people 'the opportunity to express themselves in their own terms, employing their own language, relating their history, their stories, traditions' (Barker & Cross, 1992: 12). Life stories were vital for gaining insight into changes that have taken place including: changes in customs and practices, trends in population and livestock numbers, intensity of conflict, climatic and environmental changes, the effects of formal education, new religions and urbanisation. Life stories helped me understand the causes of these changes and trends as perceived by Karrayyu people. They accessed hidden spheres of experience, particularly aspects of private life, traditional and experiential knowledge and people's **feelings**. People's point of view invariably depended on personal experiences, which varied according to age and gender, among other things.

I collected life stories from a total of 16 community members: 10 men and 6 women, ranging in age from 17 to 80+[7]. Life stories spanned from early childhood to the present time. Questions were used as a guide, but people tended to follow similar patterns naturally and often prompts were not needed. Participants responded particularly well to the life story approach. One elder, who had worked with other researchers, was pleasantly surprised when I asked him to recall his earliest memories, and later said that recounting his life story was an enjoyable experience. I did not manage to collect many life stories of elder women, I am particularly grateful to Robee Jibituu, an influential female elder, who was happy to speak at length with me.

[7] There were difficulties getting the precise age of elders

There was a remarkable similarity in themes that emerged, across the generations and sexes. Milk was a topic that recurred over and over again; people spoke about how much they loved milk, how it made them feel, and how much they miss times when milk was plentiful. Other themes were the importance of animals in their lives, the dramatic environmental changes they have experienced, changing material culture and traditions, and their thoughts about the future. One of the main themes for younger people was formal education, elders also spoke about this, but from a different perspective. At a certain point I stopped collecting life histories because of the similarities, and concentrated on focused interviews about specific themes and topics which emerged from life histories, interviews and videos which required more exploration.

Transcription

Interviews and life stories were conducted and recorded in *Afaan Oromo,* and transcribed in the field. Fantalle and I listened to the recordings together and I wrote his explanations in English. This process was laborious and time consuming, but the struggle to translate the utterances and statements of participants enabled me to appreciate underlying meanings which may otherwise have escaped my notice. It assisted the language learning process and led to a more in-depth understandings of important cultural concepts. An active role in the transcription process meant that I gradually digested and internalised the material, in contrast with just reading the passages which would have perhaps led to a more superficial understanding. It also meant I could discuss and develop important points as and when they emerged.

Mixed Methods & Participation

Using a range of methods gave people different options in terms of participation. In addition to the PV process community members contributed through interviews, life stories and general commentary. Methods had to be tailored to people's needs. Women, for example, were often not comfortable with the use of recording equipment or formal questions, so we often spoke informally instead. As time went on women became familiar with recording equipment and towards the end many female participants took great pleasure in listening to recordings of their voices. Participation of women in interviews and life story collection was significant because other researchers have experienced difficulty in this regard. Gebre writes, 'It was unfortunate that nearly all the in-depth informants were male. Women were less accessible for interviewing

due, mostly, to cultural influences discouraging female participants in such encounters' (2000: 21). Another study on Afar and Karrayyu pastoralists states: 'The household was taken as the unit of analysis. This was done because of social considerations where the head of each household is often the person expected to speak on behalf of the household. Because of strongly developed cultural protocols it would have been very difficult if not impossible to get information from other members of the household (e.g. women).' (Abule, Snyman and Smit, 2005: 23). However, other researchers working with the Karrayyu have mostly been male and being a woman may have helped me relate to Karrayyu women.

On Writing

The final stage of research usually involves a return to the academic environment: ‘one engages, disengages and returns to base in order to write’ (Hobbs, 1993: 45). As Jackson writes, 'Apparently it is this critical separation between native and re-civilised anthropologist, a crucial distance that permits the anthropologist to see not just through the native's eyes but also to examine those natives eyes through a much more powerfully scientific pair' (2004: 34). I had hoped to remain in Ethiopia to involve community members in the writing process, I felt it was important to carry the participatory approach through to the final stages of the research. As Menzies has written 'writing, analysis, revision and distribution ... is the key phase of the project. The responsibility to remain in contact with the community is crucial' (2001: 22). I applied to the ESRC but my application was declined due to rules relating to supervision requirements, so I returned to the UK to write. In many ways this was unfortunate as it meant that the participatory process was cut short. I found the writing process contrasted markedly to the way I had worked throughout the fieldwork period. It forced me to distance myself from the people I spent so long working with and alongside. In many ways the academic writing process creates a separation between 'Us' and 'Them' and reinforces the dichotomy of 'native'/ anthropologist, which highlights another conflict between academic protocols and collaborative approaches.

Despite 'returning to base' I have to some extent involved participants in the writing process. Certain parts of the thesis were written whilst still in the field, and parts were e-mailed to Ethiopia to be read and commented on. After writing the first draft I returned to Ethiopia for

two months (01/09/10 to 02/11/10) to consult community members and to finish the videos, many of which lacked subtitles. I worked mainly with literate community members who read the draft and added subtitles to the films; but I also spent time consulting various non-literate participants who had worked closely with me throughout the research. Some may comment that this gives too much control to participants and makes the process subjective and unscientific, but I found it to be informative. Collaboration during the writing phase led to new insights and enabled me to fill gaps in my knowledge. I began to understand areas I had misunderstood or misinterpreted, particularly aspects of complex social institutions like the *Gadaa* system.

Lassiter recognises the value of extending the collaborative approach to the writing stage. 'Collaborative ethnography invites commentary from our consultants and seeks to make that commentary overtly part of the ethnographic text as it develops' (Lassiter, 2005: 16). This helps us to 'counterbalance the more individualistic forms of self-reflexivity which seem to focus solely on the ethnographer's own intellectual and reflexive capabilities; secondly, to offset more heroic accounts of fieldwork that imply that insights are gained on the anthropologist's own account, and, finally, to demonstrate how insight is built up only gradually and painstakingly through endless conversations and encounters' (De Neve, 2006: 41). It is increasingly recognised that a 'subjective', 'insider' position can be vital both in terms of appropriate representation and understanding of indigenous knowledge and perspectives. ‘Western research…brings to bear on any study of indigenous peoples a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualisation of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialised forms of language, and structures of power’ (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999: 42). Collaborative approaches are vital in order to avoid interpreting and testing local experience and knowledge according to Western canons alone, therefore reproducing a dominant world view (Sillitoe, 2000: 5).

Accessibility

‘Writing up’ often involves extracting knowledge and storing it in a form which makes it inaccessible to the ‘owners’. On completion this thesis will be made available to community members. However, the written mode is problematic as many of the people I worked with are non-literate. Participatory Videos will therefore play an important role in providing an

alternative way for the community to engage and to feel that at least part of the research is owned by them and remains with them.

In addition I have tried to develop a certain written style. MacClancy (2002: 4) points out that ‘many anthropologists, despite their best intentions, have hidden their insights and cloaked their findings in the thickest of prose’, often intentionally in order to retain an authoritative position. Owusu (1978: 312) expands on this, saying that accounts 'written in obscure "scientific" and esoteric language' are 'virtually impossible, particularly for the native anthropologist, to falsify, replicate, or evaluate it objectively. For frequently, it is not clear whether the accounts so brilliantly presented are about native realities at all'. However, it is important to emphasise that: 'Writing clearly is not about "dumbing down"... it is about writing accessible texts, texts that express complex ethnographic facts in clear, comprehensible language' (Lassiter, 2005: 120). This is an ethical decision because as well as contributing to academic knowledge 'we are working with real, everyday people who deserve to know what we are up to and how we are interpreting their lives. If they cannot understand our ethnographic texts, something is wrong with our collaborative project' (ibid., 121).

Chapter Four: Karrayyu Experiences of Cameras, Television & Researchers

Before PV training, I conducted interviews about Karrayyu exposure to media. A total of 18 people: 12 men and 6 women were interviewed. Women were still underrepresented at this stage, but formal interviews were supplemented by more informal conversations. I focused on visual media, primarily television, films, and people's experience of cameras. Photography is important because the Karrayyu have more experience with, and therefore knowledge of, still photography than video cameras. Exposure to still cameras was likely to influence reactions to and understanding of video, and is a useful window into attitudes towards cameras generally. I also explored Karrayyu experiences with researchers because this affected how I was regarded by the community. As this thesis makes an argument for collaborative engaged approaches, it was important to assess community members' past experiences.

Reactions to Cameras

The majority of Karrayyu live in rural areas. They have limited interaction with outsiders and generally have a late introduction to things from 'outside'. Reactions to cameras should be framed within this context. Roba Fantalle, a male graduate, recounts his memories of his childhood:

> 'When I was a child, before coming to school, I hardly got a chance or a choice to go to town. I was afraid, anything from town would make me wild. If a car came from town near to us I would run. I was afraid of the different sounds when a car moved on the road. That sound was really strange for me so I would run to the bush or the mountain".

He also describes his first experience of town:

> 'It was strange to see so many people moving in really narrow spaces, narrow roads, cars, horses and carts, different things moving, different sounds. Town was a really difficult place. I never thought of coming to visit town. I didn't like it. My place was in the rural area and I always wanted to stay there'.

Since Roba was a child, attitudes have changed as rural areas have opened up and interactions with town have increased, but rural areas are still largely cut off from urban life.

All community members I spoke to were familiar with cameras, mainly in the hands of *ferenjis*. Fantalle Roba, a Karrayyu student, explained, 'I only knew about the camera with the *ferenji*, never with the blacks or *habeshas*[8]'. Cameras are overwhelmingly associated with outsiders who can generally be put into two categories: tourists and development workers. Men are familiar with tourists, but women have less interaction due to more restricted movements. Men travel with the camels along routes which are frequented by tourists. They are highly visible and attract a lot of attention due to their clothing and hairstyles. Karrayyu men have a reputation for being fierce and are known for not liking photographs to be taken of them or their animals. The Karrayyu point of view is that tourists often do not ask permission and are disrespectful. Delale Mieso, a young Karrayyu camel herder who also runs a milk co-operative, described his experiences. 'The *ferenjis* stop their cars and make films and take photographs of our animals. Recently I saw when they came and took photographs of us even when some people said "don't take our picture."' Fantalle Bulga, Roba Bulga's younger brother, says: 'I have seen the *ferenji* many times. I saw the *ferenji* when I was a kid, the community hated them when they took people's picture. Sometimes they fought with them or shouted at them'. Men often defend themselves by threatening photographers and even throwing stones at them. Tourists often try to give money, biscuits and clothes in return for pictures. A Karrayyu male complained that *ferenjis* treat adults like children by trying to cheat them with insignificant 'gifts' in return for photographs. They see this as a sign of the lack of respect that white people have for them, and an underestimation of their level of comprehension.

Karrayyu resistance to photography leads to them being portrayed as violent tribal people. This reputation is encouraged and even perpetuated by the tourist industry, as illustrated by the following quote from a guide book to Ethiopia: 'Kereyu (sic) men are noted for their hairstyle of short on the top, and huge Afro on the sides. Resist the urge to take a photograph without permission - these are some of the fiercest warriors around!' (Briggs, 2009: 394). It seems there is increased tourism to remote areas which are associated with cultures described as 'tribal' or 'primitive'. Turton writes: 'Tourists are attracted to the Omo Valley by the image presented to them in travel agents' brochures and travel articles, of one of the last 'wildernesses' in the world, inhabited by wild animals, naked warriors' (2005: 274). Part of the attraction is due to the

[8] A term used to describe Amhara or Tigrean people from the North of Ethiopia.

dangerous reputation of the 'tribes'. 'In guidebooks and official tourist publications, these cultures are promoted by emphasising their potential for violence' (Hoskins, 2002: 798) Tourists are attracted by the 'thrill of flirting with violence' and 'a trip to these areas without a camera is virtually inconceivable because photography provides the proof, the legitimation, and authentication of an 'exotic' experience' (Hoskins, 2002: 808).

It has been suggested that the culture of tourism has its very beginnings in the European trade in photographic images of Africa (Mirzoeff, 2002: 566). In many ways there is a parallel here with the practice of anthropology. Traditionally, fieldwork involves travel away, preferably to a distant locale, usually in a non-industrialised part of the world, 'the word "field" connotes a place set apart from the urban … Going to the "field" suggests a trip to a place that is agrarian, pastoral, or maybe even "wild"' (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997: 8). Certain cultures or regions are considered more anthropological than others according to the degree of 'Otherness'. The more 'in limbo' the anthropologist, the more 'exotic' the location, the more the work is valued, and the camera plays a crucial role in documenting the fieldwork experience; although the exoticist bias in anthropology has been severely criticised in recent times.

Karrayyu also experience cameras through NGOs and development agents working in the area. It is significant that people experience cameras through development workers because it is through visual images in particular, that Western societies become aware and get information about 'developing' countries. Hanne Longreen has referred to this as the 'development gaze' in which there is an 'obvious power-relation between "Us Here" and "Them Out There". In development projects we ("Us Here") are always those who give support to the "Others". This has consequences for the ways in which we look at each other' (Longreen, 2001: 227). Use of the visual image is particularly relevant in the case of Ethiopia ,which is largely known in the West as a result of the 1984 famine and its coverage in the news, particularly a news report by Michael Burke prompted by the documentary film 'Seeds of Despair' (1984). Media portrayal of Africa, as well as development campaigns, often portray Africans as helpless victims. This allows the West 'to cast itself in the role of altruistic saviour; a saviour stripped of ambiguity' (Pottier, 2001: 2). In recent times there has been particular criticism of the famine iconography used by NGOs in their campaigns, what has come to be called the 'pornography of suffering' (Maren, 1998: 1); and of disaster photography which can be seen as a type of

Orientalist discourse (Karnik; 1998). It is increasingly argued that aid and ‘development’ is another form of colonisation, in which photography and visual images play a key role (Crewe & Harrison 1998; De Waal 2002, Escobar 1995).

The camera is an object of both fear and fascination for the Karrayyu. I quickly discovered that there is a belief that cameras steal both your blood (*dhiga*) and soul (*sullii*). These beliefs are particularly strong among women and presented a major challenge in terms of introducing cameras. Community members have been exposed to Polaroid cameras and more recently digital cameras where the image is automatically available. I was told that CARE Awash, an NGO operating in the area, used Polaroid cameras to encourage people to attend their vaccination campaigns. Many Karrayyu do not understand how photography works; it seems like a kind of magic, particularly when the image is automatically available. People question the power of the camera. I was surprised to hear these beliefs from young Karrayyu students. Roba Fantalle, a student in secondary school, said:

> 'I am a person so you can't attach a charger or a socket to take my blood and soul, but the camera, without contacting with me can take my blood and soul by a kind of magic. I heard this idea from my family and the community. The first time I heard about it I thought the *ferenji* came and sucked your blood and soul from you, but later I learned that they do it with the camera.'

Interestingly these accounts are similar to those documented by Hoskins work with the Sumbanese in Indonesia. She describes Sumbanese fear of tourists, who they describe as "foreigners with metal boxes" (2002: 797). The metal boxes, or cameras, are the emblem of the tourist. Tourists are believed to 'take the children and hang them upside down, with feet near the rafters and their heads near to the metal boxes. They open up a hole in their heads and use a hose, sucking on one end of the hose to draw out the blood and make it flow into their metal boxes' (ibid.: 798). Hoskins suggests that these stories are an attempt to keep children away from tourists; children are attracted to cameras and may not 'show sufficient caution in relation to the strange and unfamiliar people who possess them’. Karrayyu also try to protect their children from cameras by saying that the *ferenji* will take them away. To reinforce this they make connections between *ferenji* and the legend of Bulgu. Kidane refers to Bulgu in Borana Oromo folk tales as 'a man-eating monster of human appearance. Tales about hobgoblin generally tell how it killed or tried to kill a member of a family' (2002: 15). There is also a

belief among the Karrayyu that placing four small stones in your mouth will ensure that the camera will not work. Attempts to investigate where these beliefs originated were unsuccessful. Fear of cameras is perhaps partly because they are associated with the unknown. Uneducated Karrayyu are unable to communicate with *ferenjis* to ask questions and find out how cameras work and what they are used for. There is no time to understand, and no explanations are given.

One has to be careful when dealing with the belief that cameras can steal the soul. As Schneider points out 'the idea of the theft of a soul by image' has been used to reinforce 'the primitiveness of the other ... the naivety of those who are not familiar with new technologies, as well as the correlate power of those who know how to handle them properly' (2008: 1). Many people in Ethiopia maintain an evolutionary idea of development and pastoralists are viewed as primitive people who maintain an outdated life-style and belief systems. This was reflected in a conversation I had with an experienced Ethiopian development worker about using PV with the Karrayyu. He didn't believe the Karrayyu could grasp PV and advised me to work with other groups in Ethiopia who have more 'advanced' cultures and a higher state of development. He regarded the Karrayyu as backward because they have retained their culture and resist 'development' efforts.

However, the antipathy of indigenous people towards the camera may not have derived from their alleged belief in its soul-stealing capacity, but rather from their own very concrete experiences: ‘the camera has served as a weapon in the process of photographic colonisation' (Schneider, 2008: 1). Cameras were introduced to Africa by Western travellers, explorers and missionaries. Behrend writes that since the 1870s Europeans have used instruments, particularly the camera, 'to create 'wonders', in order to astonish and terrify Africans. They used fireworks, mirrors, the *laterna magica*, telescopes, and cameras first, to display them as wondrous objects... as magical instruments to overpower the "natives" and furnish themselves with an aura of superhuman power' (2006: 2). This included using cameras as 'a magical practice to heal as well as to harm, as medicine, as a photographic gun to kill, or as an apparatus 'to steal souls'' (ibid.: 3). European displays were a conscious attempt to show their superior technical knowledge and to magically dazzle the ‘Others’.

Ethiopia did not attract as much attention as other African countries because it was not easy to access. 'The first photographer to visit Ethiopia was probably the missionary Henry Stern, who arrived in 1859 and later published twenty engravings based on photographs in his *Wanderings among the Falashas* (1862)' (Killingray & Roberts, 1989: 199). However, Stern, was imprisoned for 'displeasing' Emperor Tewodros II, which discouraged the use of the camera in Ethiopia until later in the century. The camera was used as a political tool as well as an instrument of war, particularly during Italian campaigns on Abyssinia (Oguile, 2002). People were aware of the power of the image then, and the use of cameras and film is still regarded with much suspicion today. It is not known when the Karrayyu first experienced cameras, but their early experiences may well have laid the foundations for the beliefs that they hold today. Many explorers passed through the Karrayyu area, almost certainly accompanied by cameras. The Italian military spent time there; elders recount stories of their experiences with Italian soldiers whose presence can still be seen in the ruins they left behind. Wilfred Thesiger recounted his experiences of travelling through the area in 'The Danakil Diary' (1996) which includes pictures he took of the Afar. Rimbaud also passed through Karrayyu country on his way to Harar.

Although I did not manage to collect information about Karrayyu encounters with cameras in the past I am more informed about recent experiences. Roba Bulga's family in particular has experience of *ferenjis*, particularly those working with cameras. When Roba was growing up, an anthropologist conducted a study of the Karrayyu (Frejacques, 2003) and spent time in Dhebiti and visited Roba's family. Through her, other 'outsiders' gained access to the community, including two *ferenji* women who work as professional photographers. They frequently visit the village for the purposes of taking pictures, some of which are sold to prominent organisations within Ethiopia. When I met Roba he was involved in a documentary film produced by an Italian woman that used his own story as a focal point. Footage was shot by cameramen from a film production studio in Addis Ababa. As the film focused on Roba, his family and village were filmed over the course of a year and a half. Certain members of Roba's family were reluctant participants, particularly the elder women. In addition, the nearby camp of GTF, which plays an important role in the organisations fund-raising activities, provides a place for visiting donors from all over the world to sleep and visit Karrayyu villages. These visitors are tourists as well as being involved in development efforts and invariably come

accompanied with cameras to document their trip, which puts an added twist to what Chambers (1983) has referred to as 'rural development tourism'. These interactions mean that the people in Dhebiti have had more exposure to photography and film-making than other members of the community.

There has been a change in people's reactions to cameras, perhaps due to increased exposure. Halko Fantalle, a middle-aged Karrayyu woman from Dhebiti, said the following: 'In my life I had two photograph taken, one for Safety Net and one for the ID of the Women's Union. When I had those photos taken nothing was inserted inside me which took my blood, I didn't feel any pain. I don't know how it can take the soul and blood. It is difficult for me to say this idea is true because nothing has happened to me. When they make the photo there is a light and then it is finished. The people say it takes our soul but I don't accept this idea'. Even if the belief in soul stealing is perhaps diminishing, Karrayyu are still aware that the photographic act is stealing something. The idea of sucking blood, which is also found among the Gabra and Boorana Oromo, is perhaps a way of expressing the intrusiveness of photography.

Karrayyu are aware of how others use their images and are suspicious of outsiders who take pictures. They suspect that photographs are used for 'business'. Increasingly men ask for money in return for their photograph because they feel they should get a share. Jilo Fantalle, a Karrayyu herder said: 'I have seen *ferenji*s in this area many times, especially picturing camels. One day they came and took our picture near Lake Nogoba with the camels. I arranged with my friends to take money from them because they took our picture which they will show in other places and make business from them. Sometimes we get money, sometimes people advise us not to disturb them or force them to give us money because they don't do anything bad, they just want to know about the life and culture of the community, about the conditions and the standard of living. Even though the elders and our friends advise us not to disturb the *ferenji*s I think that the *ferenji*s take the pictures and benefit from these pictures'. This highlights the unequal power relations inherent in photography. Many of the Karrayyu are fully aware that images are of benefit to outsiders, whereas they themselves receive nothing, not even an image in return. People frequently complain that they never get to see their image or to keep the photograph whereas the same photographs are sold for high prices to a range of buyers, from magazines, to calendar companies to development organisations. This often destructive and

exploitative relationship between indigenous groups, tourists and cameras has been highlighted by other anthropologists, particularly Turton's (2004) work with the Mursi.

Barthes developed a theory of photographic practice that stresses the violence, theft, abduction and even death inherent in the photographic act (1980: 14). He developed his theory not from the perspective of the photographer but from the victim who endures the photographic act and their experience in front of the camera. Lutz and Collins highlight the way the spectator's position enhances or articulates a sense of power over the observed, and point out that this 'power emerges particularly in the practice of art, photography and science' (Lutz & Collins, 1991: 135). Sontag (1979) refers to the camera as a 'predatory weapon' and writes that there is an aggression implicit in its use: 'To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed' (1979: 14).

It is understandable that groups like the Karrayyu want to take control over these processes, rather than always being the observed. Karrayyu criticise the one way process and struggle with the idea that someone they don't know can see a picture of them. They don't understand why people want their picture or what is done with the photographs. One Karrayyu herder said: 'Many people have come here to take our pictures, when we are with the animals and in the village. I wonder why people want to photograph us and picture the culture?'. They also wonder what people who see their picture will think or say about them. Many people said that because their permission is not asked they don't have time to prepare so are pictured with ripped clothes and bad hair. They don't want people to think that they look like this and would prefer to either be able to prepare themselves or refuse the picture. Hoskins documents similar concerns expressed by the Kodi: 'Kodi people often asked me, "Why do tourists have to take photographs of everything they see? What do they do with the images of use that they take away?" Many were anxious about whether pictures of women with bare breasts or dirty clothing would be laughed at overseas' (Hoskins, 2002: 812). Tourists, as well as development agents, generally don't consider that the people they take pictures of may feel this way, which itself is an indication of how they regard the people they photograph.

Reactions to Television

I conducted interviews about Karrayyu experiences of television to gauge how much people watch television, what they see when they watch and how they respond to it. This enabled me to assess how this affected their own use of video. It is commonly stated that people are influenced by narrative styles and presentation used in mainstream television and film. Experience of mass media may also encourage people to record certain information, particularly if mass media does not reflect the position or perspective of audiences. 'Television programmes are produced not just by specialists of a different social status than viewers but by professionals of a different class - often urban rather than rural, with national and sometimes transnational identities and social ties - who are working within structures of power and organisation that are tied to and doing the work of national or commercial interests' (Abu-Lughod, 1997: 112-13). PV is often used to resist mass media, and as Ansah points out many African governments have a fear 'that local media may be used for political purposes that are at variance with national objectives' (cited in West & Fair, 1993: 98).

There is only one television channel in Ethiopia, ETV, which is state owned. Television broadcasting was launched in Ethiopia in 1964 for the golden jubilee of the Emperor Haile Selasie (Adamu, 2005: 3). There is a film industry in Ethiopia and visiting the cinema is a popular pastime in the bigger cities. In smaller towns people mainly access film through pirated DVDs which are rented from a growing number of film rental shops. Films mainly come from abroad and feature foreigners. As well as Western films, Bollywood films and Nigerian soap operas are popular. There is a growing trend of dubbing films in Amharic but there are few Amharic films featuring Amharic actors available in local video shops, and none in *Afaan Oromo*.

The majority of community members have limited access to television, as most villages do not have electricity. Access to television is linked to mobility as most only see television when they go to town on market days. Women who do not go to school generally have less exposure to television and media than men because they spend more time in the village and countryside. Women's movements are restricted, unlike men who customarily travel to town for market. Men also travel long distances which brings them into contact with things that women do not

experience. Women commonly see television in the waiting areas of clinics in Matahara. Some participants had never seen television before, particularly the very young, elderly and disabled.

Karrayyu frequently experience 'development videos' brought by NGOs and government agencies. A group of women mentioned being taken to Adama, a nearby city, to receive training from an NGO. They were provided with access to television and spent the whole night watching it together. Many of the younger Karrayyu participants from Dhebiti and Haro Qarsa remembered a film screening that was arranged by the NGO CARE Awash in Dhebiti. The film was shown outside using a projector and a large screen and focused on Borana Oromo in an effort to share 'good practice' between communities. The film showed traditional wells (*eelaa*) and water management systems of the Borana which the NGO thought could possibly be adopted by the Karrayyu. It is common for films with development messages to be shown to communities, particularly regarding sanitation and 'traditional harmful practices' such as female genital mutilation. Video is regarded as a powerful development tool through which 'good culture' can be promoted and 'bad culture' discouraged. This fits within a 'modernisation' approach to development in Ethiopia which largely works through top-down planning and imposition of policies on local populations and does not support the adoption of local priorities, knowledge and perspectives. There are suggestions that the government perhaps regards participatory approaches which promote community involvement as politically sensitive and potentially dangerous (Kelbessa, 2001).

General themes emerged from people's accounts of their first experiences with television. Participants said they initially struggled to understand. Jilo Fantalle, a Karrayyu herder from Dhebiti, said: 'I couldn't see the television properly when I first watched it, it became dark, I couldn't resist the light that was reflecting from the screen. Bulga Jilo said, 'The first time I watched I wondered where the people went, I looked to find them, I couldn't understand how they moved and then disappeared'. There was much laugher at his response by those listening to the interview, but it was a common experience. People also commented on the combination of sound and image. Delalae Mieso, a young Karrayyu man who spends time in town, said: 'In the past when I watched I was surprised and the question in my mind was “how do they make the picture and the sound together in one piece of equipment” I wanted to understand the system they used'. This was a common experience regardless of access to town or formal education.

Fantalle Bulga, who has never attended school, said: The first time I saw it I didn't understand, it was unclear for me. I watched a song and was surprised by it. I didn't know that you could show the sound and the picture together. Before I had only heard songs by sound, not by picture'. Fantalle Roba, a Karrayyu student, said the following: 'First I hadn't seen such pictures or heard such sounds so I didn't understand. I focused on just watching the picture at first, but now I can watch the picture and listen to the sound. I can connect them together to understand'.

People I interviewed also commented that the pace was too fast and didn't give them time to understand. Fantalle Gile explained: 'I couldn't concentrate. I wanted to see all the details, I wanted to see each person from their head to their toes, but before I could grasp everything they had already moved or the image had changed'. According to Roba Fantalle, Karrayyu have very well developed observational skills which have developed due to their way of life. He believes people struggle with television because the process of observation is different and requires different skills which takes time to develop. Some commented that the way television communicates information is different to traditional communication. Haji Hawas, a Karrayyu elder, said 'I have seen television before but I don't like it very much. Information from the traditional way and the television is different. I understand information that comes from the traditional communication well but I don't understand the television well; television is not clear for me'.

There is also a difficulty with language as most television programmes are in Amharic. There are a certain number of hours per day designated to programmes in regional languages, including *Afaan Oromo*, but this is a relatively recent phenomenon. 'ETV used to broadcast exclusively in Amharic and English but it started to include Tigrinya and *Afaan Oromo* in 1991' (Fitsum, 2006: 9). Difficulties due to language was reported both by people who spend time in town and therefore have more exposure to Amharic, and those who are more isolated. Delale Mieso said, 'I can't remember the language that was used the first time I saw it but when you watch Ethiopian television mostly information is passed using Amharic, sometimes *Afan Oromo*. When they use Amharic I don't understand what they say. When I watch I hear the sound and see the people in the television, but because of the language I can't join the picture and the sound to understand the message'. Guye Jilo, a wife and mother who does not have

much exposure to town life or the Amharic language, explained: 'I saw all things in the television, too many to say. I saw these things but I don't know what language they spoke'.

There is a feeling that although there are *Afaan Oromo* programmes on television, the content is still controlled by the government. Also, there are very few *Afaan Oromo* films made in Ethiopia, in comparison with the fast-growing Amharic film industry. Some believe this illustrates a continuance of Amhara cultural dominance and the fact that Oromo culture is still restricted because it is regarded as 'political'. As West & Fair write: 'African governments justify their "cautious" approach to democratisation with the claim that media must be used to forge a national identity that will supplant local loyalties, and that localising media can work against national integration where it fuels ethnic conflict and "tribalism"' (1993: 98).

Television influenced participants' perception and understanding of the world outside their immediate experience. Haji Hawas, an elder, said: 'The value of the television is that it brings information from countries which are far from us. I can see the different cultures in different places'. Television provides people with an understanding, albeit a distorted one, of the world outside Ethiopia, including the world that *ferenji*s come from. I was frequently asked whether what people see on television of the West is true. Many people believe that *ferenji*s don't do anything by hand; it is all done by machine or by servants. Some believe that there is no soil or dirt in the West, everything is clean and covered with concrete and there are no rural areas, only cities. They also believe that there are no beggars or poor people because everyone is wealthy. Western development workers and tourists reinforce images of the West projected through film and television. They are seen with expensive technical equipment, like cameras, they drive large, expensive vehicles and live in large compounds usually in cities, all the trappings of a luxury life.

Participants also associated *ferenji*s with violence because of horror and action films. Halko Fantalle, a Karrayyu woman from Dhebiti, said: 'I saw when the *ferenji*s were attacking each other with tools that made them bleed, the blood flowed like water. Soon the man fell down, as soon as he fell down we thought he had died but the people who knew more told us that he wasn't dead. The television showed us what the *ferenji*s do to each other. Those things are far from our experience but the television brought it close to us'. People say that they are not sure

what is real and what is false when they watch television. Halko explains, 'The fighting, and the person who was attacked and died, seemed like real life, it seemed true for us'. Many people don't trust the information they get from television, particularly information that they cannot confirm from direct experience.

People I interviewed were aware that television is used as a propaganda tool. Radio and television is regulated by the Ethiopian Broadcast Agency which is authorised to inspect all broadcasts and restrict 'illegal' content. A study of audience satisfaction with ETV programming states: 'the government monopolistically owns the broadcasting media in Ethiopia, both radio and television. Consequently audiences are unable to get alternative sources of information. They watch TV programmes that are controlled by the owner which does not seem to consider the taste of its audiences' (Adamu, 2005: 4). Television programmes frequently show footage of the TPLF victory over the Derg regime, which is used to legitimise the EPRDF's position in power. A young Karrayyu herder explained: 'When I watch Ethiopian television they show the history of the past government which the current government hates. When they make the film or show the history of the past government they don't talk about or show the good things they did. They only show their point of view and the negative things done by the previous government. If I see such things I don't want to watch them. I think that information from the television is not always true'. As well as historical footage, television is also used to show victory of government troops over rebel groups. The footage is often graphic showing images of dead fighters. It is quite obviously biased in favour of the government and includes interviews with members of the public who are pro-government. Many in Ethiopia believe that television is used by the government in a calculated effort to show their power and expose the weakness and inefficiency of opposition groups.

Some participants suspect that television gathers information for the government. Fantalle Roba, a Karrayyu student said: 'One legend among the Karrayyu about television is that the tele-centre (satellite unit) in Qorkee collects images and all activities of the Karrayyu. I thought the television was arranged by the tele-centre'. Frejaques (2003: 32) also makes reference to Karrayyu mistrust of the media: 'Another fear expressed by many would-be informants was the eventual use I might make of the local radio in order to diffuse Karrayyu knowledge to people who are considered foreigners and enemies. Radio waves were used during the Derg regime

(1974-1991) to diffuse political propaganda, and the Karrayyu are no exception in mistrusting this means of mass communication'.

Many are also sceptical of machines which give out information to which one cannot respond, including radio and television, and engage critically with what they see and hear. As Bery writes 'Visual literacy comes with critical viewing skills. Essential to understanding the visual medium itself is the need to recognise what is behind the information and the pictures- who is in control, who is communicating, and why'. (Bery, 2003: 118). Wider Ethiopian audiences are generally critical of information they receive through the mass media. There is a preference for unofficial communication channels through which news travels extremely quickly, even between areas which are geographically distant. Use of mobile phones is key to this communication process. There is only one mobile phone provider, which is owned and controlled by the government and the network is frequently shut down during times of trouble, such as election periods, in order to restrict the spread of information.

Due to awareness of the bias inherent in television coverage, many Karrayyu were quick to criticise the way they are represented on ETV. Some had the perception that people from outside would do a better job of representing them than someone from inside the country. This is related to the political situation within Ethiopia and the Oromo experience of colonisation at the hands of the Abyssinian state. One male Karrayyu community member said:

> 'Sometimes when I see the people making film which explain about the community I feel unhappy. Some people in Ethiopia make films and show them on television, when I watch them it seems to me that they damage us. Rather than films being made by Ethiopians who are outside our culture, it is better if they are not made at all. But if people come from outside Ethiopia and make films about the community, especially by those from developed countries who can think in a flexible way, it is valuable and I wish for this to happen. Those from outside Ethiopia don't have any agenda with Ethiopia and they have good ways of thinking, so it is better if they make the films rather than people from Ethiopia.'

This is interesting because it highlights a widely held view that 'outsiders' from developed countries are superior to Ethiopians. This has been reinforced by development messages which promote 'modernisation' and the adoption of western ways. It also shows that there is not a strict dichotomy between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Just because someone is from 'inside'

Ethiopia does not make them sympathetic to the Karrayyu or Oromo point of view, but someone from 'outside' could be regarded as more of an ally. This is interesting as 'The right and ability of outsiders to represent accurately minorities has been repeatedly questioned' (Ruby, 1991: 58).

However, the same person said that he wished people from the community could make films themselves: 'If people from the community can learn to make films it is something fantastic. Films of the culture and the community made by people from the community would be better because they know which way the film could damage the culture, they know the culture. If it is filmed by such people I am happy and will be free from the reactions I have to films made by outsiders'. The participant in question said this with an awareness that I would be working with video, but he highlights the political issues involved in film production.

Karrayyu experiences with researchers

To better understand Karrayyu reactions to PV, and the need for collaborative research approaches, it is important to consider Karrayyu experiences with previous researchers. A number of researchers are remembered vividly by community members, and were often spoken about. Lillian Frejaques, a French anthropologist, conducted an extensive study of the Karrayyu beginning in 1996, spanning 23 months, and spent time with Roba Bulga's family in Dhebiti. Ayalew Gebre, an Ethiopian (Amhara) anthropologist conducted fieldwork over 15 months beginning in 1997. Although his fieldwork took place after Frejaques, he in one of the first anthropologists to have published substantial work about the Karrayyu. Buli Edjeta, another Ethiopian (Oromo) anthropologist, conducted studies of the Karrayyu for approximately 4 months for his MA thesis. Since completing his fieldwork Edjeta has gone on to work as a consultant specialising in conflict management, largely as a result of his work with the Karrayyu. There have also been numerous other studies conducted by MA students from various departments in Addis Ababa University.

When reviewing the theses I became aware of recurring themes which highlight issues expressed by community members during my fieldwork. Many Karrayyu express feelings of 'research fatigue'. Roba Fantalle explained:

> 'It is long ago that people started to come here and ask questions and go away with their questionnaires filled in. We have been asked questions and been researched for a long time now; we are exhausted and bored. Everyone comes and asks us questions, be they black or white, but we never know what they do with this. We think they are here to help or to share our problems with us, but they just ask us and then leave'.

Previous researchers all comment on the effect this has had on their work. Frejaques began her fieldwork by carrying out a census of Karrayyu settlements. She says: 'At first it was quite difficult for some people to talk to me, as they were mistrustful of my motives. Many Karrayyu elders had been called upon, recently and repeatedly, both by Ethiopians and foreigners alike who wished to work in the Awash valley; for this purpose several elementary socio-economic surveys had been carried out, mainly centred around the topics of need and aid. After much time and effort employed in talks and discussion, the majority of the investigators would return to where they had come from and never show up again'. (2003: 31) Gebre also describes difficulties he faced 'It was a problem at the beginning to find informants for the research work. Part of the reason was interview fatigue created by a number of governmental and non-governmental agencies as they made frequent rapid rural appraisals for their various activities in the locality. As a result it was not uncommon to hear complaints by informants that they were tired of being asked about their problems and experiences. They felt that the organisations that conducted the queries never did anything to alleviate the hardships of the people in any way' (2001: 16).

Anthropologists have justified their research by saying it will document Karrayyu culture and history for the future. Gebre writes that the approach he used was 'to candidly explain why I was doing this research. My objective was to record the customs, traditions, and experiences of the Karrayyu in a book to be passed on to posterity'. He says 'the idea was acceptable to the community, as the Karrayyu are in general sensitive about their traditions ... They are also aware that a considerable part of their traditions and knowledge has been lost in recent generations due to the failure to record their way of life and social practices' (ibid.). Frejaques describes how she explained the benefits of her research: 'Many men and women would have to dedicate time and patience to answer my questions and to share knowledge of the 'Karrayyu way of life' with me, and they were interested in knowing how I would reciprocate. I explained that my help would consist of writing a book about them, so that in the future Karrayyu

children who are becoming literate in school for the very first time would be able to read about themselves' (2003: 32). Demie is perhaps more frank, he writes: 'I told them openly that they do not have to expect any support from me, that I am an ordinary student and I am doing this research to get my degree from the University' (2006: 13).

However, the majority of Karrayyu are illiterate and cannot read these documents. The ones who are literate often cannot access theses and papers because they are either unpublished or stored in institutions outside Ethiopia. The book Frejaques mentions is her unpublished PhD thesis which remains in a University library in Boston and is therefore inaccessible to the literate Karrayyu she mentions. To my knowledge she left one copy of her thesis with the community written in English. Both Gebre and Edjeta, published their work in English ad despite residing in Ethiopia have and have not, as far as I am aware, made any attempts to make their work accessible to community members. Their work is available, for sale, in bookshops in Addis Ababa. As Roba Fantalle has said, 'Nobody knows what they wrote. They have got what they want and that's it. We sometimes see their books in bookshops'. Galtung refers to this as ‘scientific colonialism’, a process whereby the centre of gravity for acquisition of knowledge about a people is located elsewhere. ‘There are many ways in which this can happen. One is to claim the right of unlimited access to data from other countries. Another is to export data about the country to one’s own country for processing into “manufactured goods” such as books and articles’ (Galtung, 1967: 296 cited in Lewis, 1973: 584).

It is understandable that Karrayyu, based on past experiences, do not trust researchers; this includes *ferenji*s as well as Ethiopians. It is a big step for community members to make links with people from 'outside' and they often end up feeling let down. Many commented that although they have spend a lot of time and energy assisting researchers, the relationship is quickly forgotten. Ashan Jilo said, 'They come and look for someone to help them make their way into the community, they find people, interview them, get the results, interpret things in the way they want, produce a paper, graduate and then nobody knows where they have gone'. A number of community members expressed hurt at being forgotten by people they came to consider as friends. A prominent Karrayyu elder refused to participate in this piece of research because he felt so let down by a previous researcher who never contacted him after finishing their research. Fieldwork is dependent on forming successful relationships with others and

personal relationships serve as primary vehicles for eliciting findings and insight. ‘There is surely no other scholarly enquiry in which relationships of intimacy and familiarity between the researcher and subject are envisioned as a fundamental medium of investigation’ (Amit, 2000, 2). Researchers are secure in the knowledge that once they have collected enough data they return home, to ‘normal’ life and a career. This is part of the accepted practice of anthropology, and rules of detachment and objectivity enable anthropologists to do this without getting too emotionally involved. But how aware are the communities we work with of this? As Frances writes, ‘both sides bring expectations that are unlikely to coincide, and may perceive the relationship in radically different ways’ (Frances, 1992: 87).

There is a duplicity inherent to anthropology. In order to work we have to convince people that what we do has value. This process of 'seduction' is dangerous because it can lead to making false promises that even we believe at the time. Fagerlid writes in her fieldwork blog: 'I realised that I’m so crafty when doing fieldwork that the participant role of my persona seduces even me. I appear so sincere because I believe it myself ... I forget at the same time that what I’ve been doing the last months, is not part of my life-to-come but part of my academic career'. She acknowledges that 'the genuine enthusiasm I express by saying that I want to settle here helps strengthening my relationships with people'. Wolcott (2005) calls this the darker arts of fieldwork. But the communities we spend time with make investments in us, and the mere presence of a researcher can raise people’s hopes and expectations. This is compounded by the fact that: “Fieldworkers have an understandable but perhaps unfortunate tendency to represent themselves not only as different from those who do quick-and-dirty studies but somehow as more sensitive and caring humans as well.” (Wolcott, 2005: 117). This is something that researchers, particularly anthropologists, need to be aware of. Behar draws attention to the sense of loss and alienation experienced by those who take us into their lives, expecting that we too will take them into ours with the same fullness of feeling. 'We anthropologists ... leave behind our own trail of longings, desires, and unfulfilled expectations in those upon whom we descend. About that vulnerability we are still barely able to speak' (1996: 24-5).

Karrayyu also feel let down by researchers, due to their reluctance to engage with them and the issues they face. As Roba commented: 'What is this never ending thing, people just keep on coming, keep on coming, asking questions? If they were here to help what we have already told

them would be more than enough, but there is still no change'. Researchers, particularly anthropologists, have been documenting the situation since at least 1996. All of the researchers have stated that they are unable to do anything to actively assist the community, no doubt recommended by University ethics communities which encourage researchers not to make false promises or raise expectations. But the Karrayyu understand that, while they are struggling, researchers are benefiting from them. Considering the experience of groups like the Karrayyu, it is important to question whether simply writing theses and papers is enough. There is a strong argument that we have no business working with, and ultimately benefiting from, such communities unless we find ways to give something back. It also raises the question of whether researchers should venture into working with such communities unless they are prepared to make a long-term commitment. 'It is much easier for researchers to hand out a report and for organisations to distribute pamphlets than to engage in continuing knowledge-sharing processes' (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999: 16).

At this point it is useful to return to the belief in soul stealing, a belief which expresses the violation and the exploitation that comes with taking a picture. The belief parallels the feeling Karrayyu people have towards research processes, particularly anthropological research which involves scrutiny and the extraction of knowledge, the benefits of which are often not returned to or experienced by the people themselves. In this context the process of handing over the camera is a powerful one, especially hand in hand with a collaborative approach. As Hoskins writes, the act of aggression that is implicit in the invasive taking of a photograph can be neutralised when it is shared with its subject, 'who in this way appropriate a bit of the power of the outsider into their own sphere' (2002: 813).

Handing the camera over and taking a collaborative approach was a major factor in Karrayyu agreements to participate in the research. People were eager to learn how to use the camera, which has always been directed at them but to which they have had no access. Bulga Jilo said, 'I have seen many times when *ferenji*s take photographs and videos, they know the value of pictures and how to use such materials. What they are doing is for them, it has no value for us. I am very happy if the community learn to use the video and cameras themselves. The problem until today has been lack of knowledge'. Haji Hawas, another elder, echoes this sentiment: 'Maybe one day our children will have the chance to see the photographs and videos made by

the *ferenji*s, but if the community, our people, have training and can document the culture by themselves it will be better than that done by the *ferenji* because we know our culture'. People seemed far less concerned about the camera stealing their soul if they are in control. Guye Jilo, the wife of Roba's elder brother, said: 'Before when people came to take our picture we were angry with them and would run far from them. Now we are happy if we can learn these things and do it for ourselves'.

Chapter Five: Introduction of PV to the Karrayyu

This chapter aims to provide a description of how PV was introduced and how it directed the research approach. I discussed the idea of using PV informally beforehand with a range of community members. I then conducted formal semi-structured interviews to find out how they felt about PV. This was important as I had decided on the method without asking people's opinion. I explained the idea and asked how people would like to use video, what they would like to record, and who they thought should be trained. Community members commonly experience research through questionnaires, particularly livelihood assessments, which follow a regimented structure and give them little opportunity to discuss issues of importance to them. Focusing on PV meant that I perhaps gained a more accurate idea of people's concerns. Themes decided by community members directed the research. I will outline the impressions and ideas that members of the Karrayyu community had **before** the training took place to show their awareness of issues inherent to PV and their ability to engage critically with the method.

Decision Making

20 people were selected for interviews: 12 men and 8 women, who were a mix of ages and educational levels. They were interviewed individually and responses were discussed later in a group. Elders played a key role in this process and to an extent decision making conformed to traditional processes which take place at both family and community level (see Bassi 1996). The elders discussed the issue in detail and everyone who was present was encouraged to speak and put their ideas forward. Although women were interviewed they did not play a role in the group discussions, which conforms to cultural norms. Traditionally even though the elders may have more experience and knowledge of a particular issue, they cannot decide alone. They should enable everyone to share and listen to the ideas and experiences of others. It is believed that, although young people may not have experience, they can add valuable ideas. This style of decision making is used as a teaching mechanism as elders share their experience with youngsters.

This method of reaching consensus on social issues through debate under the guidance of the elders is common to Oromo groups as wells as a number of other African societies. It is seen by

some as a local form of participatory decision making. I am, however, aware that such processes are still subject to power dynamics and not everyone may be adequately represented, particularly women, because local processes reflect local power. Observing these processes increased my awareness of power dynamics which I tried to counter throughout the research process, by ensuring that young people and women in particular were actively involved. Elders actually took a back seat during the PV work and played more of an advisory role.

Attitudes to PV

Certain elders told me that they had already thought about using video cameras. Haji Musa, a community elder said, 'The idea is not just yours, we had this idea but we didn't succeed with it ourselves ... Even though we had the idea we had many questions: How do we record? What kind of materials should we use? How do we keep the materials? How do we use the materials? Can we buy such materials? We discussed and decided we don't have the ability to achieve such things by ourselves, so we stopped thinking about it'. This highlights some of the practical drawbacks of PV, particularly the availability of equipment. One elder was very enthusiastic about the video idea. He had recently commissioned a video of a relative's wedding but was disappointed because the footage failed to capture the key events. It had been shot by an outsider from Addis Ababa who was not aware of the important stages of the wedding. He said he wished he could have recorded it himself. This indicates awareness of differences in understanding and knowledge between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' and the importance of being in control of documentation. Another male elder said, 'Sometimes the government documents culture and puts it in a museum to preserve it, but the owners of the culture don't participate in the documentation. Instead it is done by people outside the culture. The community does not get the chance to correct what has been documented. These people make the document for their own agenda, maybe for political reasons or another. These documents are not enough for future generations because we didn't get the chance to correct them. If we use this chance to document our culture for ourselves it will be valuable for the future generation'.

When people were asked if they would like to use the video cameras, **t**he majority of men were enthusiastic and were keen to document Karrayyu culture themselves. A few liked the idea but did not believe that it was possible, partly due to lack of confidence in their ability to learn,

partly because of their low expectations of researchers, and the difficulties of their lifestyle. A Karrayyu herder commented:

> 'I think the community would like to learn to use video, but our life does not give us the chance to learn. The life of this community is the pastoralist life, we are not normally settled in the same place, we move from place to place to find grass and water for our cattle. Maybe these conditions will not be comfortable and will make it difficult for you to teach us'.

As described in the last chapter, women avoid cameras and are highly resistant to them and this was reflected in their responses. Some women did, however, have a positive reaction to the idea of documenting Karrayyu culture, but were reluctant to get involved due to lack of confidence, and time restrictions.

There was a general consensus in people's reasons for wanting to use PV. All those who were interviewed recounted that the culture and way of life has undergone huge changes in recent years and they fear that in a short time it will be unrecognisable. They believe that soon there will be no 'traditional' Karrayyu culture to document. Bulga Jilo, told me:

> 'When I watch the people and the community I can see that the community and the cultural ways are changing. Some have already changed and the rest is also changing. The government has a plan to irrigate the area and make us farmers ... Nothing can be done to maintain our way of life; it is already on the way to change. The people and community accept they have to change so they are on the way to move. If the culture is documented now then in the future people can see the videos and learn from them. This must happen before it changes'.

This was also a motivating factor for younger people. Fantalle Bulga, his son, felt that future generations could learn about the culture from the videos: 'If we work in a good way then new generations can learn from what we record today. They can get the chance to learn about their culture which died before they arrived. They can say that their families were with such a culture in the past. In this way the video has value for the community'.

During interviews, comparisons were made between traditional ways of passing on information and the use of video. People were keen to use video because it is considered to be unchanging. Delale Mieso, Karrayyu herder, said: 'Video supports and helps the inheritance of

this culture from the past to the future. The video can record the present culture and record interviews with those who know about the past culture and this can be passed to the new generation. The present generation is replaced by future generations but the culture is not like that. Some people know about the culture but the old people know more, when they die some of the culture is lost'. Haji Musa, a male elder, expands on this and puts emphasis on the fact that the culture, particularly oral traditions, erode over time:

> 'We pass information from father to son by word because there is no other way to record. In the past *abaar* (severe drought) came to the Karrayyu there was no food so they ate *erbee* (skin of cattle). This time is called *qorisa nyaate* (eating of skin) by the community. This event was passed to us by word. If there was the chance to record that time by video we could see it today, but instead we hear and we explain. This oduu (news) about strong drought will pass with the people who know about it. When people who were present at the time die the information dies with them. If events are documented, even if the people die not only the event but also the colour (image) of the man who was there will survive'.

This doubt regarding the strength of oral traditions may seem like a contradiction from people who are concerned with retaining their traditions, but it is important to look at their reasons.

People's primary reason for wanting to use video was because it is seen as 'stronger' than traditional ways. Haji Musa explained, 'We explain our problems by word but it is not enough. If we can explain by words and show by video, it is stronger. Our children can understand where we were and where we are, they can know.' This is a reference to the power of video to convey a message, rather than the use of words alone. There was also an idea that video cannot decay. Halko Fantalle, a woman from Dhebiti, said: 'People will be able to see these films in the future, it cannot be old, it cannot be rubbish and it cannot be broken down if it is documented by video. It can stay for a long time and have long age'. This is interesting because there is criticism of methods used in IK studies as static and unchanging, whereas IK is not static; it is constantly changing and adapting to new conditions. Oral cultures preserve verbal knowledge by constantly repeating it. 'Knowledge must be embedded in spoken formulas that can be easily recalled - in prayers and proverbs, in continually recited legends and mythic stories' (Abram, 1996: 104). Although this has worked to pass culture to the current time, community members are aware that in a short time they will not be able to practise it any more. Perhaps it is because their traditions and knowledge are under threat that the members the community stress the need

for something that can capture their experiences and knowledge as they are. They anticipate radical changes so the need to fix their culture to preserve it perhaps represents the crisis facing the Karrayyu.

People with no formal education can pick up video with minimal instruction and adapt it for their own needs. As the majority of Karrayyu cannot read or write this was one of the reasons for their interest in video. Some of the elders recognised that video could be used as a way for those who cannot read or write to pass on information. Haji Musa said: 'The ones who are educated can write about these things but the ones who are uneducated and go with the animals cannot. If they learn how to use video they can document these events, especially the rainy season, conflict, drought'. Other studies on indigenous media have raised concerns that video 'swallows culture', and changes the nature of knowledge and how it is transmitted (Carpenter, 1973). I therefore felt it was important to explore any potential negative consequences before embarking on the use of video. I found that these risks were rendered obsolete for the Karrayyu due to the crisis they feel they are facing. Although use of PV in this context could result in a romanticised, past-focused portrayal of Karrayyu culture, video documentation could equally serve as 'a record that will feature crucially in their search for their cultural identity in a rapidly changing world' (Sillitoe, 1998: xix).

There was an awareness before PV training of the potential use of video as an advocacy tool. Jilo Fantalle, a Karrayyu herder, said the following:

> 'We can use the video to record conflict situations on the border and show it to people who don't know about the conflict and they can learn. It can also record times when the community faces bad conditions like drought. We can show the video to different aid organisations and the government. Video can be evidence of the problems we face and can help us to get support. We used to report things to them by words but there was nothing we could show them. If we report using the video they can understand by themselves'.

There was an idea that video would enable them to communicate with from other countries, Fantalle Bulga said: 'Another benefit is that when Beth goes back to her homeland she can show the videos to people and they can learn from what she shows to them. They can learn who we are. It has value for them, they can know us'.

This links to the use of visual media by outsiders to draw attention to famine, drought and conflict. Many groups have passively allowed themselves to be 'transformed into aesthetic creations, news items and objects of our pity and concern. Society condones this action because it is assumed that the act of filming will do some good - cause something to be done about the problems' (Ruby, 1991: 52). Many of the Karrayyu believe that seeing is believing. They have told people about their situation numerous times but there is no change. Many of the participants felt that visual evidence would be more powerful and could not be refuted or ignored. However, films, like research, are often not effective in prompting change. This provides an interesting area of inquiry regarding the use of PV as an advocacy tool. Is there a difference between how 'insiders' portray themselves and their situation in times of need, compared to portrayals by outsiders? Do films made by insiders provoke a different reaction from the viewer? Is prompting change a primary interest of groups using PV? How effective is PV in causing change?

What to document

Use of PV enabled the research themes and agenda to be identified by community members. 'It is not only one's own mind that the presence of the camera concentrates. It can also concentrate the minds of the protagonists as to what it is about their lives that they specifically want to present to you' (Henley, 1996: 17-18). Discussions were held with community members about what they wanted to document. They were certain they wanted to use the video to record 'Karrayyu culture', but struggled to focus on a specific aspect. Delale Mieso, a young Karrayyu herder, illustrates this dilemma:

> 'There are many things that make up our culture. Marriage is part of the culture, the *Gadaa* system, the way of dressing and the way of life. This is the culture we inherited. From all of these it is difficult to document one part and leave the rest. I want all the culture to be documented, unless the time is restricted. Choosing one aspect seems as though you prefer it over the others. For me all is the same; one part is not better than the rest. Each part of the culture is related; they support each other. At the moment there are many factors which affect our way of life. It is becoming difficult and pastoralism will finish soon. Because of this it is better if our way of life is documented'.

This echoes responses by other community members who emphasised the fact that one aspect of the culture cannot be separated from another.

Other common interests emerged. Women were generally keen to record 'female' aspects of the culture. This included the traditional way of dressing, particularly traditional skirts made from skin (*Waallu)* and cultural articles such as household ornaments and milking containers, which are disappearing. There were also areas of debate. One man stated that he wanted to record the Muslim rituals, but was over-ruled by other participants who felt that Islam is not authentic Karrayyu culture. It was emphasised by the elders that the theme of the research should not be chosen based on majority opinion, but that each suggestion should be listened to and supported by strong reasons. A consensus became apparent as most chose to focus on pastoralism and the role of animals. Bulga Jilo explained:

> 'There are many things in the culture, but the most important thing is the animals. The pastoralist way of life depends on the animals, without them there is nothing. Our life is made golden by milk, butter and meat. If people are with the animals life is good. I would be very happy if this can be documented so that it can be passed on to the next generation.'

This was a feeling shared by many women, Dido Bose said:

> 'From our culture I want to document the life with the animals because the livestock make our life beautiful. The community is not happy to miss this life. We want to be with our animals and live this delicious life which is golden because of animals'.

It was widely agreed that pastoralism was the strongest theme because many believe that without pastoralism the *Gadaa* politico-religious system, *gosa* kinship system and marriage (*fuuda fi heeruma*) system will be unable to function. This is interesting because ethnographic film was originally intended to document the 'disappearing life worlds of those others - non-western, small-scale, kinship based societies' (Ginsberg, 1991: 95). In this case, the urge to document comes from community members rather than outsiders.

Who to train

Members of the community were consulted regarding who should take part in the video training. They emphasised the importance of including both men and women, as well as young and old to capture different aspects of Karrayyu culture. Delale Mieso, a young herder, said: 'Men and women, young and old can be combined to give a good result. It particularly needs those who know about the culture well, like elders. The knowledge that the young have about the culture is small; the culture is not something recent, it has a long age'. Haji Musa, a male elder, said something similar:

> 'The ones involved in the video work should be people who know about the culture. If we ask one young person his work may be incomplete. Maybe the young person will miss things; maybe he knows, maybe he doesn't know. To work on this culture it needs one who knows well, but maybe the elders are too old and too weak. They need support from those who can help them with skill and power. Those with knowledge and those with strength must be combined, then the fruit will be good. Both men and women are necessary. For marriage you need both men and women, so for both the knowledge and the manpower there should be men and women'.

They also pointed out that a person's interest and commitment was critical to the success of documentation. Haji Hawas said, 'Having knowledge about the culture is not enough, interest is also needed. If the person is not interested he will not tire to portray the culture well'. Some people, particularly women, wanted many people from the community to be trained in PV. Halko Fantalle, a middle aged woman from Dhebiti, said: 'It is better, rather than one or two groups, if all the villages in Fantalle district are trained. What you are going to do is good'. Unfortunately this was not possible due to lack of resources. It was also decided that there should be a mixture of people who had received formal education and those who had not. Involvement in education is thought to lead to different perspectives and knowledge.

Although community members specified that participants should be a mixture of men and women, young and old, educated and uneducated, they did not focus on rich and poor, pastoralist or agro-pastoralist or other categories. This may be because wealth is seen as something easily lost and obtained through fluctuating circumstances. For example drought could dramatically decrease a wealthy family's herd in a very short space of time, or a *gosas* decision to redistribute animals could influence a person's holdings. Chance was seen to be an

influential factor in terms of wealth and emphasis was placed on a person's character and willingness to help fellow community member. Most people who were consulted did not feel community members from different parts of the *woreda* necessarily needed to be included. Dadu Roba, a Karrayyu woman from Dhebiti, said: 'Karrayyu are Karrayyu, so the ones who can be recorded are enough. The culture is the same'. Of course there are likely to be differences between different parts of the community and documentation may vary depending on the participants, but there was an emphasis on 'culture' being common property for all members of the community. As Simpson has noted cultural knowledge ‘as a form of property can be crucial in establishing identities and maintaining and creating social relationships within the community’ (1997: 48).

Participants

Most participants involved in the training lived in Dhebiti and Haro Qarsa *kebele*s where people generally maintain the pastoralist way of life. A range of participants were chosen in accordance with views expressed by community members in baseline interviews. I worked with three main groups: a group of men of different ages who had not received a formal education; a group of young men who were currently receiving education; and a group of young women who were currently receiving education. The men's group consisted of six men: Fantalle Bulga, Bosat Roba, Bulgee Gile, Dadhi Hawas, Jilo Bulga and Hawas Bulga, ranging in age from 15 to 38 years old. These men were all members of the family and *gosa* (clan) that I lived with, primarily for logistical reasons. They all maintained the traditional way of life so were highly mobile. The student group initially consisted of six male and eight females ranging in age from 18 to 21 but many of them were too busy with school and household duties to participate in filming. I therefore trained another group of three males: Boru Hawas, Jilo Buttaa, Waday Bulge; and three females: Gale Roba, Galgale Bante and Tayibo Fantalle who worked with the men’s group to film, but others community members became involved at a later stage. Students were from a range of families and *gosas*, and different *kebeles* including the agro-pastoralist area near the plantation. The student groups were trained together but split into two groups: male and female. The separation along these lines was their choice, based on gender, time and routines. Interactions between men and women are traditionally strictly regulated, particularly

before marriage, and there are definite divides along gender lines, partly due to the allocation of labour.

It was initially very difficult to involve uneducated women, partly due to their attitudes towards the project and cameras and partly because of time constraints due to their daily routines. For example, Halo Jilo, a woman from Dhebiti, was reluctant to participate. She said: 'these are men's things. Men have time to play but women have real work to do.' As Sutherland has highlighted, many participatory research programmes may find themselves making a trade-off between engaging the target groups and engaging the willing (1998: 5). Despite this reluctance, women watched the training sessions intently, they viewed the films and commented on the raw footage. Even though they were not comfortable using the camera most of the women allowed themselves to be filmed, which was critically important and a major achievement. Key to women's participation was that members of the community who they knew and trusted were behind the camera. If an outsider had been filming I am not sure they would have been as co-operative. Female students played an important role in encouraging other women to participate.

Part of women's reactions may have been due to the belief in soul stealing, but this was hard to gauge. Early on in the research I interviewed Guye, the first wife of Roba Bulga's elder brother. She said that she did not believe that cameras could take your soul and she thought it was good if people from the community learned to use cameras. Two weeks later I showed part of Roba's documentary film to people in Dhebiti which featured members of Roba's family, including footage of Guye milking her cows. I wanted to show the film partly to gauge people's reactions. It was the first time they had seen the footage and most of the family were very happy. However, Guye reacted very violently; she became very upset when she saw her image and started crying. I was surprised and wanted to stop the film, but the rest of the family laughed and told me to carry on. After the film had been shown there was a conversation about Guye's reaction and people tried to comfort and reassure her. She was very concerned that she, as well as her cattle and milking materials, had been captured on film. She seemed to think that something negative would happen to them as a result, possibly connected to long-held beliefs about cameras. Her husband Jilo spent a long time convincing her that recording the culture is a good thing. He spoke about his fears that one day the culture would disappear and that the films

could serve as reminders. Guye calmed down. I asked her to explain what she was feeling but she backtracked and said she was fine.

The conversation between Guye and her husband was particularly poignant in hindsight, because Jilo was killed shortly after. I have photographs and video footage of him, which Guye later asked to have copies of so that her children can know what their father looked like. Guye eventually participated in the video project and agreed to be filmed and even wanted to learn how to use the camera. It seemed that she experienced a huge shift in her attitudes towards the camera, but how she really feels about cameras remains unknown. In my opinion, the participation of women goes some way towards assessing the success of PV as a method since Karrayyu women are generally conservative, resistant to change and are usually the last to open up to outsiders and new ideas. I believe that their resistance to things from outside is a way of them standing up for what they see as important. Karrayyu women are generally staunch defenders of their way of life, and only when they recognised the value of the video for documenting the culture did they agree to become involved.

Levels of participation

The PV process offered different levels of engagement and participation. 'There are a whole range of potential collaborators ... participatory research does not mean all beneficiaries participating directly in the process. For practical reasons, any research project will relate closely to a relatively small group of primary and secondary beneficiaries' (Sutherland, 1998: 4) While the smaller PV groups were actively involved in learning how to use video equipment and filming, other members of the community were involved in the process in different ways, and played more of an advisory role. Elders were generally reluctant to get actively involved in handling the video cameras because they said they were scared of using such equipment. Cameras were new for many of them and they worried they would break them or do something wrong. This would be shameful in front of other community members. They therefore preferred to leave the video cameras to younger people who are unafraid of technology and fast to learn. Others did not have time to participate in the training. This did not mean that elders did not participate; a number spent much time advising the filmmakers, viewing footage and giving comments.

People involved in the research changed as the fieldwork progressed. Some were involved throughout and others came and went depending on a variety of factors, such as the time of year, shifting labour patterns, migration, and other commitments. Restrictions on people's ability to participate gave me a greater understanding of the dynamics of pastoralism. More people became involved after the initial training sessions. Community members saw participants using the video cameras and asked participants to teach them, which I encouraged. The video cameras took on a life of their own and were handed over to people who were not initially selected, leading to wider community involvement. Approximately four additional people became actively involved in filming, and others just learned how to use the camera. This included Karrayyu agro-pastoralists, as well as Karrayyu living in town. It was interesting that participants were eager to share their new-found knowledge with one another rather than keeping it to themselves.

Training Process

I broadly followed a method of PV training outlined by InsightShare (Lunch & Lunch, 2006). The aim was to teach participants how to use cameras themselves so they could 'produce a visual statement of their own view of their culture' (Worth & Adair, 1972: 254). I taught Fantalle Gile the method beforehand and he led the video training sessions. Before training we discussed how to introduce the cameras in a way that would be easily understandable. I taught certain members of the community, including children, to use my still camera before video training began to anticipate issues that could arise during the video training. For training and filming two mini-DV Panasonic 3CCD camcorders (NV-GS230 model) were used. Many participants were nervous and expressed their apprehension about learning how to use the cameras; particularly those who had not attended school who greatly underestimated their own abilities.

Despite a passion for their culture, there is an increasing 'hierarchy of knowledge' in which Western education and knowledge is regarded by many as superior to indigenous knowledge and practice. This is perhaps partly due to the introduction of formal education as well as the presence of NGOs in the area. Western knowledge has become associated with those in positions of responsibility or power. *Woreda* officials and local NGO staff, even if they are

from local communities, often prioritise western knowledge and training over indigenous knowledge and experience. As Porter remarks, the superiority of western knowledge results in the questioning of local ideas and abilities (2003: 139). Tadesse writes the following about Ethiopia: 'often the people who are entrusted to provide services to indigenous peoples and minority groups are themselves brought up under circumstances of discrimination and perpetuate discrimination in various ways' (2005: 7). To encourage participants I told them that PV had been used by other groups around the world. I showed them pictures from the InsightShare PV Handbook (Lunch & Lunch, 2006) which shows people from a variety of cultural contexts, including pastoralists, using video. This was a significant moment in the training process and gave participants confidence.

I was careful not to use or handle the video cameras before the training began. Because Fantalle Gile, took the lead in the initial training participants felt free to make mistakes and to ask questions. The camera was introduced using a variety of games and exercises, some of which are based on PRA methods. These included: 'The Name Game', 'Show and Tell', the 'Interview Method' and we also used the 'Playback Technique' as a teaching tool. The training was based on a 'Training for Trainers' model so it also enabled participants to teach others. The introduction of the camera involves participants sitting in a circle, the camera is handed to one of the participants in a bag. The participant, rather than the trainer, takes the camera out of the bag. They are taught the basic functions of the camera and then hand the camera to the participant next to them and teach them what they have learned. In this way the student becomes the teacher.

Many participants could not read the written instructions on the cameras, and were not familiar with symbols (for example the play sign) that indicate the various functions. I taught them meaning of the symbols and colours, for example the red light indicated that the camera was on, the red dot for record, green for pause. This worked well, and they became proficient in a short space of time. Participants were taught the basics of film making, including how to use external microphones and tripods. The emphasis was on exploring the equipment directly through practical use, rather than by lengthy lecture or explanation. I did not teach in-depth technical information or filming styles as this can make the process seem daunting.

Figures 8 - 13: Men's PV group during training, filming, and playback.
Source: Author

Figures 14- 19: Student PV groups during training, filming, and playback.
Source: Author

Elders observing the training commented on the way we were teaching and one elder compared it to a Karrayyu proverb: 'Learning to climb a tree does not work if one man stands and tells the other how to climb. The best way to teach is if the one who knows climbs the tree and the other man follows'.

Basic training took place over four days, the men's group between 25th and 28th of April 2009, the first student group between the 13th and 16th of May, and the second group between 23rd and 26th June 2009 (Figures 8-19). Participants showed a high level of interest and commitment. Undertaking the training required them to spend four days away from their normal duties, which meant having to arrange people to cover for them. The fact that people were willing to do this indicated that they and their families were generally supportive of the project. Consultation and learning continued on a more informal basis after the training. Participants learnt how to use the cameras extremely quickly and were amazed by their own ability. They never imagined that they would ever be able to use cameras and often commented that it was like a dream.

Shortly after the men's group had been trained Roba Bulga brought a visiting *ferenji* journalist to his family's village. He proceeded to take photographs of the village and members of the family, including those who had taken part in the training. He was particularly keen to take a photograph of Roba's younger brother, Fantalle Bulga. After he had taken the picture he showed it to Fantalle on the screen of the digital camera. Fantalle casually took the camera from him and took a picture of the *ferenji*. The man was astonished at his ability to use his camera and Fantalle was aware of this. This act marked a fundamental shift in power dynamics between Karrayyu community members and those who have, until now, always held the camera.

Filming

Information from baseline interviews which took place before training was fed back to PV participants. This enabled both the PV group and other members of the community to communicate their ideas. It also functioned as preparation for the filming process as the discussions helped to establish a clear idea of roles, what and who will be filmed, in advance.

If there is no pre-planning, there is a danger of producing hours of video footage which does not necessarily have a focus. Use of the 'storyboard' technique, used by InsightShare, which allows participants to visually outline what they want to film and how was not successful. It provides structure to the filming process and cuts down on the amount of editing to be done later. However, participants struggled with this technique, particularly those who had not been to school as there is no tradition of drawing and visual representation in Karrayyu culture.

Participants proceeded to film based on the selected themes. Filmmakers have made conscious decisions about where to position and point the camera, and when to start and stop recording. The final footage has been chosen because it captures significant aspects of rituals and events. I was not present during the majority of the filming to ensure that participants had ownership and control over the cameras and footage. This was an important part of establishing trust. When the footage was brought back I asked participants to explain what they had filmed, and why, to understand their intentions.

Videos contain a lot of close ups and details of activities rather than long shots, which capture embodied and sensory knowledge of the community. Participants generally preferred to use the hand held approach rather than fixing the camera onto a tripod, which was partly due to difficulties in taking the tripod when travelling. There was emphasis on creating 'naturalistic' footage. Hardly any of the participants acknowledge the camera's presence or look at the camera, when they do it is quite surprising for the viewer. There is undoubtedly a difference because people are being filmed by members of their own community rather than outsiders. This reduced, although not completely, feelings of inhibition and shyness. Those behind the camera recognised when someone might be performing for the camera. There were instances where certain participants kept looking towards the camera whilst being filmed, and were firmly reprimanded by those filming.

Playback

Raw video footage was played back during training and filming, to people involved in the process and the wider community (See Figures 20-25). This was often done in the village I lived in using a television or laptop and a generator.

Figures 20 - 25: PV screenings in village to a range of community members.
Source: Author

The video camera was connected to the television for immediate playback. The sound of the generator attracted many people, screenings usually took place at night when people were home and had time to relax. The television/laptop was placed as far away from the generator as possible to reduce the noise. Sometimes there would be over 20 people: men, women and children gathered inside the small house peering at the screen, jostling to get a better look. It was an incredible sight and very moving. Screenings were also held in my house in town to include a broader range of people, particularly on market day when people come from all over the *woreda*. This included students who lived and studied in town, members of the agro-pastoralist community, as well as friends and relatives of the participants. Screenings, both in town and the village, occurred regularly throughout fieldwork.

The playback process enabled participants to critically engage with their films and the film-making process. Participants analysed and reflected on the footage and in this way videos acted almost as a mirror. This sets the process apart from 'home video making', a criticism levied at indigenous media productions. Playback helps build consensus on key issues and enabled participants to focus on what they thought was missing or could be improved. Playback was a crucial part of 'accurate documentation.' Participants were constantly surprised when they watched the footage and often commented that key parts of the process had been left out. The film of the *Jinfuu* religious ceremony, for example, misses out important preparations that take place at home, before rituals are performed at the sacred sites. A number of weddings were filmed before it was decided to use two cameras, one following the bride and one following the groom. The final film of the wedding ceremony does not, however, include the protracted negotiations that take place between the families, often from birth. There are limits to what these videos could document.

Playback provided opportunities to gain broader community opinions and reactions. Analysis was done throughout the research process in a collaborative way, so that participants could see the process, participate and have control over it. Video therefore offered a degree of visibility and transparency to the research process. Community analysis of the footage assisted my understanding of the community and community members' understanding of their involvement in research processes.

Challenges

There were some problems using video cameras. People commented that they felt under scrutiny and alone in front of the camera. Throughout fieldwork I was aware of people's fear of being alone, something noted by authors writing about other Oromo groups. Discomfort with the camera was evident when a man called Shinko was interviewed. Shinko is normally strong, confident and articulate, and is respected by community members for his knowledge of Karrayyu traditions. When he was in front of the camera he became unsure of himself and found it hard to talk; he kept his eyes lowered and showed a lack of confidence. When I asked him why this was he replied 'because the eye of the camera is strong and makes you weak.' This is easy to forget if you come from a culture where cameras, their products and photographs are normalised. Even though the camera was handled by community members themselves, some still feared it, saying it filled them with shame. Discussions about the effects of the camera made me realise the social implications of the 'gaze' within Karrayyu society. In the past, direct eye contact between individuals, particularly young, old, male and female, was restricted. This was explained to me using the example of traditional conduct between married men and their mother-in-laws. A man avoids his mother-in-law, even before he is married. After marriage he can visit but he stays outside the house and addresses her from a distance. They should not make eye contact or face one another directly. Equally, when Karrayyu meet one another they do not shake hands, make physical contact, or make a great deal of eye contact. A strong eye or gaze is still associated with lack of respect, or lack of *safu* (respect). These explanations enabled me to gain a clearer understanding of the social meanings associated with people's dislike of cameras.

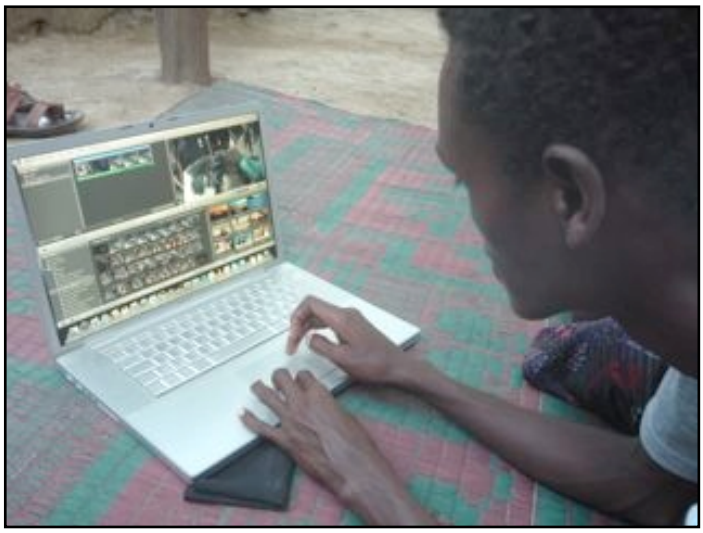
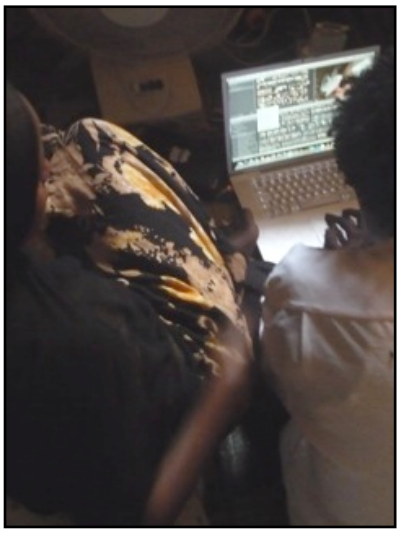
These incidents highlighted certain aspects of Karrayyu culture which are key to understanding, but are difficult to document using video. I refer to these as 'intangible cultural heritage', 'practices, representations and expressions that are central to the lives and identities of communities, groups and individuals' including 'the skills and knowledge that underlie a practice (as much as the visible manifestation), which exist primarily in people's heads' (ICH Scotland, website). In the Karrayyu case this includes their genealogy, the *gosa* (clan) system, the *heera* (laws) that govern Karrayyu society, and concepts such as *safu* (respect) and *nagaa* (peace). As MacDougall has written 'Anyone attempting to put on film a complex kinship

system might be better advised to take up pencil and paper' (1969-70: 26). Much thought went into how these aspects of culture could be captured on film. For example, the *Gadaa* system is extremely complex, even community members find it hard to articulate let alone display. Participants were able to document ritual expressions of *Gadaa* using video. However, it was not possible to document all the things that the community wanted to record using film. These elements are included in the thesis in written form which highlights some of the pros and cons of visual and textual forms of documentation.

Another challenge was the change from real time to cinemographic time, which required a process of selection. This posed a problem for participants who wanted to document whole processes and rituals, which are often very long and complex. Participants had to choose the parts which were most significant or powerful in order to capture the essence of these rituals and still produce a film that was watchable. Participants gave much thought to the things they wanted to record and planned how they would film in advance, even then the footage had to be edited down. A considerable amount of footage has not been used in the final films. There was a conflict in this respect between the interest of the film makers and the requirements of the PhD.

Editing Process

The footage required substantial editing and led to ten films: *Cidha* (*Gadaa* ceremony); *Fuudha fi Heeruma* (Marriage); *Korma Qaallu* (Rain Making Ritual); *Godansa* (Migration); *Dalagaa Dhiiraa* (Men's Routines); *Dalagaa Dubartii* (Women's Routines); *Karrayyu fi Horii* (Karrayyu and Animals); *Biyya Karrayyu* (Karrayyu Land); *Amantii* (Religion); and *Qonna* (Farming). Editing was done in a participatory manner in the field using a laptop with editing facilities (iMovie editing software). (See Figures 26-31) Editing of indigenous media is often done by the facilitators of projects, rather than participants, because editing is challenging. I decided to teach the student group to edit because they already had some knowledge of computers. This allowed participants greater control over the results. As Ruby has commented, if editorial control is not handed over ‘the empowerment of the subject is therefore more illusory than real. Although new voices are heard, traditional forms of authorship have not been significantly altered' (2000: 204).

Figures 26-31: Student group learn participatory editing using laptop and iMovie to edit footage in groups. Source: Author

Editing was time-consuming and labour-intensive and involved selecting and organising footage, developing a narrative, and making the films accessible, which included adding English subtitles. The amount of subtitles vary from film to film. To record the processes of handling and shaping that lie behind the final video product, I kept detailed field notes which enabled me to record my impressions of the research process and of findings. This allowed me to reflect on the research process and to keep track of shifts in my understanding. I conducted interviews and informal conversations throughout to understand participants reactions to and thoughts about PV. This included asking questions about what they were trying to convey and why, and how they felt about the finished products.

Participants did not respond well to the idea of 'telling a story'; they stressed that they wanted to represent 'reality' and culture as it is. Particular concern was given to the accuracy of recordings and there was an emphasis on truth throughout. Participants were also hesitant about conveying an overt message. Concern with accuracy and truth has emerged in other work on indigenous knowledge (Cruikshank, 1990; Chambers, 1983; Brokensha *et al*., 1980; Blurton Jones *et al*., 1976). However, truth is both a personal and collective construct influenced by political and historical factors. It is therefore important to understand the motivations of participants. Community members are very aware of distortions in Oromo culture and history, particularly students, because the Ethiopian history they are taught in school is at odds with what they hear at home. Memories are shaped by, and relate to, lived experience which is sometimes not captured or edited out of 'official' histories' (Blouin & Rosenerg, 2007). As Jalata has written ‘the Ethiopian knowledge elites with the support of the Ethiopian State produced ‘official’ history that completely denied a historical space for the Oromo and other colonised peoples' (1996: 96). Oromo groups like the Karrayyu are struggling for recognition and to document their culture from their point of view.

Within the country there is increasing criticism of dominant representations of ‘Ethiopia.' Many feel that the focus has been on the Amhara and Tigray and the history of other ethnic groups has been neglected. This can be seen in museums, guide books and tourist shops, where Abyssinian culture is dominant and the other groups remain largely invisible. While the North is celebrated and promoted as a centre of ancient Christian civilisation, the South is marketed as the home of exotic tribal people and wild animals. While there is 'official' promotion of the diverse 'nations

and nationalities' within Ethiopia through public celebrations organised by the government, many Ethiopian's feel that these attempts are coerced and shallow. Problems with representation extend to pastoralism, as Roba Fantalle commented: 'The textbooks and curriculum are all prepared for people who live in town or different agrarian communities, but nothing is there for the pastoralists'. PV provided a chance for the community to record things themselves and participants felt a responsibility to portray the truth of their culture.

However, there is no single truth of a community, nor is there an unmediated relationship between film and reality. Because they are made by community members, the videos are shaped by their vision, as well as the film making process. But if we can understand these frameworks they can perhaps tell us about the perspectives of the people behind the camera and their ideas of truth. Azziz writes: 'The framing of the subjects and the choice of shot are underpinned by epistemological assumptions. The 'eye' of the filmmaker is not an objective one, observing on the peripheries looking in on the truth, rather it is an ideological frame' (2002: preface). The videos and what they represent are informative of how participants view their past, present and future, and the underlying meanings can give us new insights. Karrayyu participants are acutely aware of what their community has experienced in the past, and the urgent need for documentation is heightened due to what they face in the future.

The mediated aspect of video production and concerns about truth became apparent during the editing process. While editing footage of the *Jinfuu* ceremony, participants wanted to take out modern flags; partly because they felt that they are not authentic, and partly for political reasons. There was also a video interview about farming with a Karrayyu man who had converted to agro-pastoralism. He had a favourable view of the new irrigation scheme and the impact it has had. Some members of the community who saw this footage and his praise of the government were adamant that they did not want this interview included in the film because his perspective was not considered to be representative of the wider community. Participants also wanted to edit out women collecting water from a lake because they were standing in water that would be used for household consumption. People commented that this is unhygienic and would reflect badly on the community if seen by outsiders. They removed anything they thought would portray the community in a negative light or show 'incorrect' practices. Karrayyu are acutely aware of others' perceptions of them, particularly regarding hygiene, due

to interactions with development workers, teachers, government officials and people from other ethnic groups. Participants also wanted to edit out moments where people acknowledged the camera's presence, for example footage where women jokingly insulted the girl behind the camera because she was simply filming them while they worked. They also did not want comments or sounds to be included that would make the film seem staged, or undermine it in any way. In some instances, signs of modernity were edited out, for example images of people arriving by vehicle at the site of the *Cidha* ceremony (*Gadaa* transfer of power). This seemed particularly important for the documentation of the ceremony, whereas the vehicle was included in the marriage ceremony, presumably because it is regarded as a status symbol in this context.

Editing can change the picture significantly and can determine 'what is remembered, what is forgotten, who in society is visible and who remains invisible, who has a voice and who does not. In this act of creation we must remain extraordinarily sensitive to the political and philosophical nature of documents, of personal biases and appraisals' (Cook, 2007: 169). However, these processes can add to knowledge, as long as they are documented. They give insight into whose points of view might have been silenced or muted and why. I am highly aware that I was working mainly with members of the community who are firmly in favour of maintaining the traditional way of life and culture, but there are members of the community who are possibly in favour of the irrigation scheme and who welcome 'development.' Rather than ignore the complexities I have looked at these issues, and they are discussed later in the thesis.

Reactions to PV

The experience of seeing themselves on screen can initially be a shock for participants. This is easy for people living in the Western world to forget because 'Modern life would be incomprehensible without photography, video and cinema ... Our world has changed forever, and, more importantly, the way we see it' (Forbes, 2009: 1). Practitioners using PV report that this is usually a positive process which can be immensely empowering. Karrayyu participants were moved by the films and screenings were often very emotional. People commented that they had never seen their own community portrayed in such a way and were overwhelmed by

the fact that certain ceremonies had been documented. As Bottomore points out, 'one should not forget that the very fact of seeing one's own society, and indeed, oneself reflected on the screen [is] in itself amazing' (1999: 179).

People were excited to see themselves on television and many expressed their amazement at the quality of the footage. They were surprised that it had been made by Karrayyu, especially those who had not gone to school. The video built people's confidence in their own abilities, particularly those who had never received formal education. There is a definite divide between those who have received an education and those who have not. Participants who were sceptical of their own abilities at the beginning changed dramatically through the research period and were visibly proud of their achievements. In this way the process perhaps helped to challenge their views about themselves.

There were comments that the Participatory Videos were different from other media. One male Karrayyu elder said: 'This video, the one done by our children, is quite different from those we have seen in town. These videos show Karrayyu life as it is, something that is not shown on Ethiopian TV. It also uses *Afaan Oromo*'. Those who had more access to TV commented that the videos did not show too many 'talking heads' unlike ETV productions. PV has perhaps enabled members of the community to convey their own reality and resist definitions imposed by dominant cultures. However, there were also comments that the films showed more of the dry times and difficulties of life, than the 'golden times' when pastoralism is at its best. Unfortunately, the footage could only reflect conditions during the research period. There was a general frustration and sense of disappointment that the videos could not capture the 'real' culture entirely because so much has already changed. Participants and viewers frequently stated that they wished cameras had been available in the past.

Elders questioned whether the videos have been made by their young people of their own accord. One elder in particular said, 'My question is what encouraged our children to record our culture? Is there any order from the government, or are the children doing it for the sake of our history?' This comment reveals two things, suspicion of the government and lack of trust in 'the children'. The elders blame themselves for allowing the culture of the Karrayyu to decline to its current state, and feel they did not fight hard enough. They also have no faith in the young

generation to save the culture, which is reflected in their disbelief that the young people would make films from their own interest. As McIntosh (2004: 186) has written, 'No cultural carcinogen is more powerful that oppression internalised to the point that a community blames itself for its disempowerment, dysfunction and underachievement'. However, whilst the PV process highlighted gaps and tensions between the generations, it may also help to bridge these divides as elders come to realise that the younger Karrayyu are fiercely defensive of their culture, and that their desire to participate in the research was driven by a commitment to their community.

PV and Ethnography

The next chapters provide an ethnographic account of the Karrayyu. The overall themes come from choices participants made about what to film and the ethnographic details emerged from the films, the interviews and life stories. The ethnography is divided into four chapters. Chapters Six and Seven focus on how Karrayyu culture and community 'should be.' I am aware that there is a strong and widely agreed collective narrative in which certain accounts almost exactly mirror what other researchers have included in their work; even though the story is the same, the people I have spoken to are different. When discussing Karrayyu culture, participants wanted to focus on the life of the community as a whole, rather than individual stories, and emphasis was placed on the collective, which has perhaps led to a somewhat essentialised account.

Because of the approach I have taken, this account of Karrayyu society has been shaped by their narrative and this may be seen as a weakness, but to deviate from this narrative raises dilemmas. Anthropologists are expected to unpick ideas of 'community' and 'culture' which highlights a certain contradiction between academic research and collaborative research which requires the researcher to resist the urge to control the direction of the research, and the resulting account. While I realise that the collective narrative may hide contradictory points of view and individual stories, to counter this may undermine the argument being made by community members. Chapters Six and Seven therefore reflect the ideas of the participants I worked with, their experience and point of view as members of a marginalised group.

Chapters Eight and Nine, however, contrast with Chapters Six and Seven by focusing in detail on the changes affecting Karrayyu pastoralists and what they anticipate in the future. My understanding of these changes was shaped by the PV process because video footage often contrasted with oral accounts. I found that stories of the Karrayyu community as isolated, independent, and united were at odds with a society that is becoming increasingly divided through the weakening of traditional institutions, encroachment of local government and a variety of external pressures. The videos highlighted vulnerabilities, gaps, and contradictions in the narrative and this enabled an understanding of the complex dynamics of cultural change to emerge, which became focused on individual stories. It was clear when watching and discussing the videos with participants that the Karrayyu way of life has already seen profound changes. Of the social institutions and material culture, none can be said to have reached the present day unaltered, and some have disappeared altogether, or are disappearing.

The Karrayyu collective narrative in this context is, perhaps, a way of negotiating what has happened, its meaning and of seeking ways forward. It can also be seen as an attempt by community members to influence the outcome of events. To emphasize a narrative of traditional culture, which to a degree contrasts with the way their society has become, strengthens their arguments against the change from pastoralism to farming. As Eastmond writes ‘Story-telling in itself, is a way for individuals and communities [to] remember, bear witness, or seek to restore continuity and identity, [and] can be a symbolic resource enlisted to alleviate suffering and change their situation’ (2007: 250). She also highlights that narratives are not transparent renditions of reality but reflect a dynamic interplay between life, experience and story. Therefore when reading the next chapters one needs to bear in mind that this portrayal of Karrayyu culture relates and is a response to the social and political contexts that have shaped and are shaping the lives of the Karrayyu.

The next chapters include a combination of written description, photographs and videos. The videos are accompanied by explanations, and are placed at the end of each related section. The play symbol indicates where you may want to stop reading to watch the accompanying video..

Chapter Six: Karrayyu Social Organisation

Participants wanted to focus on specific aspects of *aada* Karrayyu (Karrayyu culture): the *Gadaa* socio-political institution, *gosa* or clan system, *fuudha fi heeruma* or marriage practice, and *Waaqeffata,* the traditional religion. As explained in the previous chapter, these all fit within the context of the pastoralist system, which is explained in depth in the next chapter. Participants focused on these in order to highlight what will be affected by the conversion from pastoralism to farming. One can only understand how the changes will affect the Karrayyu by understanding their social organisation. One female elder said: 'If we stop keeping animals and start to follow a different way of life, such as farming, there will be no *Gadaa* system, there will be no *gosa* system, no more traditional marriage, no respect [*saala*]'. Karrayyu emphasise that you cannot separate one aspect of the culture from another, if one is affected, so is the rest. It is important to document Karrayyu institutions both because of the changes that are taking place, and because much of the previous research uses descriptions of cultural institutions written by scholars working with other Oromo groups.

This chapter covers additional aspects of Karrayyu culture which were identified as important by community members but were difficult to document using video. It is not possible to describe these institutions in sufficient detail, and some are difficult to write about, as Haji Musa, an elder, said: 'there are some parts of the culture we cannot explain by words, because words are not enough.' Gaining a sense of these aspects of indigenous knowledge and culture, and their importance, is critical because they are often dismissed by western science which 'tends to discount as irrelevant intuitive wisdom, mythology and indigenous experience (Johnson & Ruttan, 1991 cited in Hoare *et al*., 1993: 46). To adequately describe these ancient and complex institutions is beyond the scope of this PhD study but it hopefully provides an opening for other researchers, particularly Karrayyu researchers, to conduct more in-depth studies.

Heera, Nagaa & Safu

Heera (law), *safu* (ethics), and *nagaa* (peace) help to define and organise, other aspects of Karrayyu culture. They form part of the underlying indigenous system of knowledge held by

community members and include the rules and regulations of the society. 'These indigenous institutions are rehearsed with both regularity and rigour and are supported by networks of kin, and institutionalised in meetings and rituals' (Van Kopppen *et al*., 2007: 152). However, they are not always obvious to the outsider.

Heera refers to law. Oral stories claim that all the children of Oromo are governed by the same laws which are transferred from generation to generation through oral tradition. In the past, Oromo from different parts of Ethiopia would participate in regular assemblies during which laws and guidance were disseminated. These assemblies took place at five *Oda* trees located in different parts of Oromia: *Oda Nabe*, *Oda Bultum*, *Oda Garres*, *Oda Roba*, *Oda Bisil* and *Oda Mokkoodi*. The Karrayyu travelled to *Oda Nabe* in present day Shoa, which is still the site of important Oromo rituals such as the *Irreessaa* ceremony, held annually at Bishoftu beside a lake called *Hora*.

Heera plays an important role in Oromo society. ‘The more people abide by the laws, the more social norms and values are respected; the more people ignore the laws the more their social structure is loosely organized and the violation of norms and values is common’. (Jilo: 2009). Oromo groups, most notably the Booran, refer to two kinds of law: *heera* and *seera*. Gemetchu Megerssa, an Oromo scholar, describes the difference in the following way: '*Seera* means law and cannot be changed. *Heera* is applied law and can be changed, it can be improved on and reviewed every eight years'. He used the example of marriage: '*Heera heeruma* is to be married. A woman and a man acquire a legal status when married; before marriage law does not apply to them, they cannot have private property. Marriage is what establishes the right of the group, of the individual, to be entitled within the society. That's *heera*, but *seera* is general laws that are not necessarily practised' (personal interview).

In this respect, the Karrayyu are different. They refer to *heera* as their original law which cannot be changed and which governs the conduct of Karrayyu community members. *Seera*, on the other hand, is something that has been introduced recently and is often associated with state government. For the Karrayyu, therefore, *seera* can be modified. This was explained by a prominent Karrayyu elder: ‘There is a difference between *heera* and *seera*. *Heera* is the law that Oromo use to administer themselves, whereas *seera* is the principle that the government

uses to lead the people. *Heera* leads Oromo people from all directions of the country, whether from the north to south or from east to west. *Seera* is created by the government.' There may have been some alterations regarding *heera* among the Karrayyu. Megerssa explained that 'local understandings of these things could vary, even from village to village.'

Karrayyu see adherence to *heera* as an indication of Oromoness. One elder explained:

> 'Oromo *heera* is still with Karrayyu and Itu. But those who have converted to Christianity, whose names have become 'Taddessa' (Amaharic name), no longer know such things. Only those who are engaged in farming, those who are in the rural areas and the Karrayyu and Itu who are pastoralists are left with such culture. These people still practise *heera*. But those like 'salale' Oromo (from North Shoa) who are deep in Christianity, and those who come to an Oromo name after counting about three fathers, do not have this *heera*'.

It seems there was perhaps more uniformity across Oromo groups in the past. Megerssa explains, 'In the past there was the centre of the *Abba Muudaa* (Father of Anointment)[9] where all these things were reviewed and proclaimed. Now the centre of the *Abba Muudaa* is no more, and everyone has come to understand things in their own way. They have lived apart for too long, if semantic diversity is great it is not surprising' (personal interview, (27/10/10).

Heera, for the Karrayyu, still governs the way people should behave. There is *heera* for marriage which governs the amount of bridewealth to be paid. There is *heera* regarding relationships between men and women, for naming new born children, for adoption, for ransom. This matches Megerssa's description of *heera* among other Oromo groups. Ultimately, the *heera* (laws) of Karrayyu work to uphold law and order, and key to this is the concept of peace that enables people to live in harmony.

The concept of peace or *nagaa* is found among all Oromo groups. 'The Oromo of Ethiopia maintain that "peace," translated as *nagaa*, is the essential key to all cosmic and human order, possessing the highest and most central value for humanity to pursue' (Dewo, 2008: 140) Coppock has written regarding the Boran: 'The importance of the Peace of Borana should not

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[9] Hassen, (2005) explains, that the *Abba Muudaa* was the most important ritual figure in traditional Oromo religion and the focus of pilgrimage.

be underestimated. It is invoked in all aspects of collective decision making and shapes debate and consensus according to traditional values of well-being and law (1994: 71). Among the Karrayyu, communal gatherings of all kinds, whether they are for prayer, for *gosa* meetings, for *Gadaa* rituals, are an opportunity to express their unity. This feeling of unity is embodied in the concept of *nagaa Kereyu* (sic) or 'peace of Kereyu' (sic). *Nagaa* is expressed in everyday greetings as well as communal rituals. Deviant behaviour affects the community by breaking *nagaa Kereyu* (sic)'. Hultin writes that peace for the Oromo 'is a moral state that is a necessary condition for fertility and life, and for the well-being of people and society. Where there is no peace there is misery and death' (1994: 78).

It is believed that community members must maintain respect and balance in order to achieve peace. This is done by adhering to the concept of *safu:* the moral and ethical code that Oromos use to differentiate bad from good and right from wrong. *Safu* is based on the notions of distance and respect between all things. '*Safu*, or "the sense of harmony," directs one on the right path. It shows the way in which life can be best lived, and gives a sense of order' (Megerssa, 1995: 54) As Lambert Bartels rightly noted, *safu* implies that all things have a place of their own in the cosmic and social order, and that they should keep this place. Their place is conditioned by the specific *ayyaana* each of them has received from *Waaqa* [God] ... *safu* implies both rights and duties (Bartels, 1983:170). As one of Bartels informants states, 'having *safu* means that you know how to behave according to the laws of our ancestors'. Megerssa explains that 'these laws were devised to keep the action of man in harmony with the cosmic whole ... for it is only man who fails to act in accordance with the natural laws set down by *Waaqa*' (2005: 77).

Karrayyu Genealogy

Various accounts state that Karrayyu have been settled around Fantalle area for at least the past 200 years (Gebre, 2001). Oral traditions cite *Madda Wallabuu* as their place of origin, a common centre from which all Oromo groups trace their origins. There is some debate among Oromo scholars as to what *Madda Wallabuu* refers to. Some believe it is a natural lake located between the Borana and Bale areas, and others refute this arguing it is a mythical space and part of the Oromo creation story:

> 'Long ago there was no time, there was no day, there was no night. Only the creator *Waaqa* existed. *Waaqa* wanted all that was contained in himself to come into being. But he knew that the first had to give life to all things. *Waaqa* also knew that water was the source of all life. And so he created a body of water. He called this water *Horra Wallaabu*, that which is impregnated with life. In this body of water *Waaqa* placed the seed of all things' (Megerssa, 1995: 9).

In a personal interview (27/10/10) Megerssa explained:

> '*Wallabuu*, it is the primordial water, it is not the water in Bale. But knowingly or unknowingly Abyssinian writers, Christian writers, have reduced this philosophical space, mythological space, into meaning a place in the physical universe which is *Wallabuu* in Bale. So people got confused and gradually this name became attached to a body of water in Bale, while the myth is forgotten. It took an effort to bring back the mythical space and differentiate it from the naming of a place in Bale'.

Due to colonisation and subjugation, many aspects of Oromo history have been re-written, distorted or misunderstood. Aspects have been accepted by Oromo people and internalised leading to conflicting accounts. This proves to be a minefield for those embarking on research with Oromo groups as one has to work through tangled accounts. This includes the Karrayyu, as there are different accounts according to different sources.

The Oromo are divided into two major groups called Borana and Barentu (See Figure 32). There is some debate around the origins of the Karrayyu as there are Karrayyu clans found in both Borana and Barentu groups. Many Karrayyu elders claim that Karrayyu trace their descent from Oromo, through Barentuma, whom they regard as their genealogical father. One Karrayyu elder relayed the following story:

> 'The name Karrayyu is the name of the father of todays Karrayyu. The two main roots of Oromo are Borana and Barentu. Barentu had five sons: *Karrayyu Bareentoo* (Karrayyu's father), *Xumugaa Barentoo* (Arsii's father), *Morowwa Barentoo* (Itu's father), *Qal'oo Barentoo* and *Humbannaa Barentoo*. The name Karrayyu derives from the word *Karra* (gateway for cattle) and was given because Karrayyu's mother gave birth to him in front of the cattle gate. They were moving from one place to another and had no hut'. It is an Oromo tradition to give names to children relating to the conditions at the time they were born. So Barentoo gave the name Karrayyu to his eldest son, who we call Karrayyicha, the father of Karrayyu Oromo today. The name did not stop with him and was passed to his descendants'.

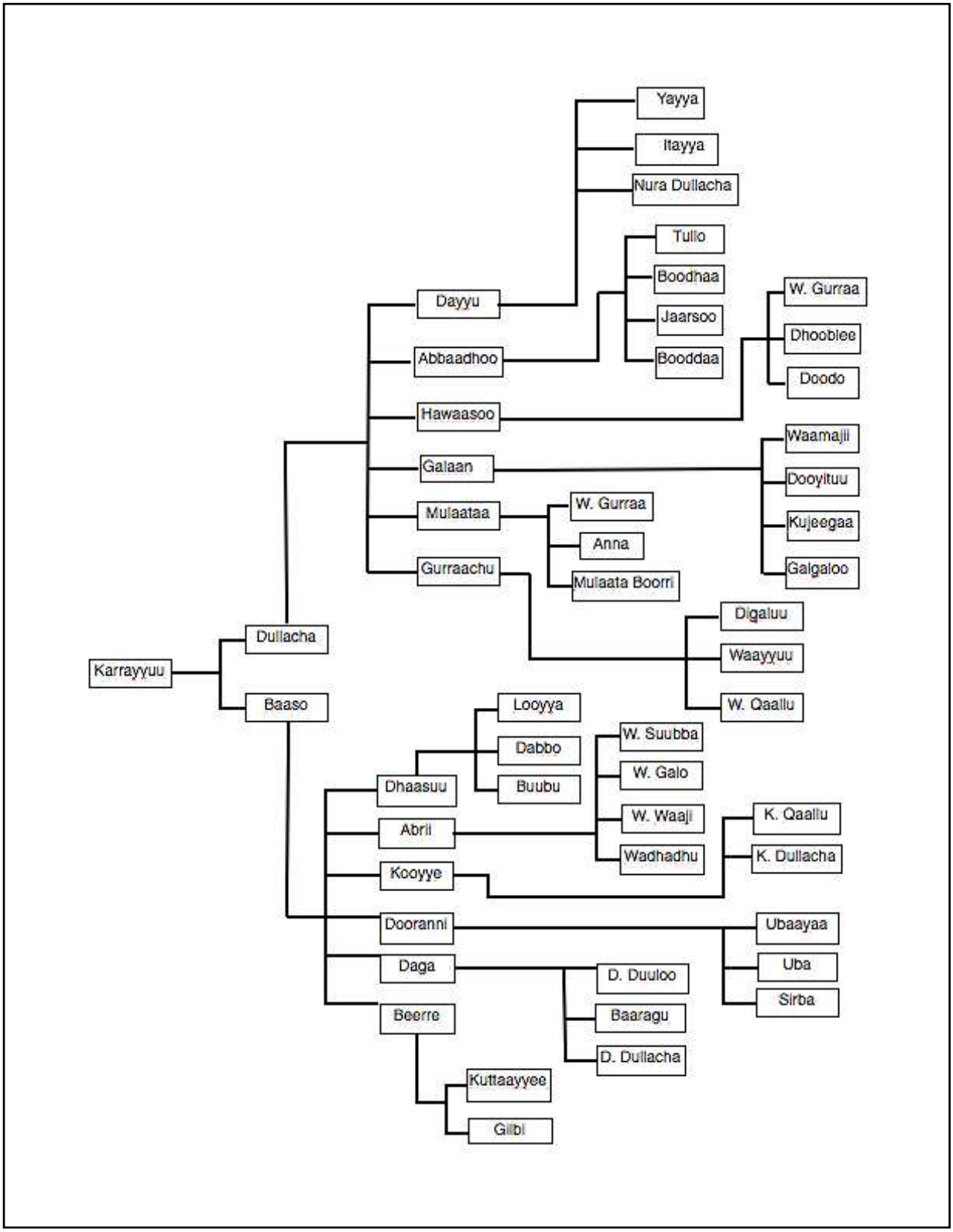

Figure 32: Karrayyu Genealogy. Source: Author

However, there are also recognised blood links with Borana. Gebre writes that 'As recently as 1992, a group of Karrayyu elders journeyed from Fantalle down to Borana in order to trace their genealogical decent. Sitting together the visiting elders from Fantalle and those from Borana reckoned that both groups belonged to a common ancestor at the fourth or fifth generation of their genealogical line, although they were not precise as to the period when those generations lived' (2001: 153). I was also told this story by Karrayyu elders. Gebre writes that all Karrayyu originated from Borana area and are descended from the Borana Kaba.

Such confusing accounts lead one to question whether there is a strict divide between Borana and Barentu. Legesse writes that members of the Dayyu lineage of the Karrayyu in Borana say that they are Barettuma people and explains that 'the Karrayyu who are calling themselves Barettuma, are not a small refugee clan attached to a big Borana moiety. They hold a dominant place in the moiety in both the *Gadaa* and *Qaallu* institutions ... they are by law excluded from the top office of *Abba Gadaa*, because their clan is empowered to elect that most senior officer of the nation' (2000: 168). This echoes a story relayed to me by Megerssa of the possible meaning of the name Karrayyu. He was informed by Oromo elders that the name Karrayyu came from two words: '*Karra*' and '*Hayyu*', the former referring to the cattle gate and the latter referring to the law keeper (who carries a whip or *Halenge* which is symbolic of law makers). This indicates that the Karrayyu clan in Borana perhaps acted as a peace-keeping group between moieties which may explain why Karrayyu clans are found in all areas of the Oromo nation.

In much of the literature it is stated that Borana and Barentu are geographically divided, Borana went west and Barentu went East and formed the modern day Oromo groups in these areas. Legesse (2000) questions this and suggests that complex historical processes have been simplified and uses the Karrayyu as an example:

> 'Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of the cross-distribution of clans is the case of the Karrayyu. We have found that this clan is the most expansive part of the Oromo nation. In our records of Marsabit Elders, Karrayyu was one of the vanguards of the southward migration of the Borana into Kenya. Evidence complied by Haberland also suggests that it existed in the Awash valley in what is presumed to be Barettuma country, as well as in western Wallagga, presumed to be Borana country and as far south as the Tana river in Kenya, among the Orma' (2000: 163)

Gebre (2001: 153) writes:

> 'Today, the Karrayyu elders recognise four major branches of the Karrayyu Oromo. The first of these remains in the Borana area where all the Karrayyu claim to originated from. The second group followed a route of migration up to Debre Birhan and Shoa Robit towns in North Shoa province. Proceeding further north, the group moved to the localities of Jehowa and Kemissie in present day South Wollo. This group is now known as the Jille Suba. The third are the Karrayyu Oromo who still inhabit the areas of Mount Fantalle and Matahara plain. A fourth group split from the Karrayyu of Mount Fantalle, migrated further south down to Arsi and travelled through Robe as far as a place called Hulul in the province of Bale. All these four major branches of the Karrayyu, namely the Borana Karrayyu, the Fantalle Karrayyu, the Jille Suba of Wollo, and the Balle Karrayyu at Hulul, manifest striking resemblances in their patterns of cultural life and modes of subsistence'.

Kassam (2005) believes the Oromo have probably undergone historical transformations and regroupings as a result of environmental and other crises. Such times of crisis are referred to as s*agli* in Oromo oral tradition and indicate a time when 'the entire social, political, and economic order of life has to be radically changed and undergo a major transformation' such times represent the the beginning point of a new cycle (Megerssa, 1995: 41). There are a number of stories told by the Karrayyu which describe such times of crisis, including severe drought and battles against the Ethiopian state. This is illustrated in the tale of Mengasha which attests to Karrayyu adaptive capacity in the face of persecution. A Karrayyu elder recounted the story to me:

> 'During the time of King Menelik II, Karrayyu fought a bloody war with the government machinery and an army commander called Mengasha. The ruler was worried about his position, he feared that the Karrayyu were going to control the whole of Ethiopia, he was worried about their growing power. The government ordered the commander to march to Karrayyu land. They fought, the king's soldiers cut off the breasts of the women and the penis of the men. Mengasha fought Karrayyu like ashes to the ground. The animals of the Karrayyu were looted by the King's soldiers. The people who escaped were dispersed to neighbouring places. Only Kaaloo Qallaa was left with his herds and family. He hid himself in the cave of stones in *harawa Fantalle* (gorge of Fantalle). Most of the Karrayyu were taken captive by soldiers. Afterwards the dispersed Karrayyu people started to collect from different areas where they had scattered, one by one. It was after they collected together that the present Karrayyu generations emerged. There were many people whose roots became mingled with others from the places they scattered to. There were also many people who were assimilated by the enemy (*Karrayyoomaa bahuu*) and lost their Karrayyu'ness'.

During these periods the Karrayyu intermixed with enemy groups such as the Afar which led to the adoption of other cultural traditions and influences. They have also mixed with other Oromo groups, and regroupings and reconstitution of society and/or subgroups have likely resulted in a mixing of Boorana and Barentu, and the replication of names (Kassam, personal correspondence). This has not been discussed in previous research, it is a complex matter that requires more investigation.

Like other Oromo groups, the Karrayyu are split into two moieties. According to Karrayyu oral tradition, Karrayyu begot two sons, *Dullacha* and *Baaso*, which represent the two major genealogical groups within the Karrayyu. Haji Musa, a Karrayyu elder explained: 'Today Karrayyu has two *gosa* that developed from the children of two brothers from the same father (Karrayyicha) and different mothers'. *Dullacha* and *Baaso* are considered to be the *angafa* (elder) and *quxisu* (younger) sons of Karrayyu. This is another a common feature of Oromo organisation: 'Legend has it that one moiety was 'born' before the other and that is the main reason why it holds a higher position. As such it simply represents the 'order of birth' of the moieties' (Legesse, 2000: 140). Legesse also writes that often one moiety precedes the other in terms of historical social formation. Certainly in the case of the Karrayyu, those who have joined recently, such as the Itu Oromo, are attached to the *Baaso* junior moiety. This can be seen when comparing Figure 32 which shows the 'pure Karrayyu clans' with Figures 33 & 34 which show how Karrayyu groups confederate for support. Figure 34 which shows Baaso is much larger than *Dullacha*, because *Baaso* has incorporated Itu groups.

Karrayyu, like other Oromo groups, have mechanisms for adopting people from other social groups, including enemies. This is done through a naming ceremony called *moggaasa*. Bulga Jilo, a Karrayyu elder, describes the *moggaasa* ceremony:

> 'For someone who is interested to be part of the Karrayyu there are certain procedures that he has to fulfil. Before he is named as a *gosa* member that person has to consult the elder of the *gosa*. The elder calls all of his *gosa* members. The person who is applying to be a member has to say the following words:
>
> 'Oh father I am a person with no father to look after me, no brother who picks me up from the ground when I fall. So now I want to become your child and I want you to

be my father. Your brothers and relatives are my brothers and relatives, your wife is my mother...'

The 'father' tells the *gosa* members of the newcomer's background. The *Abba Bokku* and *Qaallu* are then invited so they may bless the person and tell all the *heera* of Karrayyu. If someone came to me and asked to be adopted (*moggaasa*) it is announced that he is my youngest son and is part of *Warra Dhaasuu*. On that day the father offers cattle, goats and even camels to his new child. The relatives, or *gosa* members, give animals according to what they are able. Then that person is known among *Baaso* and *Dullacha*. People offer animals because the life of the community is attached to animals. In such a way the person becomes Karrayyu and pastoralist.

In the presence of *Abba Bokku* and *Qaallu* all the fundamental laws of the community are recounted by the elders to the new child. One has to have clear ideas of the society. The elders count the children of that person and the new son will be the youngest of all his sons regardless of age. Then they advise the whole *gosa* to look after the new son saying: 'correct if you see him doing wrong, search for him if he becomes lost, give ransom if he kills someone'. After that a gift (*argaa*) will be given to that new son as they do for newly born babies. But in the case that someone asks for *moggaasa* from another Oromo group they accept saying: 'this person is pure Oromo, he is '*Barentuma*' and there will be no complaints'.

The Karrayyu can distinguish between those with shallow genealogical membership and those who are 'pure Karrayyu'. Genealogies therefore serve as narratives of descent. Karrayyu regard those who can count back more than seven fathers as *Dirmadu*, and those who can count less than seven as *Dhalata*, meaning 'those who came recently'. Karrayyu genealogy therefore consists of those who are Karrayyu by blood as well as those who have been incorporated from outside. People from other Oromo groups keep their original names, but those who are adopted from outside the Oromo are fully incorporated and lose their original names and history.

Dual organisation is a recognised feature of Oromo society and as well as being symbolically important, many believe it serves as a balancing mechanism. 'It is a structural feature that divides the political community into permanently opposed groups. It is the prototypical basis for balanced opposition and power sharing' (Legesse, 2000: 136) Legesse (2000) describes a number of common features of Oromo moieties. The first is that every case of Oromo dual organisation has ethnogenetic links with **both** of the ancient moieties (Borana and Barentu), as seems to be illustrated in the Karrayyu case. The other common features is that moieties are never territorially segregated. Gebre (2001) and Lemessa (2006) write that *Baaso* and *Dullacha*

had their own respective territories until the last one or two generations, which were particularly important for ceremonial occasions such as *Gadaa* handover rituals. The geographical distinction between *Dullacha* and *Baaso* has declined due to land loss, but the idea still exists today and traditional places are resumed for rituals. However, territoriality does not exist in daily life: *Dullacha* and *Baaso* are intermixed and grazing, water and land is equally accessible to all Karrayyu. The other feature of Oromo moieties observed by Legesse (2000) is the avoidance of endogamy. This is true of *Gosa Dullacha* and *Gosa Baaso* as intermarriage frequently occurs between the two groups as well as between members of the same division. The two groups are interdependent and support one another.

Gosa

Under the two main moieties of *Dullacha* and *Baaso*, there are a number of named groupings also called *gosa* which are equivalent to clans. Each of these is subdivided into smaller lineages or *balbala,* meaning 'people from the same door'. For example, *Dullacha* had six sons (*Ilman Dullacha*): *Dayyu*, *Abbaadhoo*, *Hawaasoo*, *Galaan*, *Mulaataa* and *Guraachu*. Under *Dayyu* there are three *balbala*: *Yayya*, *Itayya*, *Nura Dullacha*. In addition, under each *balbala* there are smaller family groups called *araddaa* and *warra*. (See Figures 33 & 34)

Karrayyu *gosas* confederate into groups to support one another in times of trouble and to pay *guma* (blood money). *Dullacha*'s six sons confederate into two groups: *Shanan Dayyuu* (the Five *Dayyus*) and *Booxa Sadeen* (the Three *Booxas*). *Baaso*'s six sons confederate into three groups: *Torban Iluu* (the Seven *Ilu*), *Saddeet Daadhii* (the Eight *Daadhiis*), and *Sagal Galaan* (the Nine *Galaans*). However, *balbalas* from *Dullacha* can support those from *Baaso*. For example under *Sadeet Dhadi* there are Ituu, *Baaso* and *Dullacha balbala's*. These relationships are very complicated and difficult to document without further research.

*Gosa*s consist of people who have blood relations with one another, both male and female. This is an important part of how people identify themselves. *Gosa* is described as a brothership. There is a male focus because the male members of a *gosa* stay the same, whereas women leave the *gosa* they are born into when they marry.

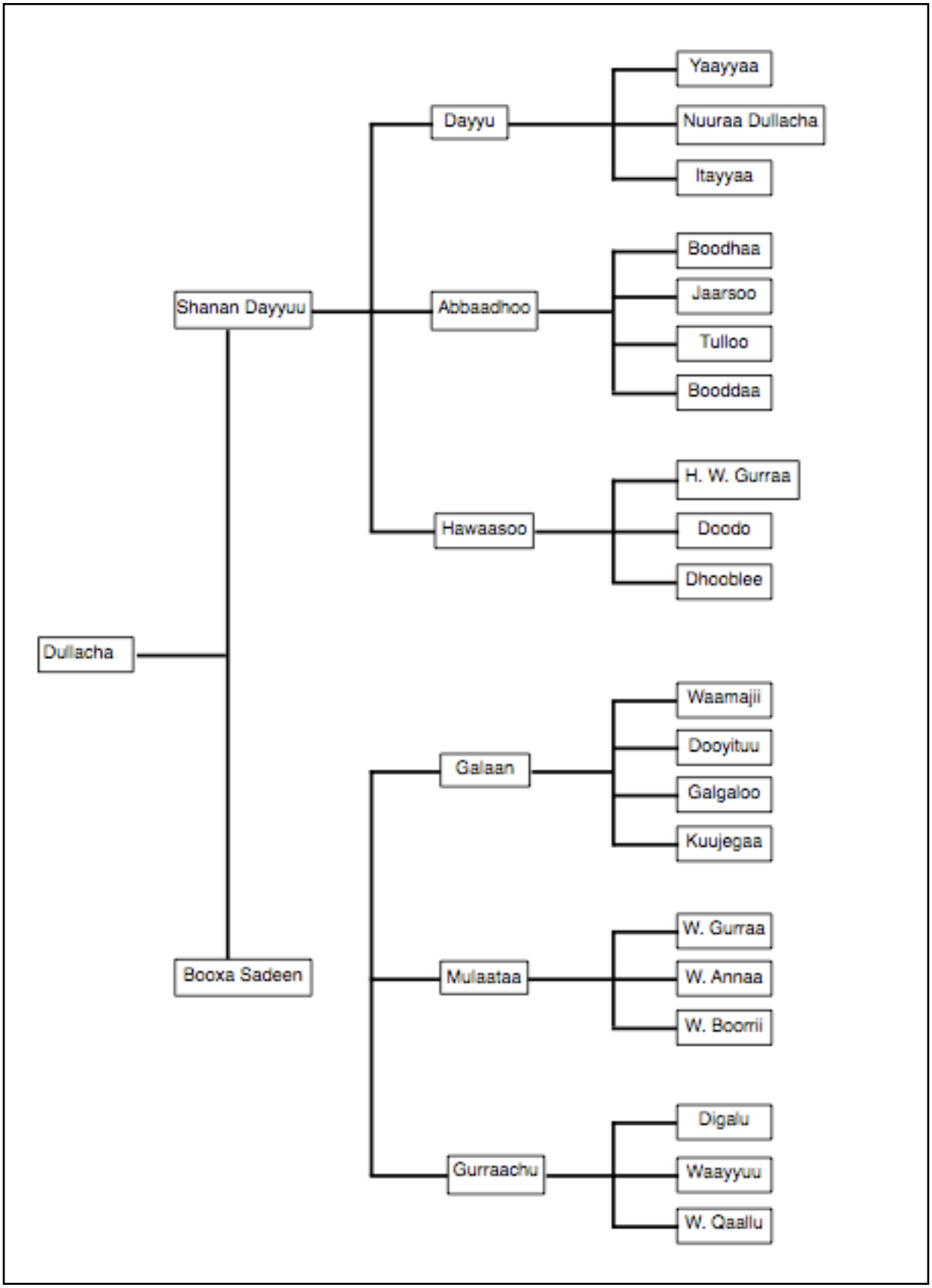

Figure 33: *Dullacha* Confederation. Source: Author

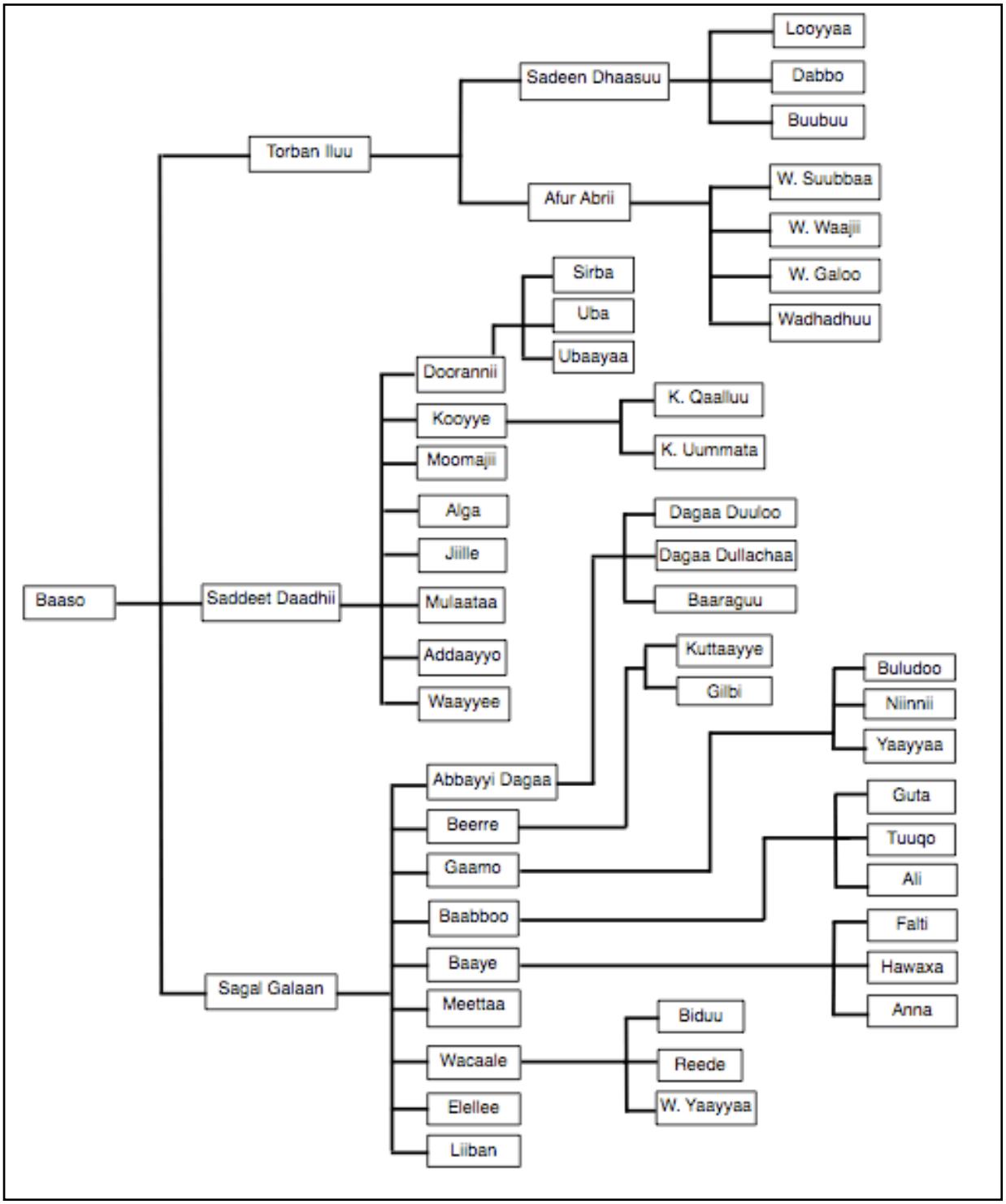

Figure 34: *Baaso* Confederation. Source: Author

Men within a *gosa* refer to each other as brother. Children call their uncles '*Abboo*', meaning father. *Gosa* members follow and protect one another throughout life and exchange information with fellow members if there is an issue of concern. Haji Hawas, a Karrayyu elder, describes it in the following way: 'When the *gosa* sees another member without work they don't accept this. They punish the person and make sure that he has a role. This is why today none of our people are beggars. We don't move to different places without a job and without purpose. We are not dealt with by the government because we have the *gosa* culture. Even if people go far from each other, the *gosa* still collects information and support one another. Even if a person is accused by the government the *gosa* group tries to save him by payment or negotiation'.

The *gosa* is led by a *damiinaa*. Haji Musa, a male elder, explains: 'every *gosa* has a *damiinaa*, the leader of the *gosa* institution. If someone is unable to help himself, all of the *gosa* members arrange a meeting by the help of the *damiinaa*.' The leader is elected, according to their ability to act as leader, by the other members in peace without argument. Jilo Gobbu describes some of the selection criteria:

> 'To be *damiinaa* you must experience or participate in many *Koras* (assemblies). Before I was *damiinaa* I was *Jajjabi* (peace keeper/facilitator), and was responsible for organising *kora*. We used to have many sticks in our hands to balance and adjust each and every mistake we found on our way. We used to give order to the *gosa* who were outside and inside the village. After this the gosa decided to make me the *damiinaa* of Dhaasu and gave me *halange*e (leather whip made of hippo skin). I have spent the whole of my life serving the *gosa'*.

Ashan Jilo, a Karrayyu student studying Anthropology at Addis Ababa University, writes that the election of *damiinaa* 'is egalitarian in the sense that every male of competent age-bracket of a particular *gosa* has equal chance to be elected depending on his ability to influence others through speech, the ability to persuade others rather than enforce, the good management of his own family and property, and his physical strength'. Winning the trust and respect of the community plays a great role in selection. When a *damiinaa* is elected a ritual is performed to make the selection publicly known. The *damiinaa* assumes his new duties by assessing the work of the former *damiinaa* and after this he assumes the responsibility of co-ordinating the *gosa*.

The *damiinaa*'s responsibilities can be divided into occasional and routine acts. Occasional acts include: providing food for families in times of illness or distress; providing shelter after fire destroys a house(s); paying *gumaa (*blood compensation); managing the restocking process for individuals who face shocks (disaster, raid and disease), locally called *hirpha*. Routine responsibilities include: visits to houses of *gosa* members, particularly widows and the isolated; calling clan meetings to discuss clan issues (*kora gosa*); advising and counselling the members; socializing the new members of *gosa* (younger generation) so they participate in the social system; and punishing deviant individuals for rehabilitation purposes. *Damiinaas* therefore hold considerable power.

Jilo Gobbu, *damiinaa* of *Buubuu gosa*, informed me that the position of *damiinaa* is a recent development for the Karrayyu. '*Damiinaa* originally comes from the Itu Oromo ... I am the first from my *gosa* (clan). Torban Koyyee are the first *gosa* chose to have *damiinaa*'. Ashan Jilo's (2009) study of the *damiinaa* institution also reports that *damiinaa* and its practice is not originally part of Karrayyu tradition. His informants associated its introduction with a time referred to as *baatuu abaar* (severe drought). He writes: '*damiinaa* institution diffused to Karrayu after the Karrayu migrated to Ituu area during second half of the 19th century (five generation back from this generation)' .He also quotes an informant as saying:

> 'Karrayu migrated to Itu (East), to Argoba (West) and Afar (North) to recover from *abaar* (drought) which took the life of all of their livestock and left them barehanded. They left their homeland at the end of summer (*ganna*) or at the beginning of autumn (*birraa*) and they returned to their home after one year. When they came back to their home land (*Biyya Fantalle*) from all corners, they came with new cultures that they borrowed from the host society. Accordingly, those who migrated to Ituu came with *damiinaa* and its practices' (Jilo, 2009: 40).

This illustrates Karrayyu awareness that their culture has adapted over time. Parkin (1970) notes that while the existence of cultural borrowing from outside a society has been documented by anthropologists, the people themselves rarely make such assertions. He suggests that when members of a society state emphatically that certain features have been taken from another culture in the past, this 'constitutes an ethnographic datum and has analytical value'. He suggests that such statements may be significant in historical terms as

indicators of social and religious change, especially in cases where evidence is not immediately apparent to the outside observer (cited in Kassam, 2005: 100).

As the duties of the *damiinaa* illustrate, the *gosa* serves as a support system. Members are responsible for paying *guma* or blood money if a member commits a crime and it mobilises the contribution of animals for celebration of communal rituals. As Haji Musa explains:

> 'No one can be outside the *gosa*. If something happens to someone in the *gosa*, the rest of the *gosa* supports him. If someone kills a person, or if he destroys someone's possessions, he will not be taken to prison or treated by government law, the *gosa* support him from being accused. They make arbitration by payment to save him. If he is poor and he cannot get married the *gosa* can come together to discuss, to approach the lady, they can collect among their animals, and give to him. No one can be outside the *gosa*, it is our support system'.

The *gosa* is responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of poorer members and the *damiinaa* is charged with defending the rights of the vulnerable. If a member of the *gosa* is struggling then a meeting will be called by the *damiinaa* to ensure that contributions are made to support that member. Jilo Gobu, the *damiinaa* of Buubuu, describes his role in the following way:

> 'An example of the role of *damiinaa* is that if someone becomes poor the *damiinaa* has the responsibility to take action to help that person. All *gosa* members should contribute animals (cattle, camels, goats, sheep) according to their capacity. This form of support is called *hirphaa*. As *damiinaa* I have the responsibility to know where and how my relatives are: my g*osa* (clan) and the *Niitii Hiyyeessaa* (widows)'.

Donations according to *hirpha* are decided based on individuals capacity, the *damiinaa* is assisted by the *qondaala karraa* or *Abba karraa* (resource mobiliser). '*Qondaala Karraa* can suggest who should contribute what at the time of charity (*hirpha*) and blood compensation (*gumaa*)' (Jilo, 2009: 33). Haji Musa says the following: 'A person is not able to confront the difficulties of life alone. *Gosa* is crucial for the economic and social life of the community'.

Gosa is also a way of keeping community members in check. There is emphasis on equality and ideas of good leadership and means of improvement are discussed openly. Activities of individuals are seen as the concern of the *gosa* because they reflect on the *gosa* as a whole.

There are rules and regulations which enable members to live together and to control each other's behaviour, including punishment. Members can be punished if they do not support their family, manage their livestock properly, if they disobey the *damiinaa* or do not bring back lost animals that belong to other Karrayyu. Someone can be punished if they show wild behaviour, do not work, or go to town regularly to drink or chew *khat*. However, people cannot be punished arbitrarily according to personal feeling. Punishments vary according to the severity of the misdemeanor and range from: beating, social exclusion in which a person is kept in isolation and body hair and nails are removed, and drowning. Another kind of punishment consists of *Gadaa* officials singing songs insulting the offender at every public ceremony. Although this sounds less severe, as it is not physical punishment, it is regarded as severe and highly shameful. Women's behaviour should not be arbitrated in public: it is considered a domestic affair which should be dealt with by the immediate family. The strictest physical punishments are rare and only applied in situations when a Karrayyu kills or badly injures a fellow community member. This is regarded as the most serious crime because, as Frejaques has written, 'amongst small corporate groups such as the Karrayyu, disputes between individuals are more likely to disrupt the social fabric than in a large-scale society' (2003: 163).

For the same reason, punishments are meted out in accordance to strict regulations and it is stipulated that certain people must be present in order for *yakka (*punishment) to take place. The punishment should take place at the individual's home or cattle corral and his or her family should be present. For a man it should be his father or a person who can take responsibility for him; for a woman it should be her husband. The leader of the *gosa* should be present, all members of the *gosa*, and an elder or elders who are not members of the *gosa* who act as mediators. An exception is made for those who take wrongful action against their parents or unmarried youths who can be punished anywhere they are found. In order to punish the person, what he or she did must be outlined to the people present and discussed to decide the appropriate measure. You may be close to the person being punished, but once a punishment is decided you must take part. If you have a personal grudge, you are not allowed to use the opportunity to resolve grievances and, if found doing so, you will be punished in turn. Once someone has been punished and admitted his/her wrongs all members of the *gosa* must then bless and comfort him/her. Those who have meted out the punishment then massage the person with butter and the offender is sometimes given new clothes or animals. This is perhaps done to

diminish the resentment of the offender towards those who meted out the punishment, to repair bonds and a sense of harmony.

Gosa also governs marriage relations. It is forbidden to marry from within one's own *gosa* due to blood links. It is believed that if you have children with someone of the same *gosa* the child will be abnormal. Marriage between certain *gosas* is also restricted. If people from these *gosa*s marry one another elements of their life will be unsuccessful: for example they won't have enough property, their children or maybe the husband or wife will die young. It is believed this is because in the past their roots were the same. The *gosa* plays a key role in marriage arrangements and restriction of marriage can be used as a punishment. Haji Musa explains in the following way:

> 'In our culture if I make a mistake with the *gosa* I marry from, that *gosa* can inform their members not to give any ladies to others from my *gosa*, this is *heera* (law). When a *gosa* prevents my *gosa* from marrying with theirs (due to a crime or misdeed) we have to make *arara* (peaceful agreement) through the elders. In the culture disagreements can cause fighting with each other (among two *gosas*). If someone comes from that *gosa* to ask to marry someone's daughter they can raise *hijaa*'.

Hijaa is the restriction raised by one *gosa* against another because of a past mistake. If an individual from a *gosa* makes a mistake and does not apologize, then anyone from his *gosa* who wants to make a marriage proposal to a woman from the wronged *gosa* can be refused. Even if the wronged man dies the idea will be passed among his *gosa* and they can maintain the restriction, sometimes for years. Such mistakes therefore affect the entire *gosa* by restricting marriage opportunities. If this person does not apologise he is effectively preventing his fellow gosa members from marrying and having children, so the g*osa* must find a solution which can involve punishment of that individual. If a solution is not found he can cut the ties between two *gosas* and finish marriage relations between them. Until a solution has been found, an individual can restrict any woman from his *gosa* from marrying someone from the offending *gosa*. Once *arara* (peaceful agreement) has been reached, things can resume. *Hijaa* cannot be raised more than once with the same woman. Solutions are found by bringing an elder who is outside the two *gosas* concerned to mediate. They may ask for an apology by words, or gifts of

clothes, or maybe cattle to be given to the wronged man. *Gosa* therefore plays an important role in the life of community members.

Gadaa

Gadaa is an ancient institution, considered to be one of the pillars of Oromo culture. Holcomb comments that: '*Gadaa* represents a repository, a storehouse of concepts, values, beliefs and practices that are accessible to all Oromo' (1993: 4). Legesse (1973: 81) asserts , *Gadaa* 'cannot be given an univocal interpretation. It stands for several related ideas. It is first of all, the concept standing for a way of life ... More specifically however, it refers to any period of eight years during which a class (*Gadaa* grade) stays in power ... it refers to a specific grade ... through which every class passes'. Although the *Gadaa* system is no longer in existence among many Oromo groups, it is still functioning among the Karrayyu. Bulga Jilo describes the importance of *Gadaa* for the life of the Karrayyu: 'In the past the Karrayyu didn't have any modern government. *Gadaa* was the Karrayyu's government. *Gadaa* is everything for Karrayyu. It is our respect and love'. The institution has an enormous importance in the way people think and act on a daily basis, and people refer to *Gadaa* traditions and values as a moral framework. '*Gadaa* is an institution that governs the life of every individual in Oromo society from birth to death' (Melbaa, 1988). *Gadaa* is extremely complex, I cannot cover it in depth but I attempt to describe the basic features according to the Karrayyu.

Karrayyu are organised into five groups under the Gadaa system, known as *tuuta,* collectively referred to as *Gadaa Shanan*. The same names for the *tuutas* are used for both *Baaso* and *Dullacha*:

Dirmaajii / Ilma Sabbaqa
Melba / Ilma Nuqusaa
Michillee / Ilma Maraa / Dilboo
Duuloo / Ilma Darra
Roobalee / Ilma Moggisaa

In Karrayyu oral tradition it is said that *Gadaa* was given to the Oromo people by *Abba Gadaa* (Father of *Gadaa*) before they crossed the Mormor River. *Abba Gadaa* organised the Oromo people into five *tuuta* (groups), he made *Bokku* (sceptre) for all of them and arranged how they could lead each other and transfer the system to one another. Each *tuuta* has a second name that the outgoing *Gadaa* calls the incoming. These names come from the people who originally led the five *tuutas* designated by the *Abbaa Gadaa*. For example, *Ilma Sabbaaqqaa* was the person that was given the *Bokku* for *tuuta Dirmaajii*. There is also an order that must be followed for the giving and receiving of power. According to oral tradition when the *Abba Gadaa* first organised the *tuuta* he did not tell them who was the elder and the younger. After some time he called them all together. He climbed a mountain and told them that it was time to designate *Angafummaa* (the elder). He instructed them that whoever reached the top of the mountain first, with his *Bokku* in hand, would be *angafa*. All the *tuuta* ran towards him, *Ilma Moggisaa* arrived first but he did not have the *Bokku* in his hand so he had to turn back. The next to arrive was *Ilma Sabbaqqaa*, next was *Ilma Nuqusa*, then *Ilma Maaraa*, then *Ilma Daraaraa*, and last was *Ilma Moggisaa*. In this way *Dirmaajii* became *angafa* and the others were ordered respectively.

Every Karrayyu person from the moment he or she is born or adopted, automatically belongs to a *tuuta*. No one can be expelled from their *tuuta* under any circumstances. Each of the five *tuuta* assumes political, social, economic and religious responsibilities every eight years. A full cycle makes up one generation of forty years. In this way, *Gadaa* functions as a time-reckoning system: events and histories are remembered according to the *Gadaa* group ruling at the time. One is born into *tuuta*: a son or daughter belongs to the same *tuuta* as his or her father. Within *tuuta* there are also age grades. There are six grades as follows:

Grade 1: Ijolle (infants)
Grade 2: Daballe (children)
Grade 3: Caasaa (youth)
Grade 4: Goobiyyo/Ruboo (adults)
Grade 5: Dorriyo (officials in function)
Grade 6: Luba (elders)

Shinko, a Karrayyu herder, explained: 'First a person takes *Dabballee*, then *Caasaa*, then *Rubo*. After finishing the *Rubo* stage you come to the *Gabalaa* as *Dorriyo*, which is the mature and high stage'. Karrayyu age grades (*harriyyaa*) are no longer based on actual age like those documented in other Oromo groups. A male Karrayyu's position in the *Gadaa* system is not determined by his age but by the position of his father, referred to as a generation set. Sons, regardless of their age, are always classified in a different position to their father, exactly five age grades or one whole *Gadaa* cycle of 40 years distant from each other. A son is initiated into the first *Gadaa* only after his father has completed a cycle of 40 years and passed through all other grades. (Abir, 1968; Legesse, 1973). When a group in power completes the eight years its members become *Luba* and resign from leadership permanently. This means they must have gone through all the *Gadaa* stages and completed a forty year cycle. The sons of a generation set that has finished its term (*Luba*) commence the initiation rite (*Rubo*). After they have undergone their eight-year period of initiation, two *Gadaa* classes will have completed their separate terms of leadership (16 years) before they take over power or become *Dori*. After eight years, they too become *Luba*. By this time their fathers who used to be *Luba* will have become grandfathers or *Gadaa*mojjii. All the three generation-sets belong to the same *Gadaa tuuta*.

People are referred to as 'father' and 'son' according to their *Gadaa* positions, even though their actual age may be contradictory to their position. For example Fantalle Gile, a male in his 20s, is the 'father' of Jilo Gobbu, an elder in his 80s. This is similar to when people within a family have a senior title but are younger in age, e.g. an aunt can be younger in age than a niece. Positions in *Gadaa* also govern marriage within *tuuta*. For example a 'father' cannot marry a 'daughter' by *tuuta* even if they are not blood relations. A 'brother' can marry someone who is the equivalent of his 'sister' (equal) by *Gadaa* as long as they are not of the same *gosa*. Haji Musa explains this in the following way:

> 'In *Gadaa* someone cannot choose by himself the one that he would like to marry; there is a rule which restricts him. In the *Gadaa* there is '*ilmoo tuuta*' ('children' according to the *Gadaa)*, from these 'children' you cannot marry. Also one cannot marry with those who are like his 'mother' (*hadha tuuta*'). The *Gadaa* system and marriage relations go together and encourage respect among the community'.

It is likely that age grades used to be based on actual age, Frejaques writes: 'in order to comply with a system that forces sons to succeed their fathers at fixed intervals of time (therefore

defying the rules of natural demographic growth), there must either be other regulations that strictly establish the time when men can become fathers, or there must be exceptions to the rules that allow for children to be born outside the fixed time framework' (2003: 98). She writes that the Karrayyu used to practice 'the removal of infants who could not be classified according to the principles of *Gadaa* ... newborns were not physically eliminated but given for adoption to neighbouring groups such as the Tulama' (2003: 99). Similar practices are also reported among other Oromo groups (Legesse: 1973) and some writers have hypothesised that the *Gadaa* system acted as a means of regulating population numbers. The restriction of these practices, due to declining adherence to traditional *Gadaa* norms and external interference with the *Gadaa* system, has resulted in a population surge (Coppock, 1994: 74).

The strict age grade system is difficult to maintain and has gradually broken down. Nowadays all Karrayyu children without exception are incorporated into the age grading system which accounts for the age differences that can be found among members belonging to the same *tuuta*. Gedafa (2007: 83) has written about this among the Borana: 'A man and all of his brothers are in the same party regardless of the differences in their ages. Together they move through the hierarchy of grades ... If a man continues to have children until he is very old, those sons will enter *Gadaa* and move through with their older brothers, even if they enter at the middle of the cycle as infants' Helland (1996: 138) also writes:

> 'The period of procreation for a Borana male may span a longer period of time, partly in biological terms, but also partly due to cultural features such as polygyny, the levirate and the distinction made between biological and social fatherhood. A man may thus bear sons even after he is dead, which means that the age span within the 'son' generation may be great. Furthermore, the discrepancy between the 'structural age' of the *luba* and the biological age of *luba* members will be amplified over the generations'.

There has been much interest in *Gadaa* as a form of traditional African democracy. Legesse has written: 'what is astonishing about this cultural tradition is how far Oromos have gone to ensure that power does not fall into the hands of war chiefs and despots. They achieve this goal by creating a system of checks and balances that is at least as complex as the systems we find in Western democracies' (1987: 2). *Gadaa* has three main ways of avoiding subordination and

exploitation: periodic succession, balanced opposition, and power sharing (Legesse, 1987), each of which can be found in the Karrayyu system.

Each eight-year term of leadership has two co-existing *Gadaa* classes called *Dori* and *Rubo*. The *Gadaa* class exercising leadership during a given eight-year period is known as *Dori/ Dorriyo*. During the same term, the generation-set that comes two *Gadaa* classes after the one in power, will be preparing itself to take over the role of leadership sixteen years later. This preparatory stage and the particular *Gadaa* class undergoing the initiation rites in connection with it, as well as the ceremony which institutionalises that class into the system, is referred to as *Rubo*. 'During any given *Gadaa* period of eight years, two groups always co-exist, one as *Dori*, actually exercising power, and the other *Rubo*, undergoing a period of initiation as a preparatory stage to the assumption of the responsibilities when its term arrives' (Frejaqcues, 2003: 113).

There is also a partial transfer of power that happens when the current group in power has only two years left. In the transfer ceremony the group who are taking partial power are referred to as '*Goobiyyoo*' meaning 'young bulls'. Within this two years the recruits prepare for the time they will acquire full power, they arrange meetings, discuss issues affecting the community, and develop policies and strategies. After eight years the full handover ceremony takes place, and those who were '*Goobiyyoo*' become '*Dorriyoo*' and take power. At the same time there are two groups exchanging the *Rubo* position. This system of giving and taking power ensures that at no point is power wholly transferred to one *tuuta*.

In addition the same *Gadaa* related practices and rituals are carried out independently by the two moieties, *Dullacha* and *Baaso*.. Due to the *angafa* status *Dullacha* is always one year ahead of *Baaso* in the start and completion of its *Gadaa* terms and practices. *Dirmaajii tuuta* is currently ruling and *Melba tuuta* will take power next. *Dullacha* completed the partial transfer of power ceremony in Jan 2009 and *Baaso* made the partial transfer in Jan 2010. *Melba Dullacha* took power completely in Jan 2011, *Melba Baaso* in Jan 2012. The two, despite being independent, support each another during times of need, and assemblies (kora) are held between *Gadaa* leaders from both sides. Matters affecting both include conflict with neighbouring groups, prolongued drought, ceremonies marking the handover of *Gadaa*

leadership, and violation of *Gadaa* rules. The council is attended by elders and *Gadaa* leaders of both *Dullacha* and *Baaso*, but is led by the *Abba Bokku* of *Dullacha* by virtue of his *angafa* (elder/senior) status.

Certain men hold special positions within the *Gadaa* system, but they must be born at the right time, one whole *Gadaa* cycle after their father. As Frejaques (2003: 99) writes:

> 'Those children who are born in step with *Gadaa*, that is those whose age is appropriate for their generation set and age grade are given priority over the others, at least in terms of being official representatives of their group. It is primarily among these men that the official *Gadaa* functions will be distributed, and it is also these men who are signalled out as the legitimate bearers of the ideal social organisation that insures and assures the harmonious relationships between men and the spiritual world'.

So although all members of a *tuuta* are considered to be ruling, power can only be held by sons of those who have completed a *Gadaa* cycle. Opportunity to hold Gadaa positions is increasingly rare due to disruptions to age grades. Helland (1996: 138) writes about the affect this has had on the Borana:

> 'All Borana belong to *luba*, but a large part of the population are born into their respective *luba* too late to take part in the public *Gadaa* observances when their *luba* is charged with this responsibility. People born into the *luba* after it has completed its obligations in the *Gadaa* cycle are known as *ilman jarsa* - 'the sons of old men', in distinction to the *ilman korma* - 'the sons of bulls' who are born prior to this point in time'.

Gosa affiliation also influences one's position in the *Gadaa* system. One of the key positions in the Karrayyu *Gadaa* is that of *Abba Bokku*, which translates to 'father of the sceptre'. He is responsible for the spiritual and ritual aspects of *Gadaa*. The *Bokku* is the stick or sceptre which is key to *Gadaa* and ritual life. It is made from *Ejersa* (wild olive). There are specific rules that must be followed when collecting the *Bokku*. Shinko, a Karrayyu herder, describes his memories of this process:

> 'I remember forty years ago when I was a boy we moved with the family on horseback to collect '*Bokku magarsuu*'. After you cut the part of the tree you want, the parts of the tree that have been cut are reconnected to the tree using honey and *qumbii (incense)'*. The tree heals and grows, but the *Bokku* can never be cut from

> that part of the tree again. After it has been cut the *Bokku* is covered with a cloth called *sabbata*, it should not be protected from people's eyes. The body of the *Bokku* is shaped until it is smooth. The *Abba Bokku* returns it home on horse back holding it over his chest like a baby and hangs it inside the house. The next day they take it outside to prepare the house, and again it must not touch the ground. It is placed on a large *erbe* (skin) under a tree. *Sakayyuu* (metal bracelets) and *sabbata* (belt) are put on the *Bokku* to decorate it. Women must not touch the *Bokku* even when it needs to be moved. They hang it on a tree until a place is prepared for it inside the house. The *Bokku* must not be alone, it must be with people always'.

Other Oromo groups, such as the Booran, are governed by two separate but inter-linking institutions, *Gadaa* and *Qaallu* (Megerssa, 1995). This represents the 'principle of the balanced opposition of all things which gives rise to the separation of secular (based on the *Gadaa* institution) and religious power (based on the *Qaallu* institution). Secular officials oversee the rule of law (*seera*), whilst religious elders are charged with maintaining the ideal of peace (*nagaa*) in society.' (Kassam, 2005: 107). The *Abba Gadaa* (father of *Gadaa*) is a political figure and is elected every eight years, whereas the *Qaallu* is a religious leader whose position is handed down from father to son. The Karrayyu have *Abba Bokku* and *Qaallu*, but the *Abba Bokku'*s role is prominent, and is almost a mixture of *Abba Gadaa* and *Qaallu*. The position is inherited rather than elected and passes within families from father to eldest son down the generations. The *Abba Bokku* of *Dullacha* always comes from the *Dayyuu gosa* and *Yayya balbala*, the *Abba Bokku* of *Baaso* comes from *Dhaasu gosa* and *Loyya balbala*. The *Qaallu* still play a role and oversee the peaceful transition of power from one *tuuta* to another by blessing both the outgoing and incoming *tuutas*. The *Qaallu* ensures is therefore still an important presence at *Gadaa* meetings which shows that *Gadaa* is still linked to the traditional religion.

It is believed that adaptations to the role of *Abba Bokku* resulted from past disruptions to Karrayyu *Gadaa*. Oral tradition refers to a time when *Gadaa* stopped due to drought because the Karrayyu were forced to migrate to different areas to survive. Once conditions improved they returned and tried to re-establish their society but certain traditions were lost or weakened because many of the elders had died. Knowledge of the *Gadaa* system in particular had to be re-started from the memories and ideas that had been handed down through families by word of mouth.

> 'The second *Gadaa* was done by elders who did not know what it was like before. During this time the one with power was *Abba Bokku* and *Abba Gadaa* became unknown. Originally *Bokku* passed from generation to generation through family but *Abba Gadaa* were elected regularly for each period of power. The power of *Abba Bokku* was less then power of *Abba Gadaa* so the *Abba Bokku* refused not to elect an *Abba Gadaa* and wanted to have both powers for himself. Members of the society were afraid and left electing *Abba Gadaa*. So today the *Abba Bokku* has both powers for himself. But the flow of power from one *tuuta* to another and the length of time of power is the same as the original one. (Haji Musa, Karrayyu elder)

The power of *Abba Bokku* begins from the time of *Rubo*, before this he is the same as other members of the community. From the time his *tuuta* begins *Rubo* he begins acting as a kind of *Qaallu*. *Qumbi* (incense) is put into his mouth by *Warra Jilaa* and *Qaallu* (spiritual leaders) and from that time he should adhere to food taboos. He is not allowed to drink the milk or eat the meat of camels or wild animals, which is similar to the food restrictions that apply to the *Qaallu*. This is in preparation for when the group takes power and he will hold the *Bokku*. The *Abba Bokku* only holds this position for the time that his *tuuta* has power, after which time it is handed over.

When *Gadaa* is attained, all male members of the *tuuta* who hold an official position, their families and herds move to a newly prepared village, referred to as '*biyya Gabalaa*' (Figure 35). Before this happens there is a meeting called *Tarree* in which members of each *gosa* select who will move to the *Gabalaa* after the exchange of power ceremony. The dates of the handover ceremony and movement to the *Gabalaa* are decided according to the time of year and the moon. Movement for the *Gadaa* transfer ceremony has its own time. It should take place after the darkest month (*dukkana*). The elders discuss the specific day the members should move, usually on the fourth or sixth day of the moon's appearance. This can only be decided by the agreement of the *Gabalaa* elders. On that fourth or sixth day, after the moon has appeared, preparations such as construction of *galma* (ritual houses) and fences for the cattle takes place. Then for one *addeessa* (one cycle) the *Gabalaa* stays at the ceremonial site. This is timed to take place between crescent and full moon, while the sky is shining, in the hope that the *Gadaa* year will be bright. After the disappearance of the moon they return home. *Bokku* is cut and prepared once the full handover ceremony is complete and the new group has taken power.

Figure 35: Gabalaa village, Baaso moiety. Source: Author

One must be married to take a position in the *Gabalaa*, which indicates the significance of marriage in the Karrayyu social system. However, as more Karrayyu attend school and marry later it is increasingly common for eligible members to move to the *Gabalaa* with their parents. Every house in the *Gabalaa* is positioned according to a specific order; each family has a place according to the seniority of their *gosa*, and genealogical position. The elder *gosa* sits at the left hand side of the house of the *Abba Bokku*, who is on the right to indicate his *angafa* (senior/ elder) position. When the *Gadaa* system was disrupted these positions were also affected. From *Dullacha* moiety the family that traditionally held the *Bokku* in the past no longer carry it today. During the time of drought the family was forced to move from the area, they left the *Bokku* with another family because the *Bokku* cannot be left alone. When the family came back and tried to claim the *Bokku*, they were refused. This can be seen in the order of the *Gabalaa*, as the house of the family who should hold the *Bokku* occupies a senior position to that of the family who took over and currently hold the *Bokku*. The *Gabalaa* village only lasts for the time that the *Gadaa* is exercised. When the eight years of power come to an end members leave their communal settlement and return to their previous homes.

Despite disruptions, *Gadaa* still plays an important role in Karrayyu society today and values encouraged by the *Gadaa* system are evident in community decision making processes. The Karrayyu achieve consensus on important community issues through an open assembly. No one person can make decisions alone: issues are debated at length. However, those who can get to the core issue and articulate their arguments well are often influential and well respected. Speech making therefore, assumes major importance in the Karrayyu way of life (Figure 36). As Turton (1992) observes of the Mursi, oratory is learned by imitation and practice from an early age and as a consequence is especially well developed amongst the elders. In Karrayyu public meetings a person do not speak alone, they are usually accompanied by a 'supporter' who repeats important points and gives encouragement. This is both a sign of respect and shows that the person is being listened to.

Figure 36: Elder making a speech at a meeting. Source: Author

Different assemblies deal with different issues. The three main levels are *kora gosa* (clan meeting), *kora tuuta* (*Gadaa* group meeting) and *kora biyya* (community meeting). *Kora gosa* is the lowest level of decision making and only includes *gosa* members, although an elder from outside of the *gosa* is needed to act as an independent adjudicator in the case of punishments. *Kora tuuta* concerns only the members of a specific *tuuta* (Figure 37). Such meetings can be

held whether the *tuuta* is currently in power or not and can include members from outside the *tuuta* to act as mediators; these can be *Qaallu* or *Abba Bokku* depending on the issue. The *kora biyya* is an open meeting that concerns all members of the community. The known elders of the community should be present, including *warra aduu* (ruling *gadaa* group), *Qaallu* and *Jilaa* (spiritual leaders). Disputes should be settled amicably at such meetings and elders play a key role. As Tablino (1999: 246) has written regarding the Gabra Oromo 'The reliance on past experience to serve as a model for present action means that whoever has lived longer, knows more. This is the very practical reason for the importance of the elders, for the respect and honour given them'.

Figure 37: Karrayyu men gathered for a *tuuta* meeting. Source: Author

Although the Karrayyu *Gadaa* system has undergone changes and disruptions this should not undermine its importance. '*Gadaa* as a principle of social organisation is experienced and expressed by different Oromo groups in different ways. These variations help us understand the ways through which the people who follow *Gadaa* adapt to the new and different political, social and economic circumstances affecting their lives' (Frejaques, 2003: 306). This is particularly important for the Karrayyu, in light of the changes they are currently experiencing.

Women's roles in Gadaa

The *Gadaa* system is often portrayed as egalitarian and democratic, but not all people experience it in this way, including the victims of Oromo expansionary campaigns. Women's roles in *Gadaa* is also often subject to criticism. It is considered shameful for Karrayyu women to attend *Gadaa* meetings and as such they have a limited role in decision making processes affecting the wider community. Women can make their feelings known though male family members, but they are actively excluded from politico-military structures (Legesse, 1973). Qumbi (1989) observes that women are excluded because 'The very old, the very young and all women in the *Gadaa* system are considered innocent and peace-loving' (cited in Kumsa, 1997: 119), therefore *Gadaa* dictates a deep divide between the sexes (Kumsa, 1997).

Women do, however, play a key role in *Gadaa* at certain times. The wife of the *Abba Bokku* must be present at the time of the *Gadaa* handover rituals. The praying that takes place the night before the transfer ceremony must be opened by the eldest sister of the *Abba Bokku*. If she is not present then the ceremony cannot take place. Once she opens the songs continue from the eldest sister of each family in order of seniority. The women sing to celebrate their brothers and to show their sorrow at the passing of power. This illustrates that women remain attached to the *tuuta* to which their fathers belong, even after they are married. Women return to their parents' or brothers' home when their *tuuta* comes to power to participate in the celebrations. Transfer ceremonies cannot take place unless all female members are present. Men from the *tuuta* buy their sisters and daughters new clothes and other gifts. If a woman is not satisfied with the gifts she can refuse to enter the ceremonial site. In this case men have to provide her with more gifts and will spend much time pleading with her. No ceremony can begin before the women enter, and no one is allowed to enter before them. During *Gadaa* ceremonies women are responsible for organising food in the *galmas* (ceremonial houses). (Figure 38).

Frejaques believes this emphasises the control of men over women but, although women may have a limited role in public decision making processes, it can be argued that their prominence during such rituals indicates the important role and respect accorded to women in other spheres of social life. It has also been suggested that in the past there were parallel female-oriented

institutions to *Gadaa* which actively excluded men, in keeping with the dual organisation of Oromo societies. Van Koppen *et al.* (2007) highlight the importance of the *Atete* and *Siiqqee* institutions which have been documented across a range of Oromo groups (Kumsa, 1997; Hussein, 2004; Ostebo, 2009; Debsu, 2009). Oromo women practice *Atete,* a ritual associated with female divinity, as a way of strengthening their solidarity. The *Atete* ritual will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. Kumsa (1997) argues that the *siiqqee* (marriage stick) was the weapon by which Oromo women fought for their rights, which are stipulated in *Gadaa* laws, in *heera*, and in the traditional religious and ritual practices. Kelly (1992) also observes parallel organisations known as *gaas eyba* among the Orma Oromo of Kenya.

Figure 38: Women in *galma* during *Gadaa* ceremony. Source: Author

Oromo believe that society collapses unless a balance is struck between the power of male and female. Oromo scholars argue that *Gadaa* therefore effectively enforces a gender-based division of society which ideally forms two separate but equally important and interdependent domains. Balancing the domains of women and men and maintaining their interdependence has been a precondition for keeping peace between the sexes and for promoting *safu* (respect) in society. Whereas in the past the Gadaa system served as to balance, regulate, and safeguard these domains it is apparent that many of these institutions have been undermined as the *Gadaa*

system has weakened and as external forces have intervened. Kumsa (1997: 133-34) argues that colonialism, the imposition of feudalism and the introduction of Islam and Christianity has done much to alter Oromo values and to weaken the role and rights of women.

***Cidha* Video**

Members of the community were keen to record the *Gadaa* system. This was immensely challenging as *Gadaa* is complex and many of its activities are difficult to record, partly because they take place at set times. Participants decided to record one of the key *Gadaa* ceremonies taking place during the fieldwork period: the partial transfer of power from *Dirmaajii Baaso* to *Melba Baaso*.

Although I attended the *Cidha* ceremony I could not participate in all aspects. Viewing the video gave me an overview of the ceremony and a greater understanding of the timing of key rituals, the spatial layout of the ceremonial site, and drew my attention to symbolic aspects. The video hopefully gives the reader a visual reference point.

The Cidha ceremony was also filmed by film crews from Addis for ETV which caused a degree of upset among community members. The noise of generators and the artificial lighting used by the Addis filmmakers disturbed the ceremony and the atmosphere. There was a sense that the filmmakers had no respect for community members and were desperate to get the images they needed with little regard for the event itself. The filmmakers were also captured on the participants video footage who were annoyed that they disturbed the image, particularly because their style of dress was incongruous with the ceremony, and they were duly edited out.

The video does not feature much explanation or subtitles. It was difficult to get detailed explanations of the *Cidha* ceremony from the younger Karrayyu participants and when the edited video was initially shown to elders the arrangement was criticised for being in the wrong order which suggests that the youngsters who edited the footage did not have the same detailed knowledge. The editing process therefore added to both my knowledge and theirs, which participants viewed as a significant benefit of the PV process.

Marriage

Participants emphasised how important marriage, or *fuudha fi heeruma,* is for Karrayyu society. Marriage continues the idea of duality that features throughout Oromo culture. Haji Musa, an elder, explained:

> 'Everything works in pairs. If we compare domestic animals with wild animals, all of them have their similarities. Cattle are similar with *saalaa* (oryx), the camel is similar with *satawwaa*/*guguftoo* (giraffe), the donkey is similar with *goljaa* (warthog), the dog is similar with *jeedalloo* (fox). When we come to the culture everything is also in pairs. *Fuudhaa fi Heeruma* go together, they are two but they come together as one and encourage respect'.

Kassam and Megerssa (1996: 161) write in reference to Oromo culture: 'Marriage forms part of a collective change in status and is viewed as one of the highest social achievements for both men and women. It is also a prerequisite to full participation in the ritual and religious life'. There are strict rules relating to marriage. As mentioned earlier, it is forbidden to marry within one's *gosa*. For example, from *Torban Ilu*, members of the three *balbalas* of *Dhaasuu* cannot marry with each other (see Figure 34). Likewise members of the four *balbalas* of *Abrii* cannot marry one another. But people from *Dhaasuu* can marry people from *Abrii* and vice versa. One is also not allowed to marry someone who is not their equal within their *tuuta (*Gadaa *grade*), even if they are from different *gosas.*

The Karrayyu practice cross-cousin marriage or *dula*. Cousins eligible for marriage are referred to as *dubri*. Cousins on the mother's side are preferable to those from the father's side. For example, men cannot marry from the side of their father, for example the father's brothers children, but they can marry the children of their father's sister. This is partly because men are considered to carry the blood line, whereas women are from 'outside'. In wedding ceremonies there is priority given for the bride's family on the mother's side, particularly the mother of the bride's elder brother (*eesuma*). The uncle plays a great role. Although first cousin marriage is practised, it is forbidden to marry second cousins; they are called '*dhiigayyoo*' meaning 'my blood'. Often matches are made when children are very young and they are often familiarised with the family they will marry into. However, there are strict rules governing these

interactions and even if a woman knows her future husband it is considered shameful for her to be seen talking to him in public before marriage.

The decision to marry is not a personal one. It is made in accordance with the norms of society and within the confines of the *Gadaa* institution. The choice of first wife rests with the groom's parents who negotiate with the bride's parents. Both men and women are often unwilling to marry because it marks the beginning of responsibility and the end of their youth and freedom. Kassam & Megerssa (1996) note that marriage is seen as a kind of death. This is mirrored in accounts of marriage from the life stories of Karrayyu men and women. Bulga Jilo said:

> 'When I was a young man the idea of marriage was not in my mind. We preferred to just comb our hair in the traditional way, treat our hair with butter, find nice women and cheat animals from our enemies. Even if our families asked us to marry we said no, because if we married we would miss all these things, we would no longer be relaxed and free. I married when I was around 30 years old'.

Dido Bose, a young wife and mother, said,

> 'When I got married it seemed to me like a punishment from my own parents because I didn't really know my husband, his character and his background. Marriage meant I couldn't be free like when I was a girl. I couldn't go for *ragadaa* (dancing) but my husband could do whatever he wanted'.

Until he marries, a young man spends most of his time outside the home accompanying cattle or camels. Upon marriage he settles down to domestic life within the homestead. He becomes a full member of society through his wife, and is involved in the political affairs of the community. An Oromo man does not have the right to form an independent household until he has a wife. After his marriage he will be known as *abba warra*, or 'father of the household.' As Kassam and Megerssa (1996) document, the transformation is marked by the acquisition of a personal marriage stick. In Karrayyu culture the male marriage stick is called *dhibaayuu*, cut from a tree called *Leedi.* It is a symbol of masculinity and a man's position as a husband. Similarly, on the day of her marriage, a young woman passes from girlhood to womanhood and this change in status is marked through her marriage stick. In Karrayyu culture this is called *sinqee* (or *siiqqee* among other Oromo groups). She will now be known as *haada warra* or 'mother of the household'. *Sinqee* is made from *Harooreessa*; this tree has many branches and

the selection of this tree is to wish the bride many children. These sticks are a 'symbol of the new twig ... about to start on the genealogical tree' (Bartels, 1983: 63).

Figure 39: Newly married couple with *Siiqqee* and *Dhibaayu.* Source: Author

A wife keeps both her *sinqee* and her husband's *dhibaayuu* (Figure 39) in a place near the fire where she cooks, apart from when they are used for ritual occasions. The sticks are covered in butter and over time become blackened with smoke. The sticks are used for praying and play an important role in rituals. Once married, when a woman leaves her husband's home in peace, she takes her *sinqee* with her. But, if there is a problem in the household or a death she leaves her *sinqee* behind. The *sinqee* therefore serves as a means of communication for women. Kumsa (1997) has written much about the role of the *siiqqee* in Oromo culture, particularly its role in maintaining the rights of women.

Cattle are an important part of traditional Oromo marriage. The father of the boy is required to make a payment of cattle, or bridewealth, defined in *heera* as six cattle (*jayan jabbii qaraxaa*). In order to obtain the cattle required for bridewealth (*dhayii*), men often rely on contributions

from members of their *gosa*. Cattle contributed by the family of the groom go to the family and kin members of the bride. Cattle therefore play a key role in creating strong group and personal alliances, 'Bridewealth is the sign and seal of these relationships' (Edjeta, 2002: 131). A cow received through bridewealth is often named after the bride, as a reminder of her. If the cow produces a lot of calves and contributes to the wealth of the family, the marriage is regarded as a successful one and a sign that there is peace between the families.

After marriage takes place, a young bull is slaughtered, known as *rako*. This is extremely important, and cannot be done with any other animal. This is part of *heera*; the slaughter of the animal marks a woman's position as a wife within Karrayyu society. Jilo Bulga explains, 'The husband can then say to his wife "You are special because you did not come freely but by cattle." Cattle are very important because they bring families together'. Cattle are also used to welcome a bride to her new family. *Argaa* is a gift given to a newly married bride on the day after her wedding by a member of the groom's family. Once married, a woman can own cattle, usually those given by her family on her marriage day. All the husband's cattle are regarded as hers, until he marries again. Generally it is the husband or *abba warra* who controls the cattle and distributes them among members of the family, including his children and additional wives. However, the husband cannot do anything with cattle given to a woman by her parents without her permission.

There is a certain degree of sexual freedom for women once they are married. Before marriage a woman must keep her virginity at all costs, but after marriage she is allowed to have male 'friends' and these can be love matches. I was told by Karrayyu women that there are stages of womanhood. Newly married or fresh brides are considered to be *Baranoo* and traditionally can have relationships with men other than their husband at this stage. It is considered a transition to becoming a mature woman. Hawii, a young unmarried woman, explained:

> 'Fresh women who have recently married stay in their own house. When her husband goes far away to look after the camels the family does not leave someone with her. She can have many men for friendship which is called *hiriyaa*. These women are seen in the community as a model of respect'.

Men can decide to marry again, and in this case they choose their bride and are supported by elders in the negotiations with the bride's parents. The choice to marry again can be based on labour requirements: for example a man with large herds may need extra labour to manage household chores and animals, particularly small stock. A man needs to be wealthy in order to marry more than one wife, and has to ensure that he has enough animals to sustain the entire household. There is often conflict between co-wives and it is said that the decision to take another wife can disturb the peace of the family.

According to *aada Karrayyu* (Karrayyu culture), after their first marriage, men are expected to inherit the wives of brothers or close family members when they die. Traditionally, there are strict rules for wife inheritance. The brother of the deceased person's mother and the eldest of the remaining sons will be first in line to inherit his wife/wives. If the dead man has no brothers though his mother, the eldest son of his father's other wives is the next prospective heir. If he has no brothers the woman/women will be passed to the eldest son of his father's brother. When a man inherits a wife he assumes all sexual, domestic and pastoral rights. Marriage usually takes place approximately one year after the death of the household head. However, children born subsequently will be called after the deceased husband. Widows do have some degree of choice whether to re-marry or not. Older women can be inherited, but can decline sexual relations with their husband. The issue of inheritance is more complicated for younger women as they cannot remain alone or marry someone outside their husband's family. If they do not remarry their opportunity to bear children ends.

Angafa (elder/senior) status is an important feature within the immediate family as well as the *gosa* and *Gadaa* systems. The first wife is regarded as senior to subsequent wives, and the eldest son takes priority over other sons. If a man has two wives, his animals will pass to the elder son of the senior wife when he dies. However, some of these animals should be shared among the other brothers to keep relations smooth. Even though the eldest son takes priority, all sons are important and give support to the father and to one another. The youngest son plays an important role because he is the last to remain at home with his parents. He gives support, especially during his parents' old age. When the youngest son marries, his wife often acts as a daughter for the mother and the families often combine. The father advises the eldest son to lead by example and to treat his brothers fairly, the younger sons are similarly advised to ensure

peace. The leader of the family is responsible, in the eyes of the wider community, for how family members are treated and for the family's reputation. Sharing is particularly important. If a person is selfish it affects relationships and has an effect on the wider family, *gosa* (clan) and community.

Fuudha fi Heeruma Video

This video documents a traditional Karrayyu marriage between a young couple. Participants used two separate cameras to film the bride's preparations (*Heeruma*) and the groom's preparations (*Fuudha*), and then one camera as the two parties join each other for the final stages of the ceremony (*Fuudha fi Heeruma*). The bride was filmed by her older brother, and the groom was filmed by a close friend. The video focuses on the ritual and symbolic practices throughout the marriage ceremony which prepare the couple for married life and give them a position within the culture and the community.

The video highlights the discrepancy between bridewealth stated in *heera* and reality. One Karrayyu elder explained 'When a man marries there is a duty expected from you, there is a certain amount you should pay to the bride's family. In *heera* this payment is stated as *jahaa jabii qaraxaa* (the six calves of dowry)'. However, this amount is often no longer possible due to declining cattle numbers. The video shows that the number six is still significant, in this case three calves and three clothes have replaced the six calves. Numbers and colours have symbolic significance in many aspects of Karrayyu culture.

The video shows a vehicle, rather than the traditional horses or mules, being used for transportation. Horses and mules are still an important part of marriage ceremonies among the Oromo I spent time with in north Shoa, and Karrayyu participants told me that horses were traditionally a key part of their culture. People laughed when I asked whether anyone in the community still used them for marriage ceremonies; mules and horses at weddings are now seen as backward. Vehicles were kept in the wedding videos, rather than being edited out, because cars are seen as status symbols and a sign of wealth.

Filming of the wedding ceremony took place over three days. The bride can be seen crying throughout the video and is very weak in the final scenes. Traditionally the bride is expected to show her unhappiness at marriage and cries during her marriage preparations and during the ceremony itself. Crying reaches a climax when she is removed from her parents' house. The video provoked an emotional response on the part of women, they watched with tears streaming down their faces, because the video evoked memories of their own wedding days. People found it very difficult listening to the bride's distress, particularly her brother who helped to edit the footage. Despite the fact that girls are expected to cry on their wedding day, people were surprised by her behaviour. I was told that the bride knew the groom and his family before she got married. It was therefore difficult to gauge to what degree her crying is performative, or an indication of genuine distress.

Waaqeffata

Traditional Karrayyu religion is *Waaqeffata*, a monotheistic religion based on belief in a supreme being called '*Waaqa*'. Bartels (1989: 14) notes:

> 'To the Oromo, the traditional divinity is both one and, at the same time, also many. The supreme being whom they call *Waaqa* (sky/God), is the creator of all things and the source of all life ... *Waaqa* has appointed to every being its own place in a cosmic order of which he is also the guardian. *Waaqa*'s creative and ordering activity manifests itself in all things. It manifests itself in the special characteristics of every species of animals. It is manifested also in the individual characteristics of every man, of each plant and each animal taken singly. In this particularized form *Waaqa*'s creative activity is called *ayyaana*.'

Kassam (2005: 107) described *ayyaana* as 'an embodiment of the divine power that is manifested in all living creatures and determines their earthly destiny'. *Ayyaana* are associated with a range of Karrayyu ceremonies: *Atete, Hirsii*, *Gamesssa*, *Biyyoo*, *Jinfuu*, *Hujufa*, *Jaari.* These rituals are conducted by specific families and/or different groups at different times. Some of these ceremonies are thought to have been adopted from other ethnic groups; for example words in *Jaari* ritual songs indicate that the ceremony has perhaps come from Amhara region.

Of all the religious ceremonies of the Karrayyu, the *Atete* ritual, which is associated with female divinity, is considered *angafa* (elder/senior) to all the other *ayyaana* rituals. The seniority accorded to *Atete* indicates the place women traditionally hold in the religious and cultural philosophy of the Oromo. Hussein writes that 'the *Atete* practice by women is one part of a belief system that women are intermediary figures between *Waaq*' (2004: 111). Women play a prominent role in *Waaqeffata* rituals and are accorded great respect during times of ritual practice. This can be seen in the fact that they are placed on the right hand side to men, showing that they are considered to be *angafa*. This is also stipulated in *heera* (law). Men do not play an active role, they support and encourage, while women take the lead.

Figure 40: Karrayyu women travelling to a sacred site for prayer. Source: Author

Some suggest that *Atete* has a political function and was 'used by Oromo women to counter male atrocities and to enforce religious sanctions against related misbehaviours' (Hussein, 2004: 112-3). There is a belief that '*Waaqa* listens to women's desires and instantly responds' (ibid.: 13). Women's prayers are used to counter harsh ecological conditions such as drought and disease, and other social crises such as conflict. Men urge women to pray in order to avert problems (Figure 40). Women's role in the defence of the community can be illustrated using the example of the women from *Tootayyaa* clan of *Dullacha* moiety. These women play an important role in cursing and warding off enemies, disease or other difficulties through

prayer. Frejaques writes that they have 'the power to curse more strongly and to cause much more harm than any other Kereyu (sic) individual. When Kereyu (sic) men want to curse an enemy they will buy clothes and jewellery for the *Tootayya* girls and ask them to use their special powers' (2003: 150). They also have the power to heal. These ritual practices are difficult to document because they are closely guarded by women. Without witnessing or understanding these aspects of community life one may misunderstand the importance of women's roles.

Karrayyu men and women alike devote a significant part of their day to prayers and blessings which permeate daily routines. Men lead prayers over coffee ceremonies that are held at times of the day when all family members are present. Prayers are said by women after making butter, and when they release cattle in the morning. The following prayer is an example of a prayer said by women when they release cattle for grazing. It represents women's relationship and connection with cattle, milk and *Waaqa*:

Ililii li li li.....	
Yaa Waaqi ka nagayaan bulchite	*Waaqa*, the One who gives a peaceful night for us
Na nagayaan nu oolchi	Make the day peaceful
Mucha oolee nu obaaftee	The milk that is in the breast of the animals in the day we have in the night
Mucha bule nu obaasi	The milk that is in the breast of the animals in the night we have in the day
Yaa looniinu	You cattle
Bobba'aa galaa	Go and come back in peace
Dheedaa hoofaalaa	Graze and be safe
Biyyi isin oltan	The place where you stay in the day
Biyya galamsoo daayoo	The place of *Galamsoo daayo* (holy place for cattle)
Ka oolliyaan odee sumude	The one *Oolliyaa* finds and brands
Qorro'oondiida	I wish the hill to be flat
Maagan gundeelcha	Snake like the trunk of the tree
Hiddi dhaallaaduu	Roots like *dhaallaaduu* (easily broken)
Gaanni habaso	Have hot mating
Kormi xinxinaa	Make the bull successful
Madii kutuba	Have good water that encourages health
Lolan heewwana	Let the rain be good for your body
Biyya isin ooltan	The place where you stay
Inni isin wajjiin haa oolu	Let Him (*Waaqa*) be with you
Kan isin tiksumullee innin haatissu	Save you and your lookers
Bobbae'aa didaa mul'adha (guutaa)	Go and be full
Galaa liisae tullaay'aa	Come back in peace and find the resting place

In these prayers and blessings there is a common appeal for *nagaa* or peace: as Frejaques has written 'Kereyu (sic) people's praying together is experienced as a public statement of peace' (2003: 145). Communal prayer ensures the continuance of the community and peaceful relations: 'the words of prayers, blessing and greetings continuously create and recreate connections between the organizational and the cosmological structures' (Baxter, 1990: 247). Prayers for peace are not only for people but also for animals, settlements and the land (Bartels, 1983).

Waaqeffata is closely related to the natural world. Tablino has written about the Gabra Oromo: 'Gabra religion is based on nature, on the concept that God works though nature. The messages of God are not wordy revelations; they are the rains, the seasons, the rhythm of time, the birth of children, death, illness, the prospering of people and animals. All these are how the Gabra know God' (1999: 261). Karrayyu pray to *Waaqa* at sites believed to be particularly blessed; these sites include certain tree species such as *Oda*, at specific lakes and water points and on the top of certain hills and mountains. As Fantalle Gile explained:

> 'We collect wet grasses and go to the rivers and lakes to pray for the wetness of our country, people and animals, to save them from drought. We pray under trees like *Odaa* because *Odaa* is wet, has milky sap and bears fruit upon its body. We pray for our chance to be like that tree. We go to the mountains and hills to pray for our life and history to be strong, developed and known like the high places.'

It is believed that certain places in the natural environment have their own *ayyaana* (spirit) and there are different families which are responsible for taking care of these places. Haji Kasaru explained:

> 'In our country every *malka* has its own *Qaallu*. Every lake (*hara)* and watering place (*malka*) has people who are responsible for worshipping there. *Malka Hawash* used to have its own spirit (*afaan*). People slaughtered *korma* (bull) and *dullacha* (old cow) on this side of the river and on the other side. People would gather and sit at the side of the river to worship'.

These ways of praying do not make the Oromo animists, contrary to some explanations. Haji Musa states:

> 'There are people who believe that Oromo pray to the river, but this is not true. Oromo people have a reason for praying **at** the river but we do not pray **to** it. We do this because the first day the Oromo people prayed at a river, *Waaqa* heard us and we got success. The *Malkaas* are wet all the time so we also wish this for our lives and for our animals'.

There are a range of spiritual leaders in Karrayyu society, but the main religious and spiritual leaders of the community are the *Qaallu* who are responsible for conducting sacrifices and directing prayers. In Karrayyu oral tradition is said that all *Qaallus* come from the same root. There are *Qaallus* in both *Dullacha* and *Baaso* but not from all *balbalas*. For the *Dullacha* moiety *Qaallu* can only come from *Mulaataa* and *Gurraachu gosas*, and for the *Baaso* moiety from *Kooyye gosa*. The *Qaallu* position is passed on through the family, and any child of a *Qaallu* family can become a *Qaallu*. This includes both males and females, who are referred to as *Qalitii*, and even extends to women who marry into the family.

Qaallu are considered responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of the society and are therefore expected to uphold certain norms. Robee Jibituu, a female elder, explained: 'All Oromos have rules regarding things they must not do, but those of the *Qaallu* are quite different. Only God can judge them'. The rules that a *Qaallu* is expected to adhere to are explained by Shinko, a Karrayyu herder, as follows:

> '*Qaallu* should never hunt someone's wife, he never cheats anyone's property. He is the one who does not dig the ground for burial when someone dies. He never consumes the meat of wild animals, camels or their milk. He never passes the dried trees dying on the ground. There is an insect called *Dhubbaa* (similar to ants). It is forbidden for *Qaallu* to pass over such insects on the ground. He has to keep away from anything considered to be a sin by the community. If someone's animals come to his fence with his own he has to look for the owner and return them. He prefers to sit under the tree's shadow. *Qaallu* never go into the house of anyone who has the blood of Oromo on their hands, whether the ransom (*guma*) has been paid or not'.

Qaallu must always avoid conflict and maintain peace; they must respect others and in turn others must respect them. It is believed that because the *Qaallu* practises such behaviour anything they ask *Waaqa* on behalf of the community is answered. Robee Jibitu, a female elder, describes the role of the *Qaallu* in the following way:

> ‘At the time when the people face difficulty due to rain shortage, *Qaallu* and *Bokku* are vital to pray to *Waaqa*a for answers. The important people in the society such as *Qaallu* and *Bokku* have the responsibility to make the dry into wet, *bona* into *gana*. They are the people who settle the disputes and wars. The *Qaallu* never does such things by himself, rather it is the people who encourage him to pray'.

As a demonstration of the *Qaallu*'s relationship with *Waaqa*, the *Qaallu* of the Karrayyu were not buried in the same way as ordinary men.

> 'When such a man died the dead body was covered with a black cloth called '*ruufa*' and taken to the cattle corral. A cloud came from the sky and the body was taken back to *Waaqa*. The elders who are alive today are witnesses to this. It was in very recent years that the people began to bury the *Qaallu* when they died. After the death of a *Qaallu* called Sunnee the *Qaallu*s were no longer taken by *Waaqa*. They covered the dead body and waited for him to be taken but nothing came from the sky. Starting from that day on *Qaallu*s are buried as ordinary men'.

Karrayyu elders say the reason the body of the *Qaallu* are no longer taken is because they have broken cultural norms and done something which was forbidden. It is taken as a sign of the changes that have occurred within Karrayyu society that even the *Qaallus* no longer adhere to the traditional norms.

***Korma Qaluu* Video**

This video focuses on the Korma *Qaluu* ritual or prayer for rain, performed by the *Baaso* moiety at the *Gabalaa* village. During fieldwork I lived mainly with members of the *Baaso* moiety, most of whom have converted to Islam. I therefore had limited opportunities to witness traditional religious ceremonies. I did, however, find that even among Muslim families many, particularly women, continue to practice aspects of the traditional religion. This illustrates the complex dynamic between what people say and what they do. It was considered extremely important to document the traditional religious activities.

Before the video was shot there had been prolonged drought. One of the elders insisted that the cattle were brought to the *Gabalaa* for the rain ceremony to take place. The young men were reluctant and wanted to move the cattle to another area to search for better grazing, perhaps because their belief in the efficacy of such rituals has been shaken. After protracted negotiations and discussions they brought the cattle back to the Gabalaa and the ceremony was performed. That night there was heavy rain.

Through the editing process I became aware that the video contained things that may not have been intended by the filmmakers, but which added to my understanding. 'What he doesn't see, or what he unknowingly lets slip into a picture, or fails to edit out can spotlight his vulnerableness and also make a contribution to knowledge' (Steele, 1962: 48)

This video contains footage of the *Abba Bokku* being scolded by his son for mistakenly covering the head of the Bokku. In addition Boru, who can be seen at the end of the film collecting components for a mixture used at the end of the ceremony, later told me he got it wrong because it was his first time. This led to enquiries about erosions of knowledge which was extremely valuable from a research point of view but the ability of film to highlight people’s vulnerabilities has certain dangers for participants which I am not sure they are fully aware of.

Chapter Seven: Pastoralism & Karrayyu Identity

Pastoralism is defined in many ways but is generally understood to be a mode of living that is reliant on animals and animal products. For pastoralists it is more than just a livelihood or mode of production: ‘It is a highly imaginative and original system of intricate modes of social organisation and patterns of culture. It is a mode of perception.’ (Markakis, 2004: 14). Pastoralism is fundamentally important to Karrayyu culture and identity. 'The contribution of animals to our Karrayyu identity is great. That is why we give animals as gifts to those whom we adopt, to make them pastoralists like us'.

Migration

Fantalle *woreda* has a semi-arid climate with high temperatures. There is low rainfall and drought is a frequent occurrence. Livestock management in a semi-arid region requires constant or periodic movement to find pasture and is therefore reliant on extensive land use and freedom of movement. The Karrayyu traditional system for managing land and resources has been described as ‘transhumance Pastoralism’; seasonal movement following a regular migratory pattern between dry and wet season grazing areas, with settlements in each area. Karrayyu land (*biyya* Karrayyu*)* was divided into three ecologically differentiated grazing zones. *Ona Gana* was the summer or wet season grazing land. Grazing in this area lasted almost four months from June to the middle of September, the months which receive the highest rainfall. After mid September this area no longer yields sufficient pasture or water; rain stops, grasses no longer grow and temporary water sources dry up. Herds then move to *Ona Birra*, the autumn or dry season grazing land which is used from mid September to December and is connected with ritual activities. This area was a long strand of land on either side of the Hawash River. *Ona Bona* serves as a transitional point between the two zones. Pasture in this area is reserved for winter or dry season grazing and can be used between January and May, depending on conditions. The system is not described in detail here because it has been covered in some depth by other researchers writing about the Karrayyu (see Edjeta 2002, Gebre 2001).

Herding and a high degree of mobility facilitate the effective use of resources depending on the time of year. Patterns of human and livestock movement between these grazing areas is

influenced by the availability of rainfall and pasture. Movement between these areas enables the land to recover and regenerate between the seasons. Migration is particularly suitable for such arid/semi-arid areas and enables community members to be highly adaptive to fluctuating conditions.

***Godansa* Video**

Godansa means migration or movement in *Afaan Oromo*. This video follows one family as they move with their animals from a dry area of land on Fantalle mountain to find better grazing and water in an area near the Awash Park. Although the film was originally intended to show how Karrayyu traditionally migrate, this was not possible due to the changes that have taken place in migration patterns in recent times due to land loss, climate change and population increase. This is explained in more detail in the next chapter. The film footage was edited together and a voice over was added later.

Participants chose to focus on aspects of migration that should be adhered to traditionally, such as conversations between people herding together to decide when and where to move. The video emphasises the communal nature of pastoralism where many activities are performed by groups larger than the immediate family. Participants were keen to emphasise throughout the research that the Karrayyu way of life relies on, and is strengthened by, collective efforts. For example, the range of knowledge available to any one family is limited, including knowledge of pasture and variations in local conditions, and is therefore strengthened by access to a common pool of knowledge and communal herding activities.

The video shows a woman praying before the cattle are released (see cattle prayer on page 183-4) which highlights the interconnectedness between cattle, women and Waaqeffata. It also shows the roles designated according to age, gender and animal types. The men can be seen with the cattle, the younger children with the small stock and the women pack the home and move with the donkeys.

Footage of women packing donkeys was considered to be important, and women can be seen using traditional rope which is becoming increasingly rare. Participants pointed out that the way the women pack the donkeys is the same way they traditionally packed camels. They use the same system but have adapted it to a different animal. The use of donkeys as pack animals is seen as a sign of deterioration of Karrayyu traditions, and the environment.

The footage shows how much cattle deteriorate during a drought period, and aims to show how quickly they can recover when they have access to sufficient grazing and water. The landscape and the condition of the cattle at the end of the film is in marked contrast to the beginning. Community reactions to the film were interesting because they were just as excited to see their animals on film as they were to see fellow community members. People watching the film recognised and could name the animals that were featured, and spoke about them as individuals. A Western audience would react to the same footage very differently.

Time and Seasonality

Seasonality is a crucial as all activities follow the pattern of the rainy and dry seasons. Rainfall usually occurs during two distinct rainy seasons, short and long. Pasture quality and quantity improves during the rainy season and deteriorates during the dry season. Awareness of the seasons, and weather patterns, can be seen in the Karrayyu names of the months. There are twelve months; some of the names are unique to the Karrayyu. The adherence to twelve calendar months is noted by other researches working with different Oromo groups. Although some of the names are used by other Oromos they correspond to different months, possibly due to seasonal variation between different regions of Oromia.

For the Karrayyu the month roughly equivalent to January is called *Qorkee;* there is no rain and grazing is far away so calves and old cows often die during this month. *Qorkee* is the name given to the old cows. February and March are called *Abraasaa duraa* and *Abraasaa duubaa* meaning the first and second *Abraasaa*. This is the spring season and the community expect to receive rain during these two months. April is *Qaamuu*, which refers to an insect whose sound is associated with the hot temperature at this time. Another explanation of this name is related

to the environment: *'Qaamofte'* means 'seems dry' because during this month there are no green leaves, and flowers become closed up and shrivelled. May is known as *Buufaa*, and refers to dust storms which have a major impact on pastoralists. From the beginning of the month winds come from Afar region every afternoon and Afar animals come into Karrayyu territory following the winds. From half way through the month the winds switch in the opposite direction so the Karrayyu have to take special care of their animals. This month is also dry with a lack of grass. There is apparently no special meaning for *Waxabajjii* (June), *Adoolessa* (July), *Hagayyoo* (August), and *Birraa* (September), names also used by other Oromo. October is known as *Dhadhamotaa* which means cold. *Qora Cabsoo* (November) is a very cold month. *Qoree* means 'thorn', *Cabuu* means 'break', because thorns break due to extreme cold. *Furmaata* (December) means 'solution', since conditions are expected to improve due to rainfall. Rain is vital at this time, if it fails the problems from November become worse.

Months are based on the cycles of the moon. The word for month is *ji'a*, also the word for moon. The succession of months and days is conceptualized as cyclic with no beginning or end. Days of the month are counted according to the moon. Days 1 to 4 are referred to as *Baatii* meaning new moon/cresent moon; days 5 to 13 are *Adeessaa* meaning 'white' or 'there is light'; day 14 is *Qoncoora* (*qota baye*) meaning free from bending, referring to the fact that the moon is no longer crescent shaped; day 15 is known as *Goobana* meaning full moon when it is at the mid point between waxing and waning; Day 16 is *Dukkan durisa* which means missing light for first day (1st day of waning); days 17 to 27 or 28 are *Dukkana* which means no light. Day 28 or 29 is referred to as *Gad-dabra* meaning 'moving', because before you see the sun in the morning the direction of the moon in the sky has changed; Day 29 is referred to as *Loontu arga* or *Lo'o* meaning 'the cows see it', because the moon cannot be seen and it is said that only cattle can see it on this night.

The age of the moon, the position of the stars and the day of the month when brought together is used to forecast the weather, to set the dates of important occasions and to predict prospects for a person's future life. This calendar system is also used by other Oromo groups (Doyle, 1986; Bassi, 1988). There are only a few people left within the Karrayyu community who have this knowledge. The moon and stars are also used to navigate at night. Karrayyu have a very developed awareness of the earth, changes and fluctuations in climate, and the cycles of the

moon because they live so closely with and are dependent on these elements. This knowledge is not always articulated but lived and shared. The idea of, and awareness of, cycles is central to Karrayyu culture and can be seen in cultural institutions like the *Gadaa* system. 'To fully engage, sensorially, with one's earthly surroundings is to find oneself in a world of cycles within cycles' (Abram, 1996: 186). This same awareness of cycles can be seen in other indigenous communities whose lives are centred on their relationship with the land and environment.

The Role of Animals

The Karrayyu keep mixed herds consisting of cattle, camels, goats and sheep and rely on these animals mainly for their milk. Cattle are fundamentally important, and in the past it is likely that cattle were the dominant species in Karrayyu herds. Herd composition has changed over time due to a variety of factors. Traditionally, products derived from their herds constituted the major component of the Karrayyu diet, mainly milk, butter and meat. Karrayyu rarely slaughter their animals for meat. Roba Fantalle explained: 'A pastoralist will not slaughter any of his or her animals just to eat meat. They don't do this unless there are specific occasions or reasons'. The importance of livestock milk to pastoral survival was first documented by social anthropologists in their research among African pastoralists in the 1950s and 1960s (Stenning, 1959; Dupire, 1963). Many are surprised by pastoralists' ability to survive on a milk based diet, but 'Milk includes all eight of the essential amino acids: zinc, potassium, sulphur and phosphorous' (Sadler *et al.*, 2009: 6). The extent to which pastoralists depend on milk versus other animal products is attributed to an efficiency of energy production as well as to the availability of grazing. African pastoralists can survive more exclusively on milk because the double rainfall allows year-round milking, whereas meat is only sporadically available. In addition a milk-based system provides subsistence for more people per unit than any other arid zone production method (Sadler *et al*., 2009).

Keeping a variety of animal species enables the Karrayyu to utilize a wide variety of fodder. Different livestock species feed on different types of vegetation, thereby maximizing natural resource use. 'Herding multiple species is an adaptive strategy by pastoralists which reduces risk and extends the milk supplied by livestock' (Sadler *et al.*, 2009: 10). In addition, losses due

to diseases are to some extent limited by mixed herds because certain diseases are species-specific. Keeping mixed herds maximises milk production, as production varies according to the species of animal. Camels are often valuable livestock in dryland Africa as they can exploit very limited resources, especially water, and have the longest lactation period of any livestock species. Sheep and goats are the most widespread livestock raised by pastoralists world-wide and are important for milk production during dry seasons. Goats are particularly drought-resistant and can continue to supply some milk for human consumption throughout the dry season. They multiply faster than large livestock and produce more milk and have a longer lactation period than sheep. Cattle produce relatively high volumes of milk but need more water and therefore dry up relatively quickly during the dry season.

Milk of cattle, sheep, goat and camels have different properties and are used for different things. Cattle milk is important for storage as it can be made into butter and ghee, whereas milk from other animals does not make good butter. Sheep and goat's milk is normally used quickly, particularly for adding to *hoojaa* (drink made from roasted coffee husks). Camel's milk is regarded as having medicinal properties and is typically given to sick people and women who have just given birth and need added nutrition. Young children are not allowed to drink camel's milk because of its powerful effects. Karrayyu camels herders never drink the milk of the camels while near the fire place because it is thought that heat makes the milk turn sour in the stomach thereby reducing its positive effects.

Animals and Gender Roles

A typical Karrayyu homestead has three gates (*karra sadeen*) and corrals for the three main groups of animals: *loon* (cattle), *galaa* (camels) and *re'ee* (goats and sheep). Donkeys are not included, they are a recent addition to Karrayyu herds. Animals help structure the household and the division of labour. Male adults manage the herd and the household. Breeding decisions, purchasing or selling of livestock is almost always done by the household head. The *Abba warra* is responsible for watching family members and ensuring that labour allocations are fair. Young men are responsible for long distance herding, particularly camels, and the defence of the family and herd from wild animals and raiders. Women are responsible for building and transporting family shelter, fetching firewood and water, milking the animals, watering small

stock, preparing food and sterilizing and storing milking implements. They also take care of young animals kept around the home. 'Men expect women to bear a large number of children and to take care of domestic chores, on their side women expect men to provide for their family's material needs and physical security' (Frejaques, 2003: 91).

Children are socialised into the pastoralist system and are expected to take responsibility from a young age. They are sent out with the animals as soon as they can toddle and are given chores to do; their games mimic the activities of their parents and elder family members. As Simpson has said in relation to his work in Sri Lanka: 'children, from a very early age, are socialized into a powerful rhythm within the community. They do not so much learn, as learn how to learn… and this takes place within the total context of the community and its history… From an early age children are exposed to a wide range of stimuli connected with vocations traditional to the community' (1997: 46).

Even though a single family or household is regarded as the basic unit for livestock ownership and production, many activities are done cooperatively with the *ganda* (village) which comprises of a number of households, whose residents may or may not be related by blood. Animal management is generally allocated according to age and gender. Camels are associated with men; they are taken long distances for grazing by male herders and spend the majority of their time away from the homestead. There are strict rules about milking camels (Figure 41). Bulga Jilo explains: 'The difference between the camels and the cattle, goats and sheep is their hygiene. Milking of camels has its own rule. Men do the milking, and they have to take care of their personal hygiene'. Men are not allowed to milk camels if they have had sexual intercourse, and must wash their bodies before milking. Young unmarried girls are allowed to assist with milking, but women who have reached the age of menstruation or who have given birth are restricted. Women are allowed in some rare cases to milk camels but they must be clean (*qulqullina*), meaning women who are not menstruating, or who have not given birth recently, or who are post-menopause and can no longer give birth, or virgin girls. It is thought that if a person's personal hygiene is bad then it is dangerous for the camels; they will not become pregnant or give milk. Camels that come into contact with such a person are considered polluted: their body condition is affected, the amount of milk they produce is reduced and does not produce froth as normal. Bulga Jilo says that for these reasons: 'It is good for camels if they

are kept away from people due to issues of hygiene. A special place is given for the male camels away from the dung of other animals. They are even protected from their own dung because they are easily affected by disease which can be easily transmitted to the others'.

Figure 41: Karrayyu herder milking camel using *gorbo.* Source: Author

Cattle are primarily associated with women and the home. It is said that women should accompany cattle, and cattle are not happy if they cannot see the fire of their owner. According to traditional belief, herds are thought to multiply abundantly upon the sight of fire (Gebre, 2000). Camels, in contrast, are said to hate the place where there is fire. Looni, a young Karrayyu mother, explained the connection between women and cattle:

> 'I like all of our animals, but there is nothing like cows. Cows are attached to the women's life. Without cows women are not women. You cannot get any butter from the milk of goats, sheep and camels. A woman cannot even milk a camel. Camels are of men not of women. Our beauty and cleverness can be seen through our butter and cows'.

Another young woman said the following:

> 'The reason women like cows rather than any other animals is because you can make butter from their milk. Cows are attached to the life of women. Though men can keep the cows, they simply go behind with a dry stick. Men are not very much

connected with cows, unlike camels. Most of our food is milk and maize; to eat maize you need milk and butter. So cows and their products are essential to our lives. We soften the skins of cows with butter so we can sleep on them. Milk and butter are helpful for so many things, especially for the home. Cows are vital to our life'.

Figure 42: Karrayyu woman milking cow. Source: Author

Milk processing is exclusively done by women (Figure 42). Before milking, containers are smoked using charcoal from specific plants and trees. This sterilises and seals the container, without fumigation the milk curdles. Smoking also adds a pleasant odour and taste to milk. Milk (*annan*) is kept in a large container after milking until it becomes thick (*itittuu*). The milk is then put into *weesso*, a butter making container, and is cradled by a woman who rocks it back and forth, occasionally opening a small wooden plug to release the pressure. The change in the churning sound indicates when the milk has turned into butter (*dhadhaa*). Buttermilk (*baaduu*) is often added to porridge or given to children to drink. Butter is made into ghee by melting it over a fire, and fresh leaves and stems of sweet basil (*Ocimum basilicum*, known as *urgooftuu*) are added for flavour. Moisture is driven off and before the liquid clarifies a handful of maize, or other cereal flour is added. The ghee is then stored in a container with a lid. This enables women to preserve butter for long periods of time.

In pastoralist populations, the transformation of milk into dairy products can help deal with 'gluts' of milk during the wet season and supply valuable nutrients during the dry. Products such as butter or ghee, yogurt and cheese not only prolong the storage-life of milk but also change its nutrient profile (Sadler *et al.*, 2009: 8). Ghee may have been more important in the past when milk surpluses were more common. The difference in milk surplus between the past and present is illustrated in the stories of women who describe pouring excess buttermilk onto the ground during times of plenty.

Milking of animals for human consumption requires a careful balancing act. Milk must be available in sufficient quantities to sustain young animals to weaning age, with only the surplus used for human consumption. For this reason nursing calves are kept separate from their dams except when calves are used to stimulate let-down of milk. Milking usually takes place twice a day. Offtake that deprives young animals, even if it benefits pastoralists in the short-term, impairs herd replacement and growth rate in the long-term. Milking animals is a skill which requires the balancing of immediate and long-term needs. As women are primarily responsible for milking they have the major role in determining milk offtake. Although men may be the decision makers in terms of livestock management and allocation of household labour, women play an important role in managing both the household and stock. Waqayyo notes, 'By exercising a real day-to-day control over the disposition of the resources at every point of the decision-making process in ways that are protected by the value system of society, the woman wields determinative influence in the society as a whole' (1991: 8).

This is important to recognise, as Lydall has written: 'if you were to visit the Hamar in southern Ethiopia, you would probably gain the impression from what you see and hear that this is a relatively egalitarian male-dominated society ... however, if one looks a bit closer behind the rhetoric of naming, ritual, gesture and speech, one gets to see another reality in which women also act as household and homestead heads, maintain and control assets, and direct the labour of household members. In short, behind the apparent male domination, we find a hidden, but none-the-less effective female power' (2005: 152-3). The role of women in pastoral communities is often not recognised using Western standards of gender equality. Outsiders see women as utterly powerless figures who live at the mercy of their husbands, but as Debsu

writes 'unless we appreciate those subtle rights, our knowledge of gender relations in non-western societies remains partial' (2009: 16).

***Dalagaa Dhiiraa & Dalagaa Dubartii* Videos**

Videos of men's and women's routines were useful in understanding male and female roles in the community. The films show the strict allocations of tasks according to gender which is typical of pastoral systems in general. The videos give the viewer an insight into the daily demands of Karrayyu existence, on the part of both males and females. They show the long walks taking cattle, camels, goats and sheep for water and grazing, women carrying water on their backs or on the back of donkeys, lugging firewood and grass from the nearest place it can be collected, building houses, and preparing food. These are just some of the daily activities around which Karrayyu life is organised.

One of the interesting things captured on video was the songs of women while they were making butter. Throughout fieldwork many Karrayyu commented that the traditional songs, which were once a common feature of social life, are declining. During my time in the village I never heard the women sing. As McLean notes: 'in non-literate cultures, songs are very seldom sung without a reason' (1965: 299) As the way of life changes, many of the institutions and practices, including songs, lose their relevance and so decline.

The videos of men's routines, although perhaps less labour intensive than women's routines, shows the importance of men in defending the community. Male participants were keen to capture footage of fighting because they wanted to show the impact it has on their lives and the challenges Karrayyu herders face. Although they did capture footage of Afar herders on the other side of the border none of the participants had cameras with them when they were involved in conflict, which indicates that conflict was not usually planned. In many ways this was a relief because footage of conflict would have raised moral and ethical dilemmas.

The impact of conflict is apparent in the video footage in the form of the ever present Kalashnikov. I became used to the presence of weapons during fieldwork, but was made aware of the abnormality of this when returning home and seeing the shock of audiences who viewed

the photographs and videos. This perhaps goes to show how conflict becomes normalized as a way of coping.

Students editing the films commented that although the videos made a distinction between men's routines and women's routine's, in reality the boundaries are more fluid. Some responsibilities and labour divisions are quite clearly defined whereas others tend to be more flexible and vary depending on seasons, labour shortages, and the number and type of livestock. Participants emphasised that male and female roles are interdependent. The videos provided a way of talking about how men and women's roles are defined, how they have changed over time, and how they could perhaps be re-negotiated to accommodate changes in the future.

Animals as wealth

Animals are a symbol of wealth; they reflect the prosperity of the land and people. Animals can be sold if cash is needed but generally 'a pastoralist does not plan to sell and when he does it is in response to an acute need for money' (Coppock, 1994: 115). This is partly due to the fact that an individual's wealth is assessed on the basis of the number animals he has, specifically lactating animals. The more animals a person has, the more milk. In addition to lactating animals, steers and castrated bulls, rams and young male camels are considered indicators of wealth. Castrated animals show that an individual has an excess of animals and can afford to castrate some. These animals act as decoration for the herd; castrated animals look good because they are always fat and strong. Breeding animals expend energy during reproduction and can become thin, whereas castrated animals have no 'job' except to become fat and glossy.

Generally the size of the household increases as wealth increases, and richer houses are often polygamous. This is partly because as the herds increase, more manpower is needed. The more animals an individual possesses the wealthier he becomes, the more wives he takes the more children he fathers. It is believed that a household should be powerful both in terms of animals and people; one of these alone is not enough. However, numbers alone is not an indicator of

wealth. A commonly expressed sentiment is that a man can be rich but if he is not rich in his thinking for others, or in his generosity, then his wealth is meaningless.

Karrayyu attachment to their animals is not just due to ideas of wealth and the products they get from them. Baxter has written: 'herders not only depend on their stock for subsistence but they also have emotional and religious attachments- stock which is used for exchange and sacrifice is a source of pride, social position and ritual fulfilment' (2001: 238). As described in the previous chapter, animals are essential for marriage arrangements, *Gadaa* rituals and religious practices. Animals also play a vital role in connecting members of a household, village and community. Bulga Jilo, an elder, explains: 'The camels have a special role in the life of the Karrayyu, and are respected. We show our love and praise for them through song (*leelluu*). In the past the families used to have one fence for all the villages camels which was located next to the home of the *Abba Ganda*. All the inhabitants would come to praise the camels in the night'. Cattle are particularly important for the collective life of the community; they bring neighbours together in herding practices and families together in marriage. Those who herd together must consult one another on their movements; one household cannot move without informing the others.

Sharing and working as a collective is an important part of the Karayyuu value system. Rather than selling surplus milk products, the Karrayyu use lactating animals or their milk products to maintain social ties. 'In some pastoral societies there are cultural prohibitions on selling milk products, which must be kept for hospitality or sharing between group members ... When decisions must be made on how to allocate milk from animals, the future social insurance gained by sharing milk between group members may outweigh the immediate financial gain from its sale' (Sadler *et al*., 2009: 13). Karrayyu have a system of milk exchange, called *Dabaree,* which was introduced after a time of severe drought. Children often have informal access to milk offtake from other families in their social group because milk is shared. Mullin has commented 'Pastoralism entails not just a particular sort of relationship with animals and the environment but also particular kinds of relationships among humans' (1999: 209).

Animals are kept as part of the family and each animal is named and known individually, including their genealogical history. Bulga Jilo explains, 'every group of camels has a male

camel, who acts like *Abba Warra*, so you know who the father is. We praise the newborn baby by pointing it towards his own father and calling his name'. Knowledge of the animal's family group is used as a mechanism for checking animals, rather than taking a head count herders systematically go through the family groups. They are also checked by colour and by name. Karrayyu admire animals with striking colours that can be seen from a distance, and certain colours have ceremonial significance. Names are given to cattle based on their colouring, after family members who have given them as gifts, and names indicate if they have been taken from enemies. Animals are allocated to specific family member, and it is known which animals belong to whom. They are given as gifts when children are born, and any offspring born are allocated to the child. As the child grows, so does the number of their animals. Similar practices have been observed among other pastoralist groups. Galaty (1989) explores not just the meaning and value of cattle but also the cognitive skills that have allowed Massai to recognise hundreds of individual animals and describe, name and classify them according to appearance, reproductive status, history of acquisition and genealogy.

Karrayyu regard animals as sentient beings. Certain animals, particularly horses, cattle and camels, are regarded as being particularly close to people due to their levels of awareness and emotional intelligence. It is difficult for those who do not share their lives with animals to understand this. It is common in Western societies for there to be a distinct boundary between animals and humans, and a view that 'humans [are] both radically different from and superior to all other creatures' (Mullin, 1999: 204). From this viewpoint many have argued that pastoralists' attitudes toward their livestock are irrational. This has been described as the 'cattle complex' defined as an extensive ritual use of cattle, an emotional attachment or identification with cattle (Herskovits, 1926).

However, the idea of the 'cattle complex' as an irrational attachment is increasingly questioned. The boundary between people and animals does not exist in all societies. Through living with animals intimate relationships are formed. One becomes attuned to their individual personalities, to their dynamics, to their pleasure and pain, to their smells, their sounds, and their needs. This is critical to understanding Karrayyu attachment to their animals, and why they cannot imagine a life without them. It is a different concept of what animals are, a deep connection that requires full engagement. Roba Bulga explained:

'As a pastoralist your attention is with your animals, you have affection and passion for animals, you love them. You enjoy being with them, and you don't want them to starve or to be sick, you just want to care of them. The community is dying because of the animals. They want them to have plenty of grass and they will take them anywhere, even at the expense of their own life'.

Karrayyu fi Horii **Video**

The title of this video means 'Karrayyu and their Animals'. It aims to show the importance of animals for the Karrayyu and features members of the community talking about why pastoralism as a way of life is fundamentally important to Karrayyu culture and identity.

The narrative structure of the first section of the film is given by a speech made by Bulga Jilo to camera which is inter-cut with footage filmed by the video groups. He uses the idea of 'Karra Sadeen' or 'Three Gates', which refers to the three categories of animals that are most important, to describe why animals are fundamental to Karrayyu identity. He goes through the animals in order, starting with sheep and goats, then cattle and then camels.

He highlights the role that each animal plays in Karrayyu life and relates them to significant cultural and social rituals. Interestingly donkeys are not included in this part of the film because they were not part of traditional Karrayyu herds. Donkeys are not respected in Oromo tradition, however, they are included in the section on animal products where their usefulness as pack animals is acknowledged.

In the speech Bulga Jilo is consciously building an argument. The speech was not rehearsed and he was not responding to questions. This is Bulga Jilo explaining things from his own point of view, but his argument echoes accounts by other Karrayyu participants.

This can be seen as an indigenous representation of reality, using a structure which is common and easily understood by a Karrayyu audience, but the videos were met by confusion by some of the western viewers who could not make the link between the idea of 'three gates' and the idea of three different groups of animals.

The middle section of the film gives examples of the benefits gained from animals, namely animal products. To an outside observer they may seem like 'food' or clothing, each of these things have a range of deeper meanings, for example milk represents the Karrayyu link to their animals, fertility and peace.

The end of the film consists of three speeches: one by Bulga Jilo, an elder; one by Rado Bulga, his daughter who gives the point of view of Karrayyu women; and the last is by Rado Bulga's husband who is an agro-pastoralist. They are all related to each other but they also represent a range of view points and capture the feeling and emotion of community members about pastoralism. Rado's speech certainly emphasises how women feel about their life with animals. This is interesting as she is educated and has lived in town and is therefore not a typical Karrayyu woman, but she is representing both her views and those of other women. In a sense she is speaking on behalf of those who refused to speak to the camera.

Relationship with the Environment

Pastoralists have often been cited as destructive to local environments. 'Governments and other actors external to pastoral system have persistently failed to understand the underlying rationale and dynamics of pastoralism ... Hardin's '*tragedy of the commons*' thesis in 1968 provided a convenient theoretical framework to justify existing perceptions of pastoralists as irrational land use managers by those external to the system' (Nori *et al.*, 2008: 10). However, it is increasingly acknowledged that because they are directly dependent on a sparse natural resource base, pastoralists are obliged to be efficient managers of it. Resource management is are key to survival. This entails an 'opportunistic management strategy' which is required in a 'dynamic' or 'non-equilibrial' ecosystem (Turton, 1995: 28). Makakis writes, 'theirs is one of the very few surviving civilisations that can claim to have lived in harmony with nature' (2004: 4). Nori and Davis define pastoralism as 'the finely-honed symbiotic relationship between local ecology, domesticated livestock and people in resource-scarce, climatically marginal and highly variable conditions. It represents a complex form of natural resource management involving a continuous ecological balance between pastures, livestock and people' (2007: 7).

The welfare of people, animals and the environment are inter-linked. Rainfall governs the availability of water and grazing; this in turn directly affects the amount of milk available for adults and children to drink. Rain is highly variable and herders have to be alert to changing conditions in their environment and be ready to move their animals at fairly short notice to find available water and grazing. The importance of rain is particularly noticeable in an arid environment. These areas are some of the driest and hottest environments on earth, but a rainstorm can turn it into a vibrant landscape bursting with life, 'a pulse of abundance reflecting the position of water as the desert's primary limiting resource' (Middleton, 2009: 2). Season has a dramatic effect on cattle breeding and milk production; the majority of calf births occur during the long rains. Kassam describes this cycle of fertility that is crucial for the Gabra and Karrayyu pastoralists alike:

> 'The links in the fertility chain are the heavenly rain send by the sky God (*Waaqa*) to bless the earth and make the grass grow so that the animals might grow fat. The animals in turn produce regular supplies of milk, the staple food of the Gabra pastoralist, hence creating a general sense of wellbeing ... When the land is fertile and produces enough food for both man and animal it enhances their reproduction. Women and stock become fertile and ensure the future regeneration of the family and herd. Nature's state of fecundity is therefore of the utmost importance' (1986: 195).

Like other Oromo, when the Karrayyu pray they ask for rain, peace and fertility. While praying they hold dry sticks anointed with butter, and a hand-full of green grass (Figure 43). The stick, butter and grass represent wetness and dryness, the defining factors of pastoralist existence. Green grass represents wetness and life, both in the rain that enables it to grow, and the milk that it in turn helps to produce. Butter is a symbol of fertility and represents their connection with, and the products they receive from, their animals. Sufficient rain, pasture and milk bring peace.

As Kassam writes in relation to the Gabra: 'The state of the land, and the comfort of people and animals is closely related to the Oromo concept of peace and harmony (*nagaa*)'(1986: 195). Anointed sticks, blades of grass, butter and milk are present in all Karrayyu rituals, including *Gadaa* ceremonies, religious ceremonies, and marriage rituals.

Figure 43: Karrayyu women praying, holding green grass and prayer sticks. Source: Author

Karrayyu have vast knowledge about pasture composition, the value of different plants and grasses for different species of animal and their suitability for their different conditions, for example calves, lactating and pregnant cows. Men and women constantly discuss grazing, exchange information about the best places to water and graze their animals and obtain reports from one another about rainfall, layout of terrain, pasture and water supplies. The Karrayyu are knowledgeable about the different properties of places, water bodies, grasses, trees and the effects they have on both humans and animals. Differences in terrain are known to impact on Karrayyu herds:

> 'Fantalle mountain is not suitable for goats, cattle and camels. For cattle the lowland is suitable. When they go to the mountain the physical change they show is only in their skin, they don't have as much milk. They never get pregnant when they are on the mountain, because the bulls are not interested in mating. It rains all night and it is difficult for the cows to move, the stones become wet and slippery, and there is no friction. When they move they can't move freely, they must take great care and jump from place to place, so the milk is absorbed by their body. Bulls never fight each other when they are on the mountain. When they come back from the tip of the mountain to the lowland they start to bellow and fight as if they have been released from tension, they feel free. In the mountain area they feel tension about where to

> place their legs, they have to take care where they stand and how they move. In the lowland area they are really free and can move as they like (*burraaquu*, jumping here and there), they become happy and fight each other′ (Fantalle Bulga, a young male Karrayyu herder).

Water is vital to the health of people and animals, but different water sources are thought to have different effects. This can be illustrated by this excerpt from an interview in which a Karrayyu elder describes the different kinds of water known to community members and their uses:

> 'The water of *haroo* (natural rain water) was beloved by our fathers. It was good for the health of people and animals. But *haroo* water is no longer useful in the dry season. When the dry season (*Caamsaa*) begins, we take our goats and sheep to other water, such as *qarsaa,* because at that time the water of *haroo* gives animals diarrhoea, especially sheep. The natural water of *qarsaa* comes out of the caves in the mountain and we bring it to the animals by *idee* (container). *Qarsaa* is natural water so in the past we didn't have the diseases caused by worms that we have nowadays.
>
> We know and differentiate different rivers for different animals. For instance, *Laga Adii* (white river) comes from a spring and is good for camels. When camels drink this water and then feed they become fat, it removes their hair and they become nice to look at. *Laga Bulga* (Bulga River) is good for cattle. People people use this river for their cattle in fifteen day intervals. It is very good for goats, but not for sheep. If sheep drink this water a huge amount of hair emerges from their body. It is also nice for people even though it contains cattle urine. *Laga Bulga* makes animals skins beautiful but they become weak and thin so it's not good for fattening. It is difficult for animals to drink this water in the dry season. Also the bulls never sniff the cows so they cannot get pregnant. *Laga Bulga* produces a lot of milk if herds drink it during *Birra* (autumn dry season), but as the season shifts to *Bona* (winter dry season) the grass becomes drier and the amount of milk decreases
>
> *Lagaa Hawash (*Awash River) is very good for drinking, but during the rainy season. it becomes dirty and full of mud and animals can't satisfy their thirst. If camels drink from Hawash during *Bona*, they don't give much milk but when the rainy season is over it is good, camels give enough milk and get pregnant easily. It is very good for cattle to drink the water during *Bona*, then their calves do not die easily. Generally Hawash is suitable for the animals in both *Gana* and *Bona* (rainy and dry seasons respectively)'.

Karrayyu know the value of different vegetation. Trees, for example, are used for a variety of purposes: fence building, house construction, medicine, and firewood. Oromo revere large trees

whose branches can be used to shade and protect both animals and humans. There are rules about which species should be used for specific purposes. Trees with thorns are selected to keep wild animals away from the livestock at night, but trees with large thorns which could injure livestock are not selected. To prepare *mooraa loonii* (cattle fence) *dhaddacha* and *saphansa* are preferred because the thorns are less dangerous. Trees are chosen for their strength, shape and durability. *Baddannoo* is never used to make fences or *bitimaa*[10] because it is used to dig graves. It is considered bad luck to sit under this tree on a wedding day, it is thought to bring bad luck for the couple's future. The *bitimaa* is very important, even when a fence is newly prepared the *bitimaa* must be cut and put in place before the sun sets. It must be taken from the base of a tree which has not been cut before. Some words are said before it is cut: *'Bitimaa roobaa fi nagayaa*' (Bitimaa of rain and of peace). Certain trees are known to have medicinal properties, for example *Jirimee* is used when animals suffer from *maasa* (foot and mouth). *Jirimee* is cut, put into the fire, then held around the animals to cover them in smoke. Afterwards it is thrown outside the fence. Other trees are known for their negative effects, for example *sapheen gurraa* gives cattle eye infections if used for fencing.

Trees are also used for ritual purposes, for decision making and praying. Certain trees are designated as *'muka raagaa*' or holy trees. Such trees with ritual and spiritual associations are protected. Haji Kasaru, a prominent Karrayyu elder, explains:

> *'*In our culture, let alone cutting these trees we never touch them, they are respected. The person who cuts these trees will be held accountable by the community. We cut trees for cows and goats, but in the case of holy trees or trees which are used for worshipping we never cut them, people advise each other not to cut trees like *Adee*, *Odaa*, *Dhadachaa*. Other trees can be cut but even when cutting trees there is a rule about how to cut them and how to peel their bark. When the trees are stripped of their bark (*quncee*) people takes from the bottom of the tree upwards, they never strip the bark from top to bottom*'*.

Holy trees include *Badanno*. Haji Kasaru stated that this tree is associated with women: 'Under the *'Baddanno'* tree the only issue discussed is that of women by women and only women worship or pray to *'Waqaa'* under these trees'. Specific tree species are believed to have a special association with *Waaqa*, for example the *Oda* tree which is used for prayer and spiritual

[10] Branch used to close cattle corrals

ceremonies, for Gadaa rituals, and meetings. *Oda* is widely used as a symbol for the Oromo people, including the Karrayyu:

> 'Their well grounded roots evoke a people's anchorage to their land, their trunks may represent the force of present life that stands unabated in the face of climatic change and their ever growing branches and leaves remind people of the incessant generation of life. Trees also provide a sense of identity because they outlive human beings and therefore are living links not only to the past, but also to the future. Trees symbolise Kereyu (sic) feelings of attachment and connectedness to their land' (Frejaques, 2003: 268).

Figure 44: *Oda* tree next to Awash River. Source: Author

Karrayyu do not consider their environment a mere resource to be used without limit. *Safu* (respect) plays a critical role in regulating interactions between humans and the environment by ensuring that community members make use of the environment in a way that is reasonable and respectful. Religious beliefs and institutions like *Gadaa* impose a system of ecological checks and balances. Karrayyu, and Oromo people generally, believe that the present generation is under moral obligation to preserve the land for future generations, one has to make sure that his

or her lineage will continue to flourish in the future. There is an awareness that the land and resources are not just the preserve of humans, but of other living creatures:

> ‘Human beings ... are endowed with the intelligence that enables them to understand cosmic events. Thus, *Waaqa* expects them to care for other creatures and creation by acting in harmony with the cosmic whole. If humans continuously despoil the land by breaking traditional rules, it may not support all creatures indefinitely' (Kelbessa, 2005: 10).

Chapter Eight: Changes to Karrayyu Pastoralism

'The Awash Valley has undergone perhaps the most dramatic transformation of any Ethiopian lowland area' (Kloos *et al*., 2010: 257) Understanding these processes of change is important if we are to comprehend their scale and the potential psychological reverberations and cultural implications for community members. The changes taking place are partly a result of external forces, but there are also choices being made within and by the community. If this is not acknowledged there is a danger of portraying the Karrayyu as passive victims, whereas they are also agents of change. This chapter looks at both external interventions and pressures and internal changes and choices.

External Intervention and Pressures

Loss of Land and Water Points

A study conducted by IIED in 2010 found that all the Karrayyu households they surveyed had lost grazing and water resources to non-pastoral uses. The study states that the causes are many and complex, including disenfranchisement from land by the state for commercial production, the establishment of national parks, and border disputes involving tribal conflicts (Elias & Abdi, 2010: 7). Karrayyu have lost vast areas of land to the Matahara Sugar Estate, founded in 1967, followed in 1969 by the installation of a sugar mill. Awash National Park was founded in 1969 and later came the Nura Era Fruit Plantation (See Gebre, 2001 and Edjeta, 2002 for detailed discussion). Awash National Park Management Plan states that the establishment of the Park and commercial agriculture have 'contributed to a decline in the Kereyu (sic) land holdings, have failed to include them in the development decisions and have failed to effectively compensate them for their losses. The result has been that the Kereyu (sic) are worse off today, socially, economically, politically and culturally, than they were 40 years ago' (Jacobs & Schloeder 1993: 243).

The Karrayyu have resisted these developments, sometimes using force, by disconnecting the safety valves of the irrigation canals, grazing livestock over cane plantations and land that falls within the Park boundaries and sometimes even by killing Plantation and Park employees. Elias

& Abdi (2010: 7) report that all the Karrayyu households they interviewed expressed bitterness and anger over the loss of grazing sites and water points to centrally-planned development schemes. Their anger is understandable they have never been compensated for the loss of land, despite many promises, and benefit little from either the Plantation or the National Park.

Matahara Sugar Plantation brings in seasonal labourers from other areas of the country instead of employing local people. A small number of Karrayyu are employed as guards, largely due to the widely held view that the Karrayyu are lazy, do not have a work ethic and are only good for fighting. Karrayyu are only allowed to take the surplus sugar cane leaves to feed their animals during times of severe drought. There is a scheme which makes sugar available to community members at a discounted rate so they can sell it on, but this is usually monopolised by certain prominent members of the community so the benefits are not widely distributed.

Awash National Park also employs members of the Karrayyu and Afar communities as guards due to their knowledge of community, which they need to protect the Park. However, people from other areas of Ethiopia are brought in to work in the lodges, and to run tourism activities. I visited the Park on a number of occasions and very little information is given to visitors about the pastoralist communities who inhabit the area. Any information that is provided is largely negative. There have been discussions recently about community tourism ventures and there are some efforts being made to show Karrayyu traditional dances to tourists, but this is largely a token effort which only benefits a few. Community members bitterly resent the fact that during severe drought they are restricted from grazing their animals on Park land, which means their stock die and they face famine. If found inside Park boundaries, their livestock are impounded until they pay a fine.

In the past community members showed their resentment and frustration towards the government and Park authorities by killing wildlife because they felt that more concern was shown for the wildlife than for them. This was exemplified in the construction of boreholes in places like Dhebiti for the wildlife whilst no provisions were made for the local human population. Such actions on the part of community members violated traditional cultural laws, and indicate the disruption of human-ecological interactions. This is a common problem

reported around the world as a result of Parks which fail to incorporate humans into the management strategy.

Perhaps the most devastating impact of land loss is that the Karrayyu can no longer access their main water points. Awash River runs through Fantalle *woreda* and was critical for Karrayyu survival during the dry season. But as one community member said, 'Now, let alone use the Malkas (watering points) as we used to do, we cannot even see them with our own eyes anymore. It is like a dream to see the river now. We remember the river and regret its loss'. The sugar plantation is not willing to provide livestock corridors to Awash River in case the cane is damaged. A community member explained:

> 'If we need Hawas River for medicine or for prayer we cannot use it because the Sugar Factory blocks access on both banks. The sugar cane is guarded and the guards do not allow us to go near the river so our animals do not know it anymore, all the *Malkas* are destroyed ... Today if you go on foot to these areas and they find you, you are accused. The factory does not allow you to be there. After Hawash River leaves the plantation it enters the Park. Let alone use the river, we cannot even walk on the land of the Park. If they find you there you will be arrested, if you run they shoot'.

Karrayyu have also lost land to Lake Nogoba (referred to as Lake Baseka is Amharic) which has increased from 3 km² in 1957 to about 42 km² in 2000 (Gulilat, 2000). Its expansion has resulted in significant loss of dry season grazing land. It is thought that the expansion is due to poor drainage management in the adjacent state farms. 'The inundation of pastures by the alkaline/saltine Lake Baseka has been due mainly to the dumping of drainage water from Abadir Farm' (Alemayehu, Ayenew, & Kebede, 2006). The expansion of Lake Nogoba has flooded the traditional wells (*eelaa*) which were previously dug on the edges of the lake. The name *Nogoba* means 'useless thing' because as well as being saline the water is increasingly polluted and therefore unsuitable for human or animal consumption. In recent years the Karrayyu have also lost access to the Bulga River, their other main water source during the dry season, due to encroachment by Afar and Argoba. A Karrayyu elder stated: 'The land that has been taken from us is equivalent to the land we have been left with today. Loss of land to the government for the plantation and the park, to Lake Nogoba, and to Argoba, Afar, and other neighbours has encouraged the worst kind of life for the community today'. (Figure 44)

Figure 45: Aerial image of sugar plantation and Lake Basaka. Source: Google Earth

Lack of planning or consideration for the pastoralist population is demonstrated by the water problems in the area. The Awash River is now used for irrigated development, and the water is treated and supplied to those living within the sugar plantation and Matahara town. Although community members who live close to Awash River have access to water all year round, the quality of the water is not suitable for consumption as it contains chemical pollutants from waste products which are discharged from the factory and drainage from irrigated fields. 'Downstream of Koka High Dam, high pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer use in two dozen commercial farms and agro-industries increasingly imperil the water resources of the Kereyu and Afar pastoralists, who use the irrigation systems for domestic use and livestock watering' (Kloos *et al*., 2010: 261-2).

Ponds were constructed by the government as compensation for the loss of traditional water points along the Awash River (Edjeta, 2002). The community is responsible for maintaining the canals which supply water to these ponds as part of a 'Food For Work' scheme. The ponds, however, are seasonal and can only collect water when there is enough rain. During the rainy season, the community water needs are less critical because they use ground water and springs. Some of the ponds, constructed during the regimes of Haile Selassie and the Derg, were deliberately built at border areas with Afar and Argoba. This exacerbated conflict between the groups and as a result they are largely no longer in use. There is one pond located in an area called Galcha, close to the plantation, which has water year round. However, this pond is highly polluted as the water supplying it comes from the factory, and contains waste products from both the factory and the plantation. Use of this water makes both humans and animals sick, but it is the only water available for community members living in the area. Rather than using this water, those who are permanently settled in Galcha try to bring water by jerry can from Matahara and Haro Adi, but this is not possible for everyone. Other ponds have been built by GTF, including two rock catchment dams built in Haro Qarsa and Qobo. Neither of them collect water effectively, partly due to poor design and decreased rainfall.

Water from boreholes serving the community has a fluoride concentration of up to 8.4 Mg/l, much higher than WHO guidelines for the maximum concentration of fluoride in drinking water (1.5 mg/l) (GTF, 2009: 8). Fluoride is naturally occurring throughout the Rift Valley, causing severe dental and skeletal fluorosis in places (Tekle-Haimanot *et al*., 1995). Boreholes therefore present health risks. The effects of fluoride can be seen in the deterioration of the teeth of people living in the area, and community members complain of back problems which they attribute to the water. Community members are aware that the water impacts both on their health and their animals. One Karrayyu elder told me:

> 'Nowadays we use the *Birkaa* (borehole) for drinking. There are many complaints about its suitability for our health. Because the water comes from underground it might be full of minerals. It blackens the people's teeth and causes back pain. The underground water washes out the gastric of the animals and prevents them from becoming fat'.

Boreholes (Figure 45) have also had a destructive effect on human relationships. A Karrayyu herder said: 'The water resources made by the government make people fight one another. This

water makes you thirsty even though you are near to it. You can't get enough even though it is running besides you. It is water which makes you lose money. It cannot satisfy your herds when they drink it'. As Flintan notes 'according to customary law (*adda seera*) all Boran have the right to water and to use land for grazing. The right to water is the right to life, and it is forbidden to deny someone water or to ask him or her to pay for it' (2010: 160). Payment for water affects traditional laws which in turn affects people's interactions. A Karrayyu elder explained:

> 'With this water we become ruthless to each other. Our love and respect has phased out. We have become shameless. When you come with your cattle from grazing you and your herds are thirsty, but they ask you for money before you and your cattle can get water. If you don't have the money in your hands then you cannot get the water. One person may say it is his turn, another person argues that it's his. It really is a great shame to argue with your own people, with your own uncle or aunt, to use water'.

Figure 46: Cattle at borehole in Dhebiti. Source: Author

Flintan reports similar shifts occurring among Borana Oromo pastoralists. 'Increased privatisation of resources also means a reduction in the availability of communally held resources for the remaining mobile pastoralists, and increased competition, mismanagement and misuse of them' (Flintan, 2010: 154).

The Awash Park Management Plan writes: 'All pastoralists obtain their drinking water from either the Awash River, from the Galcha pond, from standing pools after it rains (where livestock also drink), from a borehole in Sabober Plain, or from Lake Basaka. With the exception of the borehole all of these water sources pose health risks which affect the quality of human and animal life and its subsequent longevity. The Awash River, Lake Basaka and Galcha Pond in particular pose serious health hazards since it is here that the plantations dump their waste water and that insecticides and pesticides enter the hydrologic cycle' (1993: 75). A Karrayyu community member, also interviewed by Gebre (2001), described the effects in the following verse:

> *Nu bishaan hiqabnu bitti teenya makarrdhaaa,*
> *Jaalannetiimitii rakkannet dhunye sagaraadha,*
> *Achirraa jaalqabatti nu fixi dhukkbni garaadhaa*.
>
> Water is a serious problem in our land,
> Our livestock and we have become forced to drink the undrinkable,
> And we are now suffering from diarrhoea and intestinal diseases.

Conflict

Karrayyu experience conflict with neighbouring groups, namely Afar and Argoba. 'Violent conflicts and cattle raiding are a regular occurrence and a major characteristic of the contentious relationships between the Karrayyu and neighbouring groups' (Mulugeta & Hagmann, 2008: 77). However, there are different reasons for conflict between the two groups. Argoba are enemies mainly due to their Amhara status: the Karrayyu consider them as 'highlanders' and feel threatened by their expansionist tendencies. Afar are enemies but both Karrayyu and Afar recognise that they have much in common; there are close links, including intermarriage, despite the conflict. In the past, fighting between Karrayyu and Afar was for the purpose of cattle raiding rather than territorial expansion.

Numerous anthropologists working in East Africa have documented livestock raiding, the motivations for which include the desire for prestige and proof of manhood, retaliation, the desire to acquire or reacquire cattle for the purpose of expanding herds, repairing stock losses, accumulating stock for bridewealth, and more recently for money (Fleisher, 1998). The reciprocal nature of community-approved cattle theft has been noted among some groups (Fukui & Turton, 1979) and livestock raids in other areas are also thought to serve human-ecological herd management and redistribution functions (Sweet, 1965).

Conflict between Karrayyu and neighbouring groups has undergone changes in recent times; this has been highlighted by oral histories, interviews, and by other academic studies (see Mulugeta & Hagmann, 2008; Gebre, 2009). In previous times the fighting was more organised and was therefore, arguably, more controlled. One elder stated: 'There is a change between previous fighting and that of today. The enemy we have today are the Afar and Argoba and the fighting is bad now, it is hard. Before, fighting only happened once or twice every few years with different enemies, but now fighting occurs many times per year. This didn't happen in the past'. The effects of fighting seem to have been exacerbated since the introduction of automatic weapons. Another elder commented: 'We used to fight, but it was completely different to the fighting of today. The main difference can be seen in terms of discipline and the latest guns, now you can defend yourself from a distance. Long ago it was not like that. We used to fight by horse, spear, shield, and some basic guns'.

Due to developments taking place in the Awash Valley, all groups have lost land and basic resources are now sources of conflict. Irrigated agriculture has been introduced to the Afar and this has impacted on their way of life, creating competition over resources. Members of the Afar and Karrayyu community die every year as a result of such fighting. A survey conducted among 80 Karrayyu households by Gebre (2001: 246) demonstrates that from these households a total of 83 Karrayyu had been killed by neighbouring groups between 1976 and 1990. During my fieldwork, two members of Roba Bulga's family were shot: one was killed and the other wounded, and a member of Fantalle Gile's family was shot and killed. The effects of conflict are readily apparent particularly in areas close to the border area where there are a high number of widowed women and female-headed households. Most Karrayyu men bear the scars of past fighting.

Karrayyu identify different kinds of fighting. *Lola* is spontaneous and usually involves defensive actions. The number of men involved is small when fighting begins and is carried out by men who happen to be herding their animals together, but numbers increase as reinforcements arrive. When news reaches the rest of the community that fighting has started all able men must go and help. *Lola* mainly occurs during the dry season when resources are scarce. After these episodes of fighting, men, particularly young men, often try to take revenge and organise into groups for fighting. Fighting can last for days and requires preparation, strategy and supplies. This type of organised fighting has been called *Dula* by Frejaques (2003) and *Gaddu* by Gebre (2001). One of Frejaques's informants stated 'in the dry season, we fight for survival; in the wet season we fight for revenge' (2003: 199). The elders try to minimise youngsters taking revenge. In Karrayyu culture the maintenance of peace and harmony is seen as the supreme duty of the elders, but it is a difficult task when emotions run high, particularly after the death of a loved one.

Pastoralists are widely portrayed as 'naturally' violent, the Karrayyu are reputed to be ruthless warriors and are feared by other Ethiopians. Fighting is an ever-present activity for Karrayyu men, with the exception of young boys and older men. Younger men's role is to defend the community and they are generally viewed as a fighting force. Raids and revenge attacks on enemy groups show their bravery and masculinity. A prominent place is given to heroes among the community. Heroes are distinguished by wearing clothing and jewellery associated with women (Figure 46). Women are recognised for their strength and bravery, for example if they bear a large number of children, by wearing decoration associated with men, such as the *micciira* bracelet. However, not all men enjoy fighting or the fear of being killed. Men often find themselves in situations where they are forced to fight; if not they lose their stock, as well as the little land they have left. Frejaques argues that conflict with the Afar now serves as a 'way through which Karrayyu men act in order to try and preserve, and if possible increase, their territory and/or the right to graze and water their animals in it.' (2003: 195).

Figure 47: Karrayyu Hero. Source: Author

Women support men during times of fighting by supplying food and water, and alerting the rest of the community. They sometimes act as a buffer: there is a rule among both Afar and Karrayyu that women should not be harmed during fighting. Women play a key role in peacemaking and traditional conflict resolution (*Arrarra*), and when dialogue is impossible they are used to send messages to try and bring peace. 'Customarily there is a shared confidence between both sides that no matter how tense and hostile relationships have become, neither party would inflict harm to a woman sent on a peacemaking mission' (Gebre, 2009: 32). However, the women I spent time with felt equally defensive of Karrayyu land. One woman said:

> 'I hate that I am female because it protects me from fighting. Sometimes I wish I was created a man. Last year we moved to Afar territory for grazing on the hill, the men were not around, it was just me and other women looking after cattle. There was one Itu Oromo man keeping the cows with us. The Afar were keeping their cows near by, they came and shot the Itu man and killed him. We left the place with our cattle, but if we were male we wouldn't simply leave while our people die there. It is not because they love us that the Afar men passed us safely, it was because we are female'.

I never heard fighting described as *gaddu* or *dula* during my fieldwork, fighting was almost always described as *lola*. Fighting undoubtedly takes its toll on the community both physically and psychologically. Loss of life affects the morale of families and the community as a whole. A young male Karrayyu herder explained,

> 'When conflict occurs with an enemy, if one member of the community is killed he is not only lost from his family but from the whole community, they all mourn his loss. He died to protect the community and his death takes a toll on us all, and decreases our strength'.

Conflict has become a major livelihood challenge for the Karrayyu, particularly for young male herders who face a high chance of either death or serious injury and have to live with this risk. There is an obvious contradiction between the fighting and the Karrayyu concern with peace (*nagaa*). But as Baxter has written, 'development according to the Oromo world view can only be achieved when there is peace between *Waaqa* (God), *uuma* (nature) and society'. As the Karrayyu attest, due to the changing circumstances there is a lack of *safu*, of balance and respect, which leads to violence and 'violence between men is both a cause and effect of God's displeasure' (Baxter, 1990: 238).

Land degradation

Traditional systems for managing grazing land and water have been largely destroyed. Demie states that whereas the Karrayyu had 'strong and very active indigenous institutions which played the role of natural resource management' and were 'interwoven with their own social institutions', these systems have been 'weakened due to intervention of development schemes, imposition of *kebele* administration, crop expansion, social disintegration and decreasing resource capacity' (2006: 62). Changes in grazing patterns has had a devastating effect. Elders

commented that there is no longer a difference between *Ona Bona* (dry season grazing land) and *Ona Ganna* (wet season grazing land). Community members permanently reside in areas which were previously referred to as *Ona Ganna*.

In the Oromo language, the place where I spent my fieldwork, *Dhebiti*, means ‘place of thirst' and denoting that this place has no water. The lowland around Dhebiti, called 'Booda', has undergone massive changes. Bulga Jilo explains: 'In the past the grass on Booda was tall and dense enough to hide an adult man, you couldn't even see the animals when they were moving inside'. This area used to be used in the wet season, when land around the Awash River was flooded. Whilst in Booda the animals grazed freely because they would only be there for a season before moving again. But, as Bulga Jilo says, 'due to the lack of land people now live on Booda permanently and as a result Booda has become completely degraded'. The change has been rapid. One Karrayyu woman in her early twenties said: 'When I was a little child Booda was not like now, there was enough rain and grass. This was not a long time ago, it was around 16 or 17 years that our cattle stopped grazing freely around our homes. The bare land you see now was covered by grasses. It is unbelievable when you see it now, dusty and dry'. The number of animals are beyond the carrying capacity of the land. Malifu writes, 'in the Fentale (sic) *woreda*, of a total of 133,963.33 ha of land, the grazing land shrunk to only 11,397.44 ha for a total population of about 471,634 animals. This, therefore, indicates that a hectare of land supports 41.4 animals while the acceptable number per ha is only 2.5 animals. This testifies to the fact that in this *woreda* the acceptable carrying capacity was exceeded by over 16 fold' (Malifu, 2006: 79).

Community members partly attribute the degradation of the lowlands to the boreholes (Figure 47). Jilo Gobbu, an elder, told me: ′One of the things that has made the *Booda* plain tired is the coming of the water pumps. Before the pumps came all the land up to *Nogoba* was covered by grass. At that time we used other places for water’. The boreholes were originally constructed by the government for the National Park to supply water to the Park animals. They have now been taken over by the community and are funded and maintained by them at their own cost with little to no assistance from the local administration or development organisations. This requires money for fuel and maintenance which community members struggle to meet due to

rising fuel prices and inability to sell animals at a good price during the dry season. People have become more or less permanently based in these areas due to their need for water.

Figure 48: Cattle at Booda waiting to use borehole during drought. Source: Author

Lack of grazing in the lowlands affects other areas. The mountain was rarely used in the past, it was considered dangerous for the animals, but now it is relied on. Jilo Gobbu, a prominent elder said:

> 'In the past the area was in good condition, there was a really nice smell when you walked around. We used to take the cattle to good grazing places where the grass was giving birth and flowering. Grass had a special quality and made the cattle fat and strong. Such a time will not come again. The grass was so plentiful there was no need to go to the mountain, people even feared the mountain and wanted to keep their cattle away from it. Now the cows have to climb, even to the high places, in search of grass. Even the lower parts of the mountain are without grass today. Before everyone could get enough grazing from the lowlands, but the grass has gone from these places. The conditions have forced the animals to graze in hard places'.

During the dry season animals frequently go for two or three days before they are taken back to the boreholes for water. This has a detrimental effect on the animals and their owners, making them weak and susceptible to disease, which affects their ability to compete at market.

Recent studies report a change in the number of animals held per person. 'Among the Karrayyu, richer households owned over 400 cattle and 100 camels in the past. Even the poorest Karrayyu family used to own 100 cattle and 35 camels. The average herd size today is only 12 cattle and 16 camels' (Elias & Abdi, 2010: 13). People are becoming poorer as a result of the changing circumstances. ‘A decline in the number of cows per person reduces per capita milk production and forces people to buy grain or grow crops’(Coppock, 1994: 3). Community members, particularly the vulnerable, are diversifying their herds to include more small stock, putting greater pressure on resources. In addition, productivity of the remaining livestock is diminishing due to the deterioration of the rangelands. Traditional values and laws which regulate human interactions with the environment are increasingly challenged as people face increasing poverty. There is increased felling of trees and charcoal production which leads to further environmental degradation. A member of the Karrayyu community cited by Demie (2006: 37) said: 'In the past, when the Karrayyu *Gadaa* was strong, it was prohibited to cut flowers let alone trees without the permission of *Gadaa* leaders. But now many individuals cut big trees for charcoal making and firewood without consent'. Charcoal production is looked down upon by community members as a means of generating income, but is one of the only options available for certain families, particularly female headed households. In their attempts to survive, community members are forced into destructive cycles in which poor resource management exacerbates environmental degradation, which itself deepens poverty (Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987: 48).

Climatic Changes

The land was not always as dry and degraded as it is now (Figure 48). The Awash Valley was once renowned for its biodiversity. Thesiger wrote the following description in 1930, 'A lovely spot on the Awash River... There is thick jungle along the river and every sort of bird... it is very thick bush... This seems like a paradise for game' (1996: 19). This is the land that the Karrayyu elders recall in their stories, a golden time when life was plentiful. Rainfall patterns have

changed and drought is now a dominant factor. Karrayyu are aware of the cyclical nature of drought, they used to experience drought every seven years known as *Bona Safti*, and developed coping mechanisms in response. But now there is drought almost every year. The community is observing rising temperatures, as well as the reduction in rainfall. They report that the climate has become hotter and drier than previously. A young woman commented: 'The weather conditions have completely changed when you compare them with the past. The drought and heat was not as harsh as it is now. The rain used to come in its own season, it was cool and green everywhere'. I experienced drought during fieldwork, and people's desperate need for rain. This was worst during periods when rain was expected, but nothing came. 'All month is hot. Late in the afternoons, a dry wind blows across the land. But there is no rain, only distant rumblings that herald nothing. The sky spits nothing towards earth' (Wick, 1996: 1).

Figure 49: Degraded lowland area. Source: Author

These changes could be due to global changes or local level changes which have affected the local climate, or a combination of both. Elders report that they can no longer read the weather as they could in the past, they even report changes in the night sky. Nothing follows the old patterns. One elder commented: 'When we compare the weather and the conditions in the past with those of today it is like the difference between night and day'. This echoes reports of other indigenous communities, for example Crate's (2008) work with Viliui Sakha of north-eastern Siberia.

The Karrayyu report significant loss in biodiversity as a result of changes in rainfall which is exacerbated by the change in grazing patterns. Bulga Jilo, an elder, described these changes:

> 'On the mountain there used to be a lot of grass and small trees which were easy for animals to eat, but the grass is less now and the small trees have finished. There used to be *citaa mana,* a grass which was long and used for house building; *Dareemo* which was soft and grew quickly and could be dried quickly; *Eegehilloo*, *Hudduuraphii*, *Sanbalexaa*, *Migiraa, Hoola Gabbiis*. Now these are rare, *Eegehilloo* and *Citaa Mana* have completely finished, you cannot find them anymore. Before these grasses grew well in the rainy season and bore a lot of seeds which stuck to the animals and people's clothes. Previously they grew thick and well and made it difficult for people to move. Now they cannot grow because there is not enough rain and they are eaten quickly by the animals. If there is enough rain they can grow, if there was excess land for the animals to graze they could recover, but it has become difficult'.

Due to the intimate relationship the Karrayyu have with their environment, with the loss of biodiversity comes the loss of culture. 'It is painful to lose our *Oda* trees because we lose our culture with them' (Frejaques, 2003: 267). This also applies to the loss of wildlife. Participants spoke about the massive decline of wildlife species that were once dominant in the area, this was a prominent theme in life histories. There were reportedly ostrich, elephants, buffalo, zebra, rhinoceros and many other species in the recent past, all of which are now extinct in the area. Ironically, this loss of wildlife is partly associated with the establishment of the Park which was originally used as a hunting ground for Haile Selassie. Elders described wildlife coexisting with their livestock before the Park. A Karrayyu elder told Edjeta (2002): 'We know how to rear cattle and how to live with the wildlife. Our cattle are more familiar with oryx than the cars of the government are to the oryx ... We are forbidden to live in harmony with nature while hunters are allowed to kill the wildlife in our own land'. Of course this decline is likely to

be a result of complex factors, not least decreasing pasture land and climatic changes, and has cultural ramifications, similar to the loss of Oda trees. The Beisa Oryx is called *saala* in Afaan Oromo, also the word for respect. A traditional proverb states 'when there is no oryx, there is no respect'.

Changes in the climate have not only affected the biodiversity and the wildlife, they have also affected the domestic animals kept by the community. The Karrayyu used to use horses, which are an important part of traditional Oromo culture. Many Oromo groups are renowned for their horsemanship. Haji Kasaru recalled: 'In the past every male (householder) had a horse. Horses were used for fighting and also for hunting'. Changes in the climate have made it very difficult for horses to survive now, due to lack of grass, rain and rising temperatures. Camels can no longer be kept around the permanent homesteads due to the lack of vegetation, and have to move over long distances to get sufficient grazing. Therefore, those residing in the permanent homesteads no longer have access to camel milk during the dry season. Donkeys have replaced camels as pack animals because they are hardy and can survive on relatively little. Karrayuu herds used to consist of more cattle than any other species, camels and small stock constituted smaller proportions of Karrayuu herds (Edjeta 2002:65). In recent years, the composition of Karrayyu household herds has begun to change in favour of small stock. Recurrent drought affects cattle more than the other animals, and cattle are more expensive to restock. The changes highlight coping strategies being utilised by the community, but they also indicate massive changes in the climate and environment which seem to be getting worse.

***Biyya Karrayyu* Video**

Biyya Karrayyu translates as 'Karrayyu land'. Landscape and environment was a common theme in the videos, something observed in other indigenous media productions. This is significant because, as Strang writes, landscapes are 'acted on and lived within', and are transformed by human endeavours; landscape therefore materially reflects human engagement. 'If we want to understand ourselves we would do well to take a searching look at our landscapes' (2008: 51). This video focuses on the changes that are taking place in the Karrayyu landscape, which in turn affect the Karrayyu way of life.

Participants wanted audiences to understand the changes that have taken place and tried to give a visual representation of how their land looked in the past. To do this they went into the Awash National Park to take photographs and video footage of the rangelands, wildlife and plant species that had once been present throughout the Karrayyu area.

When editing the footage they wanted to make a visual contrast between the places under conservation and how their land looks today. This marked a real turning point in my understanding of the processes of environmental change. It enabled me to get a visual picture of the landscape described by the elders in the life stories and of the dramatic changes they have witnessed within their lifetime.

The film focuses on places of significance for the Karrayyu, namely Fantalle mountain, the plain lands where the majority of Karrayyu pastoralists live today, the areas of land they have lost to the Awash National Park, the areas around the Awash River which have been taken by the Sugar Plantation and Lake Nogoba. The importance of these places to the Karrayyu is emphasised and their loss and deterioration is a source of great sadness.

Physical and Psychological impacts

Karrayyu way of life revolves around the presence of animals and animal products, particularly milk. The reduction in grazing and water has impacted on people's ability to survive from their herds. In the past one cow would give one *ciccoo* (milk container), approximately one litre capacity or more. One elderly woman said:

> 'When I was a child milk from one or two cows would fill one *ciccoo*. Now these joys and successes have gone and everything has started to change. The ground is hot and unbearable to stand upon. The grasses are disappearing from the ground. There is no butter in the house. *Marqa* (porridge) is without butter and dry'.

At the current time, even during the rainy season, a *ciccoo* is only half filled by one or two cows. In the dry season milk becomes so scarce that only children are allowed to drink it. Women report that the quality as well as the quantity of milk is affected. 'In the past milk was plentiful, it would become thick and difficult to drink. When we churned the milk it would produce a lot of butter. The milk is not like this today. Such a time will not come again' (Halko Fantalle).

The Karrayyu have become increasingly reliant on grain over the last 20 years which, combined with diminishing livestock assets, leads to increasing vulnerability. Many households have to sell their livestock to buy necessities including food and medical care. Most of the Karrayyu are now reliant on food aid for survival. 93% of households face food insecurity, irrespective of their economic group, and 20% are food insecure throughout the entire year (Abdi & Elias, 2010: 14). Food insecurity and the shift in diet impacts on the health and quality of life of community members. One elderly women commented:

> 'In the past we drank milk and ate butter, you drank milk early in the morning, once you had drank enough milk you didn't need anything more for the whole day. In the past old people could not move from the home because they became fat, but our elder years have become dry'.

Elders comment that youngsters are getting physically smaller, weaker and more susceptible to disease. Children suffer from malnutrition and a range of skin diseases.

Women are particularly vulnerable because they tend to consume less than other family members. During times of milk scarcity I observed women giving what they had to men and children, leaving very little for themselves. The majority of women rely on *hoojjaa* (drink made from roasted coffee husks) to get them through the day and when food is available they find it difficult to eat due to gastric problems. A medical team visiting the community during my fieldwork noted that many of the women they treated suffer from anaemia which causes problems during child birth.

These changes also have psychological impacts. Milk and butter play a vital role in how Karrayyu people 'feel'. Women emphasise the value of butter for their hair and skin, and to beautify their bodies. Robee Jibituu, a female elder, describes this: 'In the past if the family bought us white clothes we must anoint these clothes with butter to blacken and make them shine, we put them over the smoke of *Qayya* to make them smell good. Our pride has become less and less as our culture started to disappear'. The lack of butter and milk is a symbol of poverty to the Karrayyu. Bulga Jilo, a male elder, explained:

> 'The black colour has symbolic value in Oromo culture and for the Karrayyu. In the past we were described as '*Oromo wayaa gurraatti*' meaning 'the Oromos of black clothes'. The blackness of the *wayaa (*clothes) is because of the butter we use. When you put the butter on the white *wayaa* it becomes black. Although they were black they had a good smell because they use special *qayya* (incense) which acts like perfume. In the past all Karrayyu's houses were full of butter. It is recently that our clothes have become white. Now there is not as much butter even for feeding let alone to paint on our clothes and materials and our clothes have became white in recent years. Some may see this as a sign of progress and of good hygiene, but for Karrayyu white clothes are a symbol of drought and hardship. White clothes means that there is not enough milk and butter. Now everyone's clothes are white'.

Animals and milk are also required for rituals. As the number of cattle, and available milk, has declined people are unable to go to the ritual places. Lack of milk was referred to by all participants. When conducting interviews every Karrayyu, without exception, remembered a better quality of life in the past, vastly preferable to what they experience in the present.

Culture Change and Gender

The impact of changes within the community are not evenly distributed. Men are affected, having to go further away from home for longer periods to find grazing for the cattle and camels. Men face greater risk of death or injury due to increased levels of conflict, and they report increased tensions with neighbouring groups when they migrate with the camels. Due to pressures to diversify the family's income they spend more time away from their family and stock. However, the changes are perhaps hardest on Karrayyu women. Environment changes have led to a shift in women's workloads. Women are traditionally responsible for numerous tasks including running the household, herding and taking care of livestock, and labour shifts significantly according to the seasons. Due to changes in the environment women now have to travel further away from home for water, grass and firewood. These changes, as well as adding to their workload, also impact on the material culture of the community.

Figure 50: Karrayyu woman making traditional milking container. Source: Author

Women find it increasingly hard to find the grasses which are required to make the traditional milking containers (Figure 49). Hardly any women still wear the traditional skin skirts (*walluu*) and there is generally a reduction in the number of women processing skins. There is also no longer enough grass to build traditional Karrayyu houses and houses are increasingly built from mud. House building is shifting from a female role to a male role as a result. Elder women commented that younger girls no longer practise traditional crafts because of changes in their workloads. Everyday tasks are now more labour intensive and craft-work is seen as an added burden. This was mentioned by women of all ages. Young women in their twenties commented that those younger than them no longer practise crafts, such as rope making. A middle aged Karrayyu woman, Halko Fantalle, said:

> 'When one of our daughters is about to be married we tire to prepare the traditional materials until our backs become sore and exhausted. But it is not of value because the materials are no longer used in the same way. It does not give sense now for the people'.

In order to lighten their work load women increasingly buy modern or readymade materials from the market. However, elders see as having a negative effect on the culture and society. Roba Jibituu, a female elder, said:

> 'Traditionally everything is shaped from the cattle skins, we use them to carry things like water, cereals and the like, we use them for sleeping, for dressing, for feeding, all are the products of animals. Now our houses are becoming full of plastic bags which are the symbol of the devil, and have no weight and no respect'.

These changes are not necessarily occurring out of choice and have major psychological impacts on women because they affect aspects of the culture that are key to women's identity. This is particularly true of the erosion of ritual activities. When ritual practices were still influential women played a key role in society. In the current context where politics is increasing and the traditional religion is declining women are losing influence.

Internal Changes and Choices

There has also been an internal questioning or challenge to Karrayyu world views through exposure to western education, the influence of major religions and the market economy. The next section attempts to provide an overview of these dynamics.

Religion

Karrayyu traditional religion and ways of praying are changing due to the influx of new religions. Many Karrayyu have converted to Islam, particularly from *Baaso* moiety. Men are attracted to Islam through their interactions with town. A young male Karrayyu student said:

> ‘Men usually come to town, they have several friends, they talk to people. People from town convince them that they have no religion, they say they are the only people with no religion, men are easily convinced that way. It is mostly men who come to town for markets and other things, so it is about exposure′.

People are laughed at and seen as backwards if they continue old ways. Roba Waday, Rado's husband, used a proverb to illustrate this: '*Ilaali Oromo moofaa ammayyuu harree oofaa*' (Look at the old Oromo still running with the donkey). The donkey is used by the Karrayyu as an insult, a symbol of someone who is foolish, and in this context refers to someone stuck in their ways who practices outdated things. Roba Waday is particularly aware of these views because his father is *Qalluu* of *Dullacha*. Those from *Dullacha*, who practice *Waaqeffata* are mocked by the largely Muslim *Baaso*, who consider the Muslim faith to be modern and developed. Bulga Jilo, a male elder from *Baaso*, explained: 'People started to hate their traditional practices. When elders like me talk about these things, the young generation underestimate us, as if our ideas are old and backwards'.

Marriage plays an important role in the introduction of Islam. For marriage to take place between a *Waqeffata* and Muslim Karrayyu the former is required to change his/her faith to Islam. The vice-versa is not true. Elder women are much more resistant to change and often faithful to the old ways. There can be conflict within a family when a husband wants to convert to Islam but his wife does not. Roba Bulga's father is *Baaso* and converted to Islam when he was young, his mother is from *Dullacha* and is dedicated to maintaining the old traditions. This

used to cause friction, but she has recently started to participate in the Muslim ceremonies. Roba Fantalle described similar differences between his father and mother:

> 'The traditional things they have more weight among the women than the men. The women give more weight to things like *callee*, or *Qaallu* than men. Our relative carries *callee* beads to foretell the future. She comes to our house and my mother believes what she says, but my father laughs and doesn't believe. Their beliefs differ. When the Muslim religion came the men wanted to learn more about it and they were easily convinced.

It seems conversion to Islam has a disproportionate impact on women compared to men. Women are required to cover their hair, something which was not practised in the past. Bulga Jilo said: 'Now our girls and women cover their hair. Before people did not talk with you if you covered your hair like the Muslims do today. Such bad changes come from two things, one is education and the other is the Islamic religion'. It also changes the position of women. In traditional ceremonies women sit on the right of the men due to their *angafa* status but in the Muslim rituals they are firmly placed behind and away from men. Some commented that the Muslim faith is more difficult for women to practice than men. Roba Fantalle, a Karrayyu graduate whose father and elder brothers have converted to Islam, described these differences :

> 'A husband has little responsibility, he might go after animals but he has time to wash and pray. During the daytime he carries a bottle of water so he can pray anywhere. But if you see the women they are not free, they have no time to pray, to wash, it is a problem to get water. They give priority to their children or their husband, they are always busy. If the husband is Muslim, the wife will be called Muslim but you can only tell she is Muslim by the black cap she puts on her hair. Because she knows nothing about that religion she will keep doing the traditional things, she will go to the *Qaallu*, to the *callee* or *gameessa* ceremony'.

Conversion to Islam impacts on traditions like the *Gadaa* system. *Gadaa* is widely reported as weakening. Bulga Jilo explains using the example of the *Cidha* ceremony (recorded by participants):

> 'There is a big change when you compare the *Cidha* of today with the past. The ceremony was a time of joy and respect. Now this *Cidha* is not of us, it is that of our sons. I fear that when it is the turn of our grandsons it will disappear. We are devastated if we lose this; nothing is more beautiful than it. We are the cause of the disappearance of this culture. The government hasn't prohibited us to do such things, the shortcoming is with ourselves. Our people who are becoming Muslim see such

> cultural exercises as evil deeds, the imported Islam religion is the main contributor. People say: “what is the need to do such things now that we have become Muslims?” For this I can present evidence from the past *Cidha* (8 years ago). Many people, almost half of them, refused to participate in the ceremony. These were people who call themselves Muslims. Even at the recent *Cidha* there were some who persuaded people not to attend. As a result we fear it will disappear and future generations will lose this culture'.

Ashan Jilo, a Karrayyu anthropology graduate, comments on the impact that the Muslim faith has had on the *damiinaa* institution. 'Since the Karrayyu have converted to Islam they have started to take on practices that they relate to Islam, such as frequent visits to mosques and the chewing of *khat* (plant used as a stimulant)'. He states that there is a conflict between Sharia law and traditional *heera*. 'Adherence to Sharia law affects the ability of the *damiinaa* to carry out his role. Sharia law ordered its followers to visit mosque five times a day, but *heera* needs *damiinaa* to continuously visit and oversee the functioning system of his *gosa*. They are two contradictory ideas and cannot go side by side. It is impossible to move these two at same time in a day '(Jilo, 2009: 42).

Karrayyu have largely resisted Orthodox Christianity due to its associations with Amhara rule and culture. Many Oromo scholars have stated that the Oromo people have converted to Islam partly as an act of protest against State imposed Orthodox Christianity (see Jalata, 1993). Kumsa writes: 'Islam came to Oromo land through trade and conquest. Some Oromos were coercively converted, but others voluntarily embraced Islam as an act of protest against Abyssinian Coptic Orthodoxy in order to maintain their separate identity' (1997: 134). This echoes explanations by Karrayyu participants. A young Karrayyu student said:

> 'The community relate the Orthodox Church with the Amhara, they call it the Amhara religion. It is tribal, they are enemy with the Amhara and they consider that with them. As far as I know there is no Orthodox Karrayyu, only Waaqefeta Karrayyu, Pente Karrayyu especially from the young generation, the students, and Muslim Karrayyu, but no Orthodox'.

Young people attending school are more prone to convert to Protestantism. The first school for the Karrayyu was built by the Gudina Tumsa Foundation (GTF), a Protestant Christian organisation. Protestantism is gaining a foothold as a result. GTF provides a lot of encouragement and support for young girls wanting to attend school and many of the girls who

attend the GTF dormitory have converted. The influence of the Protestant religion affects the younger generations adherence to traditional ceremonies. Hawii Hawas, a young female student, explained:

> 'My religion was *Waaqeffata* before I started my education. But after I went to school I changed to the protestant religion. According to the Protestant religion ritual traditions like *Atete*, *Jaari*, *Booranticha* are forbidden. Worship at the trees, the mountain and the river are considered to be worshipping devils. In the past I used to help my family when they did such things and I used to participate in the wedding ceremonies of my friends, but I have stopped because this contradicts my religion'.

These attitudes have an effect on intergenerational relationships. Roba Bulga's sister, Rado, struggled to go to school and was supported by GTF. She subsequently converted to Christianity. When she converted she broke her *callee* (necklace) which is used for praying and threw the beads onto the ground. Her mother was devastated and got down on her hands and knees to pick up the beads so she could repair it. Sometime later Rado birth to her son, but she did not perform the *Atete* ceremony which is supposed to be performed after the birth of a child. It is considered dangerous for women if they don't not partake in these ceremonies. Rado did not perform the ceremony because it is considered by the Church to be a pagan practice and is discouraged. After the birth of her son she became plagued by bad dreams and night fevers. She explained the symptoms to her mother and was advised to perform the *Atete* ceremony. After performing the ceremony the dreams went away. This illustrates the gaps that begin to form between people from different generations as a result of such changes.

It is interesting to note that those who spoke about the negative impact of Islam were often Muslim themselves. However, many still go to the Qaallu and ask them to pray on their behalf. Looni, a young woman from Haro Qarsa said:

> ‘Now our people have become Muslims and Islam principles forbid the spiritual things we practice traditionally. But even though we have become Muslim our heart is still attached to these things. This is because the difference between today and the past is incredible, in the past we were living the joyful life, even though it was backwards'.

There is also what seems like a re-negotiation of 'culture' which involves the evaluation of 'good' culture and 'bad' culture. Rado Bulga explained:

> 'I still practise some ritual practises. I have *sinqee* and *dhibaayyuu* even though I am Christian. It is forbidden for a wife to throw her *sinqee* and *dhibaayyuu* while they are alive. I do have respect for them and preserve them. I don't believe but I still like to have them because they are beautiful sticks used in the culture. *Sinqee* is a symbol of the wife and *dhibaayyuu* a symbol of the husband. These are the critical for ones transformation in life, they are a symbol of my status as a woman'.

I wonder whether the influx of different religions, and the different choices people are making, will have a destabilising effect, particularly as the followers of different religions begin to compete. A young Karrayyu woman said:

> 'The Muslims compete for the Karrayyu because of the introduction of the Protestant religion. The Sheikhs and Muslim religious leaders are moving around the village to register the children. This is to compete with the Protestant GTF who give dormitory and school service. The Sheikhs apply to Arab countries for aid on behalf of the children so they can gain influence in the community'.

It seems that in this competitive environment *Waaqeffata* is particularly vulnerable. Ironically it is jeopardised by the belief in religious tolerance instilled by the culture. Increasingly members of the same family practice different religions. Roba Fantalle describes his family:

> 'My father has become Muslim, my mum is *Waaqeffattu*, some of my brothers are Muslims, and some are Protestant with me. For my family religion is not an issue, everyone is in a denomination for themselves. That is not a problem. These religions came after our family was established, we don't care, we are still family, with different religions, different perceptions and different outlooks'.

One wonders how long this harmony will last.

***Amantii* Video**

This video focuses on changes that have taken place in religious practices. It compares *Jinfuu*, a traditional ceremony which is performed by the *Dullacha* moiety every eight years, with the Muslim celebration of Eid performed by members of the *Baaso* moiety.

The film highlighted gaps between the generations. The *Jinfuu* ceremony is no longer practised by the *Baaso*. Footage of the *Jinfuu* ceremony was screened to a father and son from *Basso*; while the father knew about the ceremony in depth the son had no knowledge at all. This was a revelation and even the father was surprised at his son's reactions.

There are clear differences between the *Waaqeffata* ceremony and the Muslim ceremony. During the Jinfuu ceremony women and men are seated next to each other indicating their equality, and the women are placed on the right hand side indicating their *angafa* (senior) status. In the Muslim ceremony the women are covered and placed in a row behind the men. The male leaders can be seen preaching and appear confident but the girl who gets up to speak falters and has to be urged forward. In the *Waaqeffata* ceremony, although the *Qaallu* can be seen leading prayers he is supported by others including women. This perhaps serves to illustrate some of the changing dynamics and the shifting roles of men and women.

The video shows how hard the *Dullacha* elders have tried to maintain their sacred sites, and highlights the interconnectedness between *Waaqeffata* and the *Gadaa* system. The elder states: 'if there is no *Jinfuu* there is no *Gadaa*'. In his speech there is a sense of inevitability, a belief that no matter what they do the Karrayyu cannot make a difference to the changes that are underway. The elder says they can only be saved if *Waaqa* decides to intervene and support them, but it seems he doesn't believe this will happen which reflects the belief of many elders that *Waaqa* has turned his back on them.

Education

Modern education has had a huge impact on the Karrayyu. Before the introduction of schools in rural areas it was extremely difficult for Karrayyu children to access education; some were sent to live with friends and relatives in town. The Karrayyu were looked down on by townspeople and children living in town often had to change their name, religion and hide their identity in order to be accepted. Tadesse has written in relation to Ethiopia: 'Schools rename children who have local names; teachers bully children who come to school wearing local clothing and encourage salvaged urban-style clothes which are often too expensive for parents to afford. This is discrimination as experienced locally and collectively' (Tadesse, 2005: 7). These attitudes had a major impact on the psychology of the children who attended schools in town. Roba Fantalle described his experience:

> 'When I moved to town for school I couldn't play in the neighbourhood with the rest of the boys and girls of my age, I couldn't communicate. I couldn't have milk anymore, I was not with my mum. It was a complete shift of life, and of surroundings. All the games changed, I couldn't play what I was used to playing. I was supposed to adapt to that environment. I remember people asking me what was wrong when the family or relatives came to visit me because I lost weight and became really thin. I couldn't stand some of their meals. It was a really hard time'.

The difficulties faced by Roba Fantalle's generation led to elders pushing for the establishment of rural schools for the community. The first school to serve the Karrayyu was established in Dhebiti in 1995. Roba Bulga's family live close to the school and it has had a big impact on them. Roba's elder sister, Rado, was determined to go to school and rebelled against an arranged marriage. She met and married her husband while she was in school. This was a personal choice which goes against Karrayyu culture of arranged marriages. Her resistance to her parents' decision brought huge shame on the family. This was made worse by events that unfolded some years later when Roba and Gada Hawas, his childhood friend, ran away from home because they found out about their impending marriages. Both wanted to continue attending school, and they knew once they were married this would limit their ability to pursue formal education. Gada was the eldest son of the *Abba Bokku* of *Michillee tuuta* of *Dullacha* moiety. His father decided to send him to school because he wanted his son to have a better life, but he was criticised for doing this. Gada's younger sister, Hawii, then proceeded to refuse

marriage, along with a friend from another prominent family. The two girls ran away and hid on the mountain for one week with no support or shelter. Their actions have in many ways set a trend for other youngsters to follow.

The decision about whether to accept school or not has far reaching implications for both parents and their children. Karrayyu parents are faced with the dilemma of either sending children to school or to herd. Since livestock are the basis of the Karrayyu's subsistence this is an extremely difficult choice. If they send all their children to school there will be no-one to look after the animals or the elders. Many families refuse to send their eldest sons because it is thought that he will not be able to take responsibility for the family. Roba Fantalle describes the advice his father was given when deciding who to send to school:

> 'My father went to a man who had already sent his son to school to discuss what to do. During that time only my older brothers, Jilo and Boru, were born. My father wanted to send Jilo to school but the man said “the first son is an eye for the whole family so don't send your first son to school. Sending your first son is like making the rest of your family blind”. So my father lost courage until I was born. I was the one who went to school, actually I was forced'.

If children go to school against the wishes of their family they face being ostracised. This has not stopped a number of young people running away from home in order to follow their dream of education. For some this is a momentous decision because of the position they are expected to take in the community. Gada Hawas for example, as the eldest son of the *Abba Bokku*, was expected to inherit the position of *Abba Bokku* on the death of his father. His resistance had massive implications for his *tuuta*, *gosa* and family as it left them without an *Abba Bokku*.

School attendance also affects traditions like the practice of widow inheritance. Roba Bulga initially refused marriage, along with *Gadaa*, because he was determined to follow his education. He believed that gaining an education would enable him to help his community. Roba faced much resistance from his family. His father arranged for Roba to be married when he was fourteen. Roba realised that wedding arrangements were being made and ran away just before the wedding day. He stayed away for three years and had no communication with his family throughout this time. The wife meant for Roba was given instead to his elder brother Jilo, who already had a wife of his own. During my time with Roba's family, Jilo was killed.

Roba as the next in line was expected to inherit his wives. Roba felt that he was unable to take on marital responsibility for the women and their children and again refused to marry. This led to much heartache within the family, particularly on the part of Roba's mother who fears that the community and the culture will be destroyed if they do not adhere to the traditional ways. It is a violation of tradition for a man to inherit his brother's wives while there is an existing elder brother. In this case there was no alternative and the wives were inherited by Roba's younger brother Fantalle, who already had a young wife of his own. This meant that Fantalle, who is only twenty three years old, had to take on both *angafa* responsibilities and care for Jilo's three wives and five children. It was not an easy decision for Roba to take, and he was aware of the consequences. Below is an extract from a poem that Roba wrote shortly after his brother died expressing his loss and confusion:

I did not overcome the duty of brotherhood
By making *sadaqaa*, *deega* (slaughtering cattle for funeral ceremony)
And I did not inherit your wives,
As our customary law tells us to
I followed not the way that used to be,
But the way it came to be...
Schooling to plough my brain
Of which means is limitless
And the fruit is endless
Be it helpful or harmful
That made me a coward,
Denying me courage to retaliate...
I just talk and murmur…
Think day and night,
Worries blur my thoughts,
Neither able to keep vigil nor able to wake others up
Unlike my father, or my custom
That made me to leap and leap
Yet, my beloved brother
I promise you one thing
Though you hear me not
I promise to care of your children
And to support your wives
That I promise with all I posses
And with all that I will have...
I promise to raise them.
I swear not to disregard
This holy unbreakable oath

Girls in particular are restricted from attending school. This has been exacerbated since the introduction of schooling due to the fact that traditional gender norms are broken down in the school environment. Many girls stay in dormitories because their homes are far from the school. There has been trouble in recent years because of the rate of pregnancy among girls attending dormitory. This is taboo in a community where girls are expected to maintain their virginity until marriage. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that girls are carefully supervised, but it does not provide sex education because of its Christian mission. It is often girls' mothers who resist sending them to school. The complexities of gendered attitudes to education are illustrated by this elder women's opinion:

> 'School for women is bringing problems for our culture and traditions. A girl will learn in the class with boy students, men and the women by nature crave for each other. If they have sexual intercourse it has bad consequences, the burden is left not only on the girl if she gets pregnant, but also on her father because no one would ask a girl who is in school for marriage. Unless God leads them in the right way it will be bad. In such cases the family is blamed because of the unexpected pregnancy of their girl and there is much gossip about this family. People say "what is the importance of sending the girls to the school if they get pregnant", things like this damage the family's reputation. If your daughter gives birth at home before marriage it harms the reputation of the mother, these things are shameful in our culture'.

Children who go to school are unlikely to return to the traditional way of life afterwards. Knowledge of animals, crucial to successful herding, is often lost through modern schooling. Information about the herd needs to be constantly revised and updated as animals are bought, sold and die. This knowledge can be quickly lost if children are away for a significant period of time, for example going away to school. Roba Fantalle explains: 'My knowledge of the animals was less because I stayed in town. The only memory I have is of minor things, the camels have different categories so you can check whether all are there or not. How to care when a camel is giving birth, or when they are sick, how they traditionally take care of them. Otherwise I have little know how of how they traditionally do things.'

Once children have gone to school they become separated from their old way of life, and from their families and find it hard to participate. Roba describes this:

> 'It was difficult for me to go from being in town to being back with the family. Once I was used to the life in the town, I found that world difficult when I went back. It

> became strange, even the feeling I had for my family changed. Now I am living the other life, the life my father wished me to live. He didn't want me to follow his life so that's why he put me in school and I am just the way he wanted me to be. Now I can't get back how they live, I can't even interact, sometimes I find it difficult to discuss things together. We are in different understandings and our outlooks are different'.

This separation is not made easier by the school system which makes very little provision for pastoralist lifestyles. Much of the knowledge children learn in school is removed from the traditional way of life. Bainton has written about the impact that the western school system has on indigenous groups: 'These processes ... trap students to suffer in a western school system that simply has no possibility of engagement with indigenous knowledge. Through its dislocatory practices, indigenous knowledge is lost in transmission, through its process of nullification, the possibility of indigenous knowledge being learnt is limited' (2007: 140).

Although many children attend primary school in rural areas, they move to town for secondary school which exposes them to a very different way of life. Expectations placed upon them increase, and their aspirations shift. A young male Karrayyu student explained:

> 'If you go to school in Matahara you are influenced by town things. You are attracted to modernisation and you think modernisation means living that way, joining town and looking for better jobs, and even crossing borders if you get a chance. Young people are influenced by these things more and more'.

Once they have access to education and experience life in town, many students find it difficult seeing their families struggle. One male graduate explained:

> 'Some even want to go somewhere else and live rather than staying here and seeing the problems the community are facing. I feel the same way, if I'm not doing anything here, if I can't help I don't want to stay here and watch what's going on, you don't feel good. I would prefer to leave at least to avoid seeing the problems'.

These feelings are worsened by continuing discrimination against Karrayyu children by teachers in town. During my fieldwork a group of Karrayyu children were publicly humiliated by a prominent teacher at the secondary school in Matahara.

Like many indigenous communities, elder Karrayyu are worried about the relevance of western education to their culture and lifestyle. This is affirmed by the fact that once children graduate from school there is no guarantee they will get employment, or an adequate wage. None of this year's group of grade 12 students passed their exams which enable them to gain places at University. This may be due to prejudices in the school system, and/or pressures that Karrayyu students face in comparison to children living in town. None of this seems to be taken into account. If they do not get accepted to University then they are stuck in low level jobs, with low wages and it difficult for them to go back to the traditional ways, so they find themselves in limbo.

However, this is not always the case. Rado Bulga, despite her education, made the decision to move back to Dhebiti with her young son rather than maintain rented accommodation in Matahara; although this may be due to economic reasons and a lack of opportunities for employment as a pastoralist woman. She believes that pastoralism and life in the countryside is preferable and easier to life in town. Although she has gone back to live with her family, she believes that education has benefited her: 'There are many things that differentiate me from my friends who didn't attend school. By this time they have raised as many as five or six children. They get pregnant before they have brought up the ones they already have'. An uneducated Karrayyu woman commented:

> 'Education has benefited our girls. If you look at the past, women had no right to refuse marriage to someone she didn't like. If anyone asked to marry her, her father accepted regardless of her consent or the age of that man. Even old men could marry young girls. In this case education is important for deciding things for yourself'.

Rado echoes this sentiment:

> 'Education is vital for Karrayyu in many ways, especially women. It is vital that we learn self-determination, but if women get the chance of education they should not live as they like and bring bad consequences such as pregnancy out of marriage. She who has an education can predict her future, evaluate the present by learning from the past. One who is educated can separate bad culture from the good ones. It is this kind of person who can preserve the culture of the community for the next generations'.

This highlights that modern education leads to a questioning and re-evaluation of Karrayyu traditions. Roba Fantalle in particular has reflected on this. He trained as a vet and has an awareness of both Karrayyu animal knowledge and modern veterinary knowledge:

> 'If I hadn’t gone to school I would have grown up in that culture and I would be quite different now. I would be caring for my animals. Now I don't support that way, you shouldn't keep animals for charity, they should help you. You don't just keep them for harmony. They should be profitable, there should be an economic return. They keep animals and only take one or two for household consumption, for their clothes, or if there is a ceremony. At these times they take one or two, but with regret, sell them and take the money. To the modern way of thinking this seems like a waste. But keeping a large number of animals of different types is their world and their destiny. They want to keep everything intact, which is useless if you think as a modern practitioner. This is how my thinking has been affected and I don't think I will get that back'.

Elders realise the impact that education has on their culture, as well as the benefits, and face a dilemma. Roba Bulga's father describes his attitude to education:

> 'Children going to school has had an effect on the culture, they leave the culture that they are born with and they take the culture that they learn at school. I have sent two children to school and three are left. When I compare my son Roba's life with the others, Roba's way of life is good. But when I think about the children who maintain the traditional way of life, the ones who are with me, I think they are better because they can share everything and can support me. The chance Roba has to encourage the culture, to participate and practice, is very limited. He has already left, he cannot be part of it anymore.
>
> Me and my wife are tired, we cannot look after the animals ourselves, so we will be in the hands of those who are educated, like Roba. Some have gone to school and the others are on the way to follow them. When I compare those who follow the modern way and those who follow the traditional way I see that they cannot be together. They cannot support each other by mixing. I am worried that the culture will disappear. I worry about the life of those who are uneducated, their life will be bad because it is destroyed by conflict and drought.
>
> When I compare the two ways of life I think it is better if I send the rest of the children to school. The life of the pastoralists today has become bitter and hard when you compare it with the old way. During drought these people cannot save their animals or themselves, so the life of those who are educated is better. Those who are uneducated cannot shift the educated ones to their way, but the educated ones can shift the uneducated by sharing their ideas and their ways which can improve their life. Only in this way can they join together'.

Change has taken place at a rapid rate, causing disruption and confusion among the community. There are no guidelines in the traditional law to cope with such circumstances. Frejaques notes 'the *Abba Boku* as an individual and the *Gadaa* as a class, continuously have to cope with new situations for which there is no precedence in *Gadaa* legislation' (2003: 118). People have to figure out what to do as they go along, but they are fearful of the decisions they are making and the consequences for the future. Even the Karrayyu students who represent the communities hope for the future have no confidence in their abilities: ‘The future of the Karrayyu is in question. The responsibility for our future is on the youngsters who are educated to take our people out of this hardship, but I have no hope in our youngsters'. This is tragic, as it is the younger generations who must now forge a path.

Urbanisation

Until recently there was little in the way of urban development in Fantalle *woreda*. There are two main centers in the *woreda*, Matahara and Haro Adi, as well as the labour camps for the plantation. The origin of Matahara town is linked to the construction of the Ethio-Djibouti railway line which took place in the years 1897-1917 (Malifu, 2006). The railway project established many camps along the rail way, and Matahara was one of the camps used for technical check ups. At that time, Matahara consisted of a few Ethiopian Somalis who worked on the railway and Amhara who operated as petty traders. None of the Karrayuu participated in the camp, either as rail workers or urban dwellers, and remained in the surrounding rural areas. Matahara grew after the introduction of the main asphalt road that links Addis Ababa to Djibouti. These developments all took place on land traditionally occupied by Karrayyu. Today there are still very few Karrayyu pastoralists living in town. The majority of inhabitants are from other ethnic groups. Shops and businesses are almost exclusively owned by people from other ethnic groups. Despite benefiting some, urban development has impacted heavily on the Karrayyu. As the towns grow so do the numbers of people attempting small scale agriculture on land surrounding the town, the edges of the Awash River and the plantations, thereby taking more land away from the Karrayyu.

Urban dwellers look down on the Karrayyu. The authors of the Awash Park Management Plan wrote: 'It could be said that they (Karrayyu) have not been integrated into the more developed

society of local communities, most townspeople still considering them to be dirty, poor and unworthy of any form of respect' (1993: 239). This echoes Tadesse's description of discrimination in Ethiopia based on ethnicity: 'Members of larger ethnic groups that have wielded power since the time of conquest discriminate against ethnic minorities from the newly conquered areas in terms of their skin colour, the part of the country they come from, the language they use, and their ethnicity and religious belief. The abuses directed against indigenous groups and ethnic minorities are mainly verbal. The food they eat, the clothes they wear and their customs are subjects of derision'. He then goes on: 'Even in their own territories in government outposts where police and a few other civil servants dwell, members of indigenous groups are bullied, verbally assaulted and even beaten. Their customs and religious practices are despised. Their hair styles are condemned. The food they eat is considered to stink. Nomads are considered to be idle wanderers. Often schools, missionary organisations and officials of government lead campaigns against the "backward" way of life of these groups' (2005: 7). In response, the Karrayyu label townspeople *diina kofoo uffattu* which means 'the enemy who wear trousers' (Jilo: 2009). The Karrayyu are distinguished from townspeople by their wearing of *marto,* a white cloth which is wrapped around the waist and a key part of traditional dress.

In the past, the Karrayyu had little need to enter town. They produced most of their own food as milk, traded for grain and used cash sparingly to buy discretionary items such as coffee, shoes or sugar. However, with the changing conditions, they have come to rely increasingly on goods from town and have become less self-sufficient. The change in diet from a majority milk-based diet to grain-based diet means that people have to travel to town every market day to purchase food. Jilo Gile, elder brother of Fantalle Gile explained:

> 'Today people need a lot of *marqa*, they eat it quickly and are hungry again quickly. Before the people didn't feel hungry like they do today. Today we are always checking whether we have enough food/maize to last us, before the food runs out we have to make sure we go and buy more. Previously people did not worry like this because we had enough milk and butter'.

Men are mainly responsible for going to town to buy grain. Many of the elder and uneducated women, resist going to town and generally dislike and fear urban centres. I witnessed the extent of this feeling when Fantalle Gile's mother refused to go to the clinic in town even though she

needed medical assistance. Roba Bulga's mother also refused to go to Addis Ababa, both when her husband was sick and needed surgery and when her son graduated from University. This is perhaps because there is no role for women in town, they are out of their depth in an unfamiliar environment which they do not know how to navigate. During my fieldwork Roba Bulga suggested buying a house in town for his parents so they could have an easier time in their old age. While Roba's father was receptive to the idea Roba's mother would not even consider it. But elder members of the community face increasing difficulties maintaining their lifestyle in the rural areas as the support around them decreases with greater numbers of younger community members leaving to pursue work and education opportunities.

Greater exposure to urban centers is cited by community members and researchers as the cause of a number of changes. There are concerns that the *gosa* system is starting to weaken. because it can no longer exercise the same amount of control over its members as they move further afield. Urbanisation also results in Karrayyu traditional norms and values being replaced by urban values. Ashen Jilo writes: 'nowadays Karrayu`s *Gadaa* and *aadaa* lacks purity ... their traditional roles have declined in recent decades because of external factors such as displacement, recurrent drought and continuous interaction with the market and market place ... as a result social norms, values, beliefs and social relations are changing' (Jilo, 2009: 2).

Establishment of urban centres has inevitably facilitated more effective administration of pastoralist communities. Due a lack of educated Karrayyu community members, Fantalle *woreda* is largely administrated by Ethiopians from other ethnic groups. With the introduction of federalism government staff are largely Oromos, but they are from other areas and do not necessarily represent Karrayyu interests. In addition, as government institutional influence has grown, indigenous institutions have been undermined. The KA (*Kebele* Association*)* and PA (Pastoralist Association) systems are cited by researchers and community members as a key factor in this decline. Community members complain that the *kebele* structure, which divides the community according to geographical location, does not correlate with traditional systems of organisation, particularly as many are still mobile. The power and influence of traditional decision making assemblies is reduced as State influence becomes more pervasive. Whereas there used to be only one government representative for the community, there are now 31 representatives per *kebele*. These representatives take part in *gosa* meetings, *tuuta* meetings and

community wide meetings and represent the government point of view because there are benefits for doing so. This results in internal dissent and has a major effect on levels of cohesion and harmony, and in turn on the Karrayyu sense of community and identity. 'Local appointed authorities backed by the state create fictions in which there is no local representation. Community participation is in fact disabled by forms of state intervention and 'decentralised depotism' (Ribot cited Watts & Peet, 2004: 66).

Community members comment that people are becoming more individualistic as a result of increased interactions with urban centres. Some Karrayyu have started to sell milk, this was given as an example of the rise in individualistic behaviour and is seen as a sign that cultural norms are devalued in favour of monetary benefits. 'People start giving high value for money and start believing in cash than the culture of reciprocity' (Jilo, 2009: 43). This results in traditional support systems being undermined which is a source of concern. People comment that urban-based support mechanisms cannot provide in the same way due to certain fundamental differences. One elder said: *'Gosa* is not like the *idire* and *iqub* in the towns, with them if you don't contribute payment they cannot support you. The *gosa* supports you regardless'. Ashan Jilo (2009) observes that higher value is given to urban products compared to traditional livestock products. Due to their increased interaction with towns, men prefer hotels, soft drinks, *injeera* and *khat* to traditional products associated with Karrayyu lifestyle, such as milk, butter and meat. This is demonstrated at *Gadaa* meetings where soft drinks and *khat* are provided as refreshments, rather than traditional milk and porridge. This may, however, be partly due to the fact that women who prepare the food are struggling to provide milk and butter for large numbers due to declining milk yields.

Ghaffar (2002) describes how in Sudan small urban centers exploit and extract surplus from rural people in general and from pastoral communities in particular. This results in deterioration in the quality of rural and pastoral life. Many acknowledged that increased interactions between pastoralists and nearby urban centres, and the process of commercialising livestock and livestock products, is one of the main survival strategies in response to overgrazing, the destruction of the pastoral habitat, and unsustainable land use. But unfortunately 'The dominance of the market values over non-market ones and the emergence of terms of trade

under the global system, do not work in favour of the pastoralists, and have further increased their marginalisation' (Ghaffar, 2002: 3).

The Decline of Karrayyu Pastoralism

Figure 51: Karrayyu pastoralist. Source: Author

Karrayyu life histories are a catalogue of disappearances, things which made up their life world that are no longer present. These losses have impacted heavily on them. Things they once counted on are shifting, changing and fading. Their world is changing dramatically in a short space of time. For some, particularly elders, the sense of rapid change is devastating. Bulga Jilo told me:

> 'When I compare my life with my children's life there is a great difference, they cannot be compared. Recently when the great winds came I went out into the wind to kill myself. Rather than living such a life, dying is better. We feel sad for those who have died but they are better than us because they are free from this life. Elders do not have hope because we compare it with the life we had before, we prefer to die soon'.

It seems the Karrayyu pastoralists are fighting a losing battle. At local level loss of traditional Karrayyu territory is linked to a loss of balance and respect between people and their environment, which is compounded by the fact that the Karrayyu can no longer access many of their religious sites. They cannot go to the *malkas* where they traditionally pray, or make sacrifices along the river banks. Haji Kasaru, a prominent male elder, describes the effect of this:

> 'Now the rivers keep their mouths closed to us, the sugar cane plantation and the farming around the Hawash River made the river shrink down to the deep. All the *Malkas* we used to worship with are lost. The ones which we used to slaughter upon have ceased to exist. It is only '*Waaqa'* who knows why there is the present shortage of rainfall.'

Many in the community, particularly the elder people, believe that changes in their religious practices mean that *Waaqa* no longer listens to them: because people have turned their back on *Waaqa*, *Waaqa* has turned his back on them and no longer answers their prayers. Many see this as the reason for prevalent drought. Elders like Robee Jibituu believe the only way that the Karrayyu can improve their way of life is to resume the traditional way of worshipping:

> 'When we stopped our traditions the problems came to us from all directions. We wish our culture would come back and we know how she can come back. The only solution is to go back to our ritual respect. By ritual respect I mean moving to the *malkaas* and *tulluu* for worship. Coming back to these things means coming back to our *Waaqa*. Anyone who does not pray for *Waaqa* is not living life'.

For some, through the weakening of the traditional religion, understanding and wisdom is lost. As Kassam has noted: 'The Oromo believe that the harmonic order between all animate and inanimate matter in the universe can only be maintained through the collective performance of ritual' (1990: 5). Karrayyu descriptions are similar to how the Aztecs described the beginning of their own end, as a silence that falls because the gods no longer speak to them.

Chapter Nine: Pastoralist Policy, Irrigation & the Karrayyu

The Karrayyu are struggling to maintain their pastoralist way of life. Pastoralist groups around the world are facing a crisis and many are predicting the end of pastoralism. Baxter has stated: 'Even at its gentlest pastoralism requires a hard, if proud and dignified life; but over the last 30 years the combination of old hardships with new difficulties have come to seem overwhelming' (2001: 235). According to the Karrayyu the coming irrigation scheme represents the end of their way of life, but it is presented as 'development'. Justifications revolve around the idea that pastoralism is unsustainable, backward and an impediment to national progress. But how do members of the community see these developments, the dynamics behind the decisions being made, and the potential consequences for the future? As anthropologists we have a role in questioning decisions that impact upon the communities we work with. As Turton has written: 'The role of academic knowledge should be to reflect critically upon, not to confirm and legitimise, the taken for granted assumptions upon which policy making is often based' (2005: 277). In order 'To deepen our impact we must broaden the scope of our analyses and devote more central attention to institutions and populations of power and provide rich accounts of how knowledge and policies are produced and absorbed in relevant domains. In doing so, we will be more effective in our efforts to enhance societal responses and understanding of the socio-political dimensions' (Lahsen, in response to Crate, 2008: 588).

Pastoralist policy

In many areas of the world policies imposed on pastoralists have not worked. This is widely documented: Scoones (1994) has noted that livestock development in dryland areas of Africa during the past 30 years is considered by many to have been a disaster. According to Chambers (1997), 'a history of pastoral 'development' in the drier areas of sub-Saharan Africa would read like the afflictions of Job. Few domains can claim such consistent failure'. A recent Oxfam report highlights that pastoralists in Ethiopia and other countries in East Africa face a number of challenges that hinder their way of life and stifle their ability to adapt to changes. These include: climate change, political and economic marginalisation, increasing resource competition and inappropriate development policies (Oxfam, 2008: 2). These once self-reliant people have increasingly become poverty-stricken famine relief clients, eking out an existence

at the margins of society (Helland, 1998). A common approach can be identified in pastoral development policies: 'Building on western land management models, pastoral development policy and practice focused on two major aspects: 1) sedentarisation of pastoral communities through agricultural pilot projects, primary service provision or forced settlement programmes and 2) relocation of rangeland tenure rights through nationalisation and/or privatisation schemes. These policies largely failed' (Nori, Taylor & Sensi, 2008: 10). A report by Ethio-Horn Discourse on Human Rights in Ethiopia states (2009: 28): 'In early 2000, the World Bank initiated a development project called Pastoral Community Development Project with a total budget of $ 60 million to be implemented by the government. This year, the total budget of this project reached $ 133.3 million. The impact of this heavily funded project has not yet been felt after almost a decade of implementation'.

Policy failure is largely due to a profound misunderstanding of pastoralist ways of life. 'Another common feature of pastoral areas in the world is the high rate of development intervention failure, often due to misconceptions by decision-makers and planners of local resource management and livelihood systems' (Nori, Taylor & Sensi, 2008: 3). Ethiopia is no exception as there is an apparent contradiction in pastoralist policy. On some levels there is an explicit commitment to the need for a holistic and pastoralist-specific policy. The Ethiopian government appears to support pastoralists, organising high profile 'pastoralist days' and meetings. This has been accompanied by 'a shift in Amharic from use of the word for 'nomad' (which had a pejorative sense) to 'pastoralist' (referring to one whose livelihood is gained through livestock) ... many pastoralists believe that this is indicative of a change in approach, and one which conferred on them status and acceptability' (Lister, 2004) There has also been devolution of power to the regions partly to enable pastoral communities to participate on issues that affect their lives and facilitate the empowerment process. However, this contrasts markedly with policies implemented on the ground which reflect continued misunderstanding and lack of support. 'Although the Ministry of Federal Affairs covers the promotion of good governance and pastoral development policies, its policies reflect a limited understanding of pastoralism or dryland ecosystems. Objectives such as sedentarization of pastoral communities dominate MoFA policy documents, although there is no evidence which attributes improved livelihoods or reduced vulnerability as a result' (FIC: 2008: 48).

Some see irrigation of pastoralist land as a continuation of colonisation by the Abyssinian State. Despite nation-building advances by Yohannes, Menelik and Haile Selassie, pastoralist frontiers in Ethiopia have not been fully incorporated into the nation-state (Mulugeta & Hagmann, 2008). Historically pastoralists are fiercely independent and critical of state authority. Pastoralist freedom of movement defies 'the administrative, fiscal, political and security imperatives of the state. In effect it challenge[s] its very existence' (Markakis, 2004: 7). Despite this, with regard to Ethiopia, Mulugeta & Hagmann point out that 'Although the Ethiopian central state has a long tradition of intervening in its semi-arid peripheries by appropriating land, co-opting elites and reconfiguring collective identities, its bureaucratic apparatus has only recently been 'decentralised' to the most local level' (2008: 71). Awash Valley inhabited by Karrayyu, Afar, Argoba, Ittu and Issa pastoralists serves as an example. The area is not physically remote from federal government but, despite geographical proximity to the capital, until recently there have been few state organs such as police stations, courts or schools. Policies such as large-scale irrigation perhaps reflect an attempt to bring groups like the Karrayyu into line; sedentarisation increases the scope for state control.

Domination by the Ethiopian State comes not just through political control but through religion and extension of agriculture. Agriculture (or farming) is seen as a superior lifestyle, civilised compared to pastoralism. The bias towards agriculture is reflected in land tenure, which shows a clear differentiation between the northern predominantly agricultural parts of the country and the southern predominantly pastoralist areas, which were incorporated through colonisation processes (Helland, 2006) The payment of agricultural land tax provides a large measure of legal protection and security for farmers in Ethiopia. In contrast, pastoral areas pay an animal tax which does not confer legal protection in terms of pastoral user rights. As Helland (2006: 4) writes: 'Land rights to agricultural land in Ethiopia are obviously much more elaborate than rights to land and resources in the pastoral areas ... In practical terms, the pastoral lands have not been covered by specific national legislation granting security of tenure to the people who live from pastoralism. By implication, arable agriculture always enjoys precedence over pastoralism if there is conflict over land use'. The Karrayyu provide an example of the struggles that pastoralist groups face due to lack of land rights. On the basis of the 1955 Constitution, formal fixed-term concessions were granted for the development of commercial agriculture in the Awash Valley. The need for access to vital dry-season grazing areas along the river was not

understood by the policy-makers, despite attempts by the Karrayyu to communicate this, and the land was taken away without compensation. 'The pre-eminent right of the state to do as it pleases with pastoral lands is usually not in question' (ibid.: 6). The exclusion of pastoralists from critically important resources is an ongoing trend due to encroachment from various combinations of state and commercial interests. Scoones *et al*. (1993) write that 'the most fundamental threat to pastoral production comes from lack of secure rights to vital territorial resources'.

There is a predominant attitude in Ethiopia that the pastoral mode of life, based on mobility, is backward and needs to be transformed. Development efforts therefore focus on sedentarisation of pastoralists in favour of cultivation, instead of transhumant nomadism, and for ease of provision of social services' (Elias, 2008: vi). This approach centres around the idea that some groups remain poor because they are crippled by certain cultural features, passed from generation to generation, which perpetuate poverty. 'Ethiopia is one of Africa's poorest nations with half of the 77 million-population living below the poverty line. Child malnutrition is reported to be the highest in the world' (Oxfam, 2009). Pastoralists are seen as making little contribution to the national economy, despite evidence to the contrary (SOS-Sahel, 2007). In the view of policy makers, the only way to break the cycle of poverty is to change their culture. In the case of pastoralists this involves the conversion to agriculture. The Karrayyu are aware that they are looked down upon. One Karrayyu elder explained: 'They try to bargain us to a different way of life. When they try to 'teach us' they look down on us as pastoralists. They strike us with their words saying "you are like animals looking after animals"'.

However, as Leach & Fairhead (2002: 219) have highlighted, the perspectives which inform dominant positions in policy are just as culturally centred as the local perspectives that counter them. As Tegegn has observed, 'where peasants are evicted from their lands for large scale commercial farms, as sedentary and farming communities they were not required to change their production systems and their way of life in general. However, when it comes to pastoralists, their very way of life is considered a problem' (1998: 6). Literature on pastoralism in Ethiopia recognises that 'the key constraints to revising current policies on pastoralism in Ethiopia relate to the attitudes and beliefs of senior central policy makers which in turn are heavily influenced by ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds' (FIC, 2008: 55). This is

important because, as Lahsen points out, 'we know very little of the cultural dimensions of governmental decision making, despite suggestions that cultural perceptual filters and microdynamics at that level can be crucial obstacles to remedial policy action (Lahesen in response to Crate, 2008: 587).

Despite criticisms, the State is determined to bring about rapid changes through 'modernized' approaches to development. Agriculture, as the mainstay of the Ethiopian economy, is the focus of development policy. 'The policy aims to establish market-driven agricultural developments capable of breaking into world markets' (Tadesse, 2005). There is a general perception among policy makers and technocrats that pastoral lands are under-utilised and therefore should be brought under the plough. The focus has been on harnessing the resources of pastoral lands for the national economy. This has seen the onset of hydroelectric dams, commercial agriculture and national parks, which lead to the alienation of many Ethiopian pastoralist groups from their resource base (Rice, 2010). Changing environmental factors are used to justify the settlement of pastoralists, with the implication that pastoralism as a system is no longer sustainable. The result of this is that other factors, such as land dispossession and inadequate policy decisions, are not recognised as root causes for the failure of the pastoralist system. The Awash irrigation scheme is the latest in a long line of developments and is being introduced as a solution to both the 'pastoralist problem' and to nation-wide development.

Awash Irrigation Project

Figure 52: Newly built irrigation channel. Source: Author

The Awash River Basin has been the most intensively studied and developed part of Ethiopia for irrigated agriculture. The Awash Irrigation Project, initiated four years ago, has not been documented by previous researchers due to the speed of developments. Moreover, as the irrigation scheme is politically sensitive it is difficult to obtain concrete information. The majority of information I could obtain came from newspaper articles which praise the scheme and its benefits (Addis Fortune 2009, Yonas 2010).

Large amounts of money have been invested; the scheme costs an estimated 400 million *birr* (just over 15 million pounds). The project is financed by the Oromia Regional Government. Water is carried from the Awash River via a 100km of pipeline, reportedly drawing 18 cubic metres of water per second. After running 50 km, the pipeline divides into three and the water

is distributed by using canals (Figure 52) which cover 18,000 hectares of land in Fantalle and Boset *woredas*. The irrigation is intended to cover eleven *kebele*s of the district. The water flows through the irrigation ditches and out into the valleys and the drainage basin of Argoba in Northern Shoa of the Amhara Regional State. It then joins the Kassam Dam in the Afar Regional State. The scheme is being implemented in phases. The project covers 18,000 hectares in total. 7,000 hectares have already been completed under the first phase of the scheme . OWWCE plans to cover another 7,000 hectares within the coming two years. Godana Daba, chief engineer of the project at the Oromia Water Works Construction Enterprise has said to reporters: 'Up to 36,000 Karayu families in the two woredas, mostly pastoralists, will be able to use the irrigation facility free of charge (OWWCE)' (Yonas, 2010). The Karrayyu irrigation has been reported in Ethiopian newspaper articles as being 'intended to assist the settlement of Karayu pastoralists'. The chief engineer of the project has stated that the irrigation will 'allow the community to adopt a technology that will change their mindset' (ibid.).

Irrigated land is being distributed to households depending on family size. At Gidara *kebele*, 588.5 hectares of irrigation farm land is distributed to households at 0.75 hectares per family (GTF, 2010). Land ownership is transferred to individual households through issuance of land tenure certificates. Those who take land tenure are expected to organise themselves into co-operative associations at *kebele* level. At Gidara *kebele*, farmers have already been organised into a co-operative association. Members of the association will be provided with agricultural inputs such as 'improved seed' and chemical fertilisers on a loan basis. The government is reportedly providing the co-operative association with three tractors, to be used for ploughing. Although the irrigation is presented as 'free of charge', community members are expected to contribute towards the expense of the scheme. Money earned from crops grown during the first two years of the scheme is expected to be paid to the government. Apparently the scheme is intended to be highly mechanised in the future and members of co-operative groups already using the irrigation have started contributing money for purchase of machinery and equipment.

The Awash Irrigation scheme is important because it is being promoted as a model for other pastoralist areas in Ethiopia. The Oromia Regional State is now working on a similar irrigation projects in other pastoral areas 'The Oromia Regional State has allocated an annual budget of 800 million *birr* [just under 31 million pounds] to implement irrigation facilities in pastoral

lowlands of Borana, Karrayyu and Bale and Hararghe zones' which are mostly pastoral areas (Elias, 2008: 7).

Karrayyu views about 'development'

Considering the impact that previous 'development policy' has had on pastoralist peoples, it is important to consider how the Karrayyu themselves view this 'development'.

Firstly, from the Karrayyu point of view, the shift to farming represents a complete change in terms of livelihood. One Karrayyu male said: 'The policies don't support the continuity of pastoralism. Nothing seems conducive for the continuity of pastoralism. They wish there were no pastoralists in the country'. This has inevitable implications for Karrayyu culture. An elder said: 'If the way of life changes then the culture also changes, the two are connected. Culture cannot maintain itself. The culture at the moment will not change because we still have the way of life, but during our children's lifetime it will change, after the irrigation comes'. The pastoral way of life is key to Karrayyu identity. Another elder explained: 'We are happy when someone calls us pastoralists (*horsisee bula*) because it means 'make more life' we are happy with this name. But we hate the name farmer (*qotee bula*) because this is someone who digs the ground'. So far they have managed to adapt their way of life to accommodate the changes that have taken place, but community members are not optimistic about their future. A female Karrayyu said: 'Without pastoralism I doubt that there will be Karrayyu, we will be Karrayyu in name only'. Karrayyu survival as a group is intimately associated with the survival of their animals, herds are a defining aspect of Karrayyu identity. Frejaques writes that ' it is first and foremost their pastoral way of life that defines the Karrayyu amongst themselves' (2003: 295). Some pastoralists already attempt to grow maize, which shows they are not completely resistant to farming. They recognise that it can be of benefit to them, particularly if growing grains means they do not have to sell their animals. But, although many are not averse to farming, they do not want to lose their animals and would prefer to develop ways of maintaining both.

One of the main problems concerning the implementation of the irrigation scheme is the lack of participation of community members in the planning. The Karrayyu welcome access to water, but it seems they have not been consulted regarding its use. One community member

commented: ‘We will not be allowed to keep animals anymore. It is really difficult for a pastoralist to lose even half of his animals. So we will face a real problem for a while, until we become used to it. But if you see it from the policy point of view, those in power can enforce whatever they want because they are in power, even if it is against the will of the community'. Many Karrayyu would choose to maintain their herds but it seems there is a concerted effort to encourage them to reduce, if not get rid of their herds. A Karrayyu elder explains: 'The government and NGOs are giving training to try and change the way of life, for example by decreasing the number of animals. They want people to have two or three milking cows and a few oxen. In the future we will have to tie the heads of the cattle to lead them to graze because there won't be enough land as there is now so they will not be able to move freely. Land will be divided for farming rather than grazing. I am not happy about these changes'. Another elder stated the following: 'Where the irrigation arrives they say we must depend on the land and on farming, but our feeling is to live with the animals we already have. It is better if they act according to our feeling rather than saying we must shift to farming. They have to ask which is better for us and give us a choice. They could say that we can have some land for farming and some for animals, but they don't tell us we can develop both together, they say choose one'.

The scheme is promoted publicly as 'participatory', but, as Watson has highlighted in an article on the subject, in Ethiopia the interpretation of 'participation' is subject to considerable variations' (2002: 603). She uses the case of the Food For Work programme as an example. People in rural areas are obliged to take part in such work for a specified number of days a year. Watson writes 'A number of informants within woreda councils, described this mass mobilization as 'participation', as people were 'working together to help their community'. But penalties for failure to participate in development activities include fines and even the threat of the loss of land. 'This is not seen as being at odds with a participatory ideology' (2002: 600).

Karrayyu pastoralists are worried that certain aspects of their life will not be able to function if they become sedentary. As Flintan has written 'mobility is also about the building of the social support relations and networks that are vital for a functioning pastoral society' (2010: 154) The *Gabalaa* village for example depends on mobility to function. *Gadaa* leaders are able to reside in the *Gabalaa* because animals are mobile. Once they are assigned individual plots of land they will be tied to the land; they will not be able to move because they cannot take their land

and crops with them. If they leave their land, there will be no-one to take care of it in their absence. Members of the Karrayyu community also realise that if they start farming and no longer go with the herds, no one will be able to protect the boundary areas. They will be taken over by neighbouring groups, which will entail further land losses. Participants were keen to use video as evidence of land use and ownership in case there are struggles in the future.

Many worry that the conversion to farming will result in a breakdown of collective and communal values. As one community member says: 'All people will be divided into different *kebeles* and will become settled. There will be no more concern about one another. The *Gadaa* system will face difficulty because everyone will be divided into *kebeles* and different places so it will be difficult to come to each other's places because farmers do not allow you to come. The land will be partitioned into pieces'. They have witnessed what has happened to the Tulama Oromo, their neighbours, where even family relations break down in conflicts over land. This change in values has been noted by researchers working with other pastoralist groups. 'As sedentarisation increases, so too does privatisation of resources to be used for individual or household (as opposed to clan) gain. This includes the fencing of communal grazing areas for individual or 'group' livestock holdings, and the construction of individual water points from which water is sold. Individual interests and wealth differentiation have tended to grow, while collective responsibilities, mutual aid and reciprocity have been breaking down' (Flintan, 2010: 154). A shift to farming and the collapse of local values and institutions such as the *gosa* and milk-lending mechanisms may lead to undermining local support systems and coping strategies, which will leave people vulnerable and prone to increased poverty.

Sedentarisation also changes the roles that women and men play in pastoral communities (Flintan, 2010). Despite the changes in the pastoralist system having a heavier impact on women (as illustrated in the previous chapter) it seems that they are reluctant to make a shift to farming. Women fear that they will have less of a role in farming. The shift will alter their mode of existence and relationship with the world. It will curtail traditional exchange networks and support mechanisms. Flintan (2010) points out that, rather than improving livelihoods, it is those who wield less power in such communities, often the women, who have not benefited as much from such changes. Women are therefore understandably concerned about the shift from

pastoralism to farming and are particularly resistant to these changes. Elder women in particular cannot even conceive of a life without animals.

The younger generation is concerned about the psychological effect that the loss of animals will have on the older generations. One young person explained:

> 'My mother still always wants to have the previous life she had, she always expects great times, she wants to keep a large number of cattle, to keep milk, butter, all things processed from animals, she doesn't want to lose that. My father constructed a house and he wants her to be there, we want her to be there, but she doesn't want that. She says, “No, no, no, that's not my place.” She always wants to be with the cattle, she feels sorry whenever there is drought. She doesn't want to see them starved, dead and weak. She's always with them even though she is old and weak now'.

He went on to say: 'It is not just survival, it's their psychology, everything is affected by the well-being of the animals. They just want them to be with them, and don't want to lose any of their animals. If such a thing happens they will be badly affected'. It is hard to imagine how the Karrayyu will adapt to the loss of animals that are the foundations of their culture. This is questionable as a route to 'development' as the loss of cultural identity is known to contribute to conditions of social alienation, poverty and despair (Elias, 1991).

Many Karrayyu are not convinced that farming will bring them a better standard of living. They do not believe farming is a secure lifestyle in an arid area, especially when they observe neighbouring groups struggling to make a living from farming. An elder explains:

> 'When we compare farmers with pastoralists there is a great difference in their life. The pastoralist can sell one of his animals during the rainy time and can buy all of what the farmer produces in one year. The farmer only has the produce he gets from his land but the pastoralist has both what the farmer produces as well as produce from his own animals. The farmer does not have milk, butter and meat, but the pastoralist has all of these things. The pastoralist can move here and there and succeed in his life. If there is a drought in one place he can move to where there is rain but the farmers land cannot move here and there to get rain or suitable conditions. If the rain does not fall on his land, he is finished because his plants will die, but the pastoralist can move and ensure his animals survive and return when the conditions become smooth. If the farmer’s land is destroyed by drought and insects all of his plants are finished he cannot survive with animals and he cannot wait until the new plants grow because he needs food, so he has to move from his land to the

> town or the city to beg. Even though the life is hard for them, the pastoralists do not need to beg, they are not familiar with begging. They are free from such things. Even when they miss many of their animals due to drought the small number which are left with them can survive as soon as they get rain, and the number of them can increase. We do not keep all of our animals together so not all of them face danger. The pastoralist can rely on the ones which are not under threat and the ones which have faced difficulties can replace themselves. The pastoralist faces problems for a very short period of time, especially when their animals become tired and when they want to sell them but they can't get a good price at market. These problems are for a short period, the rains will come again and the market price will change. Also the animals of the pastoralists replace themselves as soon as they get rain, before the land the farmer ploughs produces enough to eat'.

Ultimately the conversion involves wholesale change to another way of life that the Karrayuu don't know enough about, don't fully trust and, perhaps most importantly, do not have control over. Community members question the reliability of the irrigation scheme, and need to see proof that it works successfully before they convert. Community members who are still pastoralists are particularly concerned due to their lack of knowledge of farming. This knowledge needs to be built up over time, and requires provision of adequate extension services. At the moment the conversion is being pushed along at a rapid rate with insufficient support and information for community members. This is compounded by the fact that there is little in the way of trust in government agendas, including local development agents (DAs) and extension services, due to past experiences.

There is a widespread belief among the community that the lack of preparation is a conscious policy to undermine them and ensure that they do not make a successful transition. Many are questioning why so much is being spent on an irrigation scheme that purports to be for the benefit of marginalised pastoralists, when they have been neglected for so long. It is feared that the irrigated land will be taken from them due to 'mismanagement', and sold to private investors leading to their displacement from the land entirely.

Differences in Opinion

As I worked predominantly with Karrayyu who are largely in favour of maintaining the traditional way of life, it is important to consider how representative these views are of the

wider community. Throughout fieldwork there was an emphasis on 'community' and harmony, but this in some ways hides certain underlying tensions and differences of opinion. While I understand the Karrayyu need to show their unity and strength, there is also a risk of representing them as uni-dimensional and devoid of all conflict and contradiction, and thus come across as naive. ‘The "grass roots" is not devoid of power and hierarchy’ (Gadihoke, 2003). I have therefore attempted to convey the Karrayyu message, whilst also highlighting differences in opinion, because this ultimately leads to a greater understanding of the forces at work, and the reason why certain decisions are being made.

As the *Gadaa* system has weakened, and government influence has increased, the community has become increasingly divided. Representatives of the government wholeheartedly support the scheme and praise the government for implementing it, it is most likely these representatives who have been selected to 'participate' in the planning of the scheme. This raises the issue of who speaks for whom. It can be difficult to get alternative points of view from community members because it is a controversial topic and people are worried about talking openly.

There are those who support the scheme due to the access to water that it will bring, particularly those who have already converted to agro-pastoralism. The irrigation is undoubtedly of benefit to the agro-pastoralists because it makes a difference to their ability to farm. They have already converted to farming as a result of losing land to the plantation area, but they have had no access to water and often had to divert water from the plantation irrigation channels illegally in order to farm. The irrigation was implemented for the agro--pastoralists over two years ago and they are already reporting the benefits. However, they also talk about the disadvantages that the conversion to farming has brought. This was one of the messages they wanted to convey to pastoralist members of the community, using PV. The agro-pastoralists report that their traditional values have been undermined. One agro-pastoralist elder said:

> 'Now that the water has arrived we get enough food for the people and we are satisfied, but it is difficult because we have lost our animals. The value of what we get from farming is not enough without the animal products. The culture has

> changed compared with when we were pastoralists. We no longer respect each other, we don't agree when we are farming'.

They associate the conversion to farming with the loss of Karrayyu traditional values. The same agro-pastoralist elder explained,

> 'We have culture, we have *safu*, because of this we can't act as we like towards other and we are patient, even if someone makes a mistake on us... but these values are decreasing. Being patient for each other and adhering to culture over oneself is becoming less'.

There seems to be a gap between the generations to some degree. Many elders do not support the transition, because they still have memories of 'the good life'. They believe you cannot get a better way of life than the pastoralism they experienced when they were young and they want more than anything for that to be brought back. One male pastoralist elder said:

> 'For me a good day is the day of peace. Peace can be found in the land we have lost. The land we have lost along with everything else... I have an ambition but it cannot be realised. My ambition is if Itu go back to their country, the plantation disappears, Nogoba goes back to its original size and Summa Plain and Bulga River become ours again. Then there may be hope for our children'.

Part of the reason they sent their youngsters to school was to enable them to support Karrayyu interests. But it seems the emergence of Karrayyu graduates has come too late. The young educated Karrayyu find themselves in a hard place. Many are supportive of pastoralism, even if they cannot see themselves going back to that way of life. They know what it means to their families and to their own sense of identity. One young female Karrayyu student said,

> 'I don't believe the irrigation which is coming will change the life of the community in a good way. The change will make the people wear trousers and become merchants. We will be the same as the Tulama selling cereals. The culture and ritual things will stop and the norms will no longer be applicable'.

Ideally they would like to find ways to support the community to continue their way of life but, they don't see any way of resisting. They are fully aware that if they oppose the scheme they will possibly be denied employment or scholarship opportunities. A Human Rights Watch reports states: 'The government services, jobs, allocation of aid, and resources- and therefore

livelihoods... are also tools used to discourage opposition to government policies, deny the opposition political space, and punish those who do not follow the party line' (2010a: 24).

Uneducated youngsters have no memory of the glory days of Karrayyu pastoralism. Ideally they would prefer to practise pastoralism, but they experience constant hardship which does not show any sign of improving. They are tired of drought and conflict, since they are the ones who have to defend the community and support their families. They are understandably open to the idea of change and see farming as a potential way of improving their quality of life. However, it has been suggested that the irrigation scheme may lead to increased conflict between Karrayyu and Argoba. 'The Oromia Regional State plans to develop a large-scale irrigation scheme in the area which has enticed the Argoba agro-pastoralists who have vested interest in this fertile flood plain. The result has been a furious fight between the Karrayyu and the Argoba tribes. The fight escalated as the Argobas penetrated into Karrayyu territory claiming land for settlement along the Nazreth-Metahara highway' (Elias & Abdi, 2010: 12-13). I was aware of tension and frequent conflict between Karrayyu pastoralists and Argoba throughout fieldwork, and participants commented that relations with neighbouring Argoba are deteriorating .

As highlighted earlier, there are differences of opinion between men and women. Whereas men are generally more open to change, women are more resistant. This could be due to the fact that men have more freedom of movement and therefore have more experience of alternative modes of living, whereas women's movement are restricted so they have less exposure to things outside their immediate environment. It could also be because women see themselves having less of a role in the agricultural system, and believe that the transition to farming will take away things that are fundamental to their sense of identity. As one woman explained:

> 'Women are very close to cattle. If the cattle go, the first victims will be women. Even our appearance will be changed, dry and white as ash. The men have already given up hope of continuing life with the cattle. Women are still struggling to maintain the way of life. The men are already convinced they will become farmers, but nothing farming brings can touch the women. Because of our special connection with cattle we know the products of farming cannot replace the products of animals. Oil for food and modern cosmetics can never replace how butter makes us feel beautiful and good about ourselves'.

This echoes Henderson's writing about women's role in Celtic culture: 'It was the "women's world" which stood with all its spirit, courage and resilience, when the "man's world" faltered' (cited in McIntosh, 2004: 193). Based on my experiences, women are the staunchest defenders of pastoralism, which perhaps indicates that outsider views of women's roles in pastoralist systems needs to be re-evaluated. Of course, there are differences among Karrayyu women and between them, and some may welcome the opportunities for change that the irrigation scheme brings. However, it seems that there is little opportunity for Karrayyu women to participate in the decisions that are being made, or to define what **they** want as pastoralist women.

In summary, there are a range of attitudes towards the coming irrigation system. This is exemplified by the fact that many of the pastoralist *kebeles* have agreed to take land leases as part of the scheme, but two have declined. The *kebele*s which have refused hope they can take advantage of the water and continue pastoralism without signing up to the scheme. They are concerned that the leases will undermine their claims to collective land ownership. Bearing in mind the influence that the State has over the lives of the rural poor, they are taking a risk.

The majority of people I spoke to would ideally prefer to maintain pastoralism as their livelihood, and I believe this view is generally representative of the community as a whole. The main reason people are agreeing to the irrigation is the difficulties in maintaining pastoralism, due to the impact of larger political-economic forces. They are being forced to make the change, rather than it being a choice. This is also stated in a recent report by Elias & Abdi which states that, although 21% of Karrayyu they interviewed are engaged in activities other than pastoralism, 'all respondents stated that they do not prefer these activities to pastoralism, but that they are desperate attempts to diversify their livelihoods' (2010: 17).

***Qonna* Video**

One of the last videos to be made focused on farming, perhaps because participants confidence grew throughout the process. It shows the impact of irrigated agriculture on the life of the community since the coming of the sugar plantation. It highlights the experiences of Karrayyu agro-pastoralists and the views of the Karrayyu pastoralists who are awaiting the coming of the irrigation scheme. The video gives a balanced account and includes a variety of opinions.

It is interesting to note that the Karrayyu women carrying sugar cane keep their faces covered and their backs to the camera. They did not know the participants and were therefore reluctant to be filmed. Footage of the sugar plantation shows people working in the fields, the majority of whom are seasonal workers from the south of Ethiopia. The video emphasises the contrast between the irrigated land with its lush, almost unnatural green and the parched and dusty Karrayyu land. This is a powerful visual image and aims to highlight the inequalities involved in the production of a water intensive crop in an area where access to water for the indigenous people and their herds is vital.

The video indicates the links between the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. One of the agro-pastoralists featured describes how he still owns animals, but keeps them with his pastoralist relatives. Part of the reason for this is the lack of land available to agro-pastoralists and the difficulties in managing an animal-crop system, and his concerns about the use of chemical pesticides and the effect they have on both humans and animals. These comment made me aware that the use of chemicals for farming is a concern for the agro-pastoralists.

The film is particularly powerful because it features an elder who has converted to agro-pastoralism giving heartfelt advice to members of the community who are awaiting the conversion to farming. He describes his experiences, and articulates the sense of loss that many agro-pastoralists feel due to the absence of their herds and the impact this has had on Karrayyu cultural values.

The fears of Karrayyu pastoralists are not just irrational worries, they are backed up by first hand experience from members of their own community. The Karrayyu pastoralists who watched this footage were very moved by his speech, particularly his appeals for unity. This emphasises the power of video to communicate between communities, although it undoubtedly raises certain dangers.

Potential consequences of the scheme

The past sections of this chapter have focused on the emic. However, as Crate points out 'With a solid grounding in local perceptions and cognitive models the next step is to introduce the etic, to find information on the global scale that can "fill in the blanks".

From an external point of view, aspects of the irrigation scheme seem illogical. Families are being allocated small areas of land of less than one hectare which in the long term may not provide for the needs of their families, particularly when land is divided up for inheritance purposes. There are many examples from other areas of Ethiopia where landholdings are decreasing as plots are redistributed, leaving smaller and smaller areas in an increasing number of hands, which results in a large proportion of people with not enough land to make a living. Sharp & Devereux (2004) have found that in northern areas of Ethiopia there is a significant correlation between the amount of land people are able to cultivate and levels of destitution and environmental degradation. A Panos (2004) article states that 'with a national land-holding average of only one hectare, farmers struggle to grow enough to feed their families at the best of times'. This goes against the very definition of sustainable development which should 'meet the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987, 4).

There is a suggestion by some that allocation of small land holdings is part of a conscious State policy to create a surplus labour force which will spur on Ethiopia's development: a strategy which, of course, has been used in many parts of the world. The application of this strategy in Ethiopia to fast-track development is flawed as there are not enough jobs or industry to absorb the sheer numbers of surplus people. 'Lack of access to land and the declining size of holdings

contributes to the growth of regional labour migration' and an increase in urban poverty with thousands of people migrating to Addis Ababa to search for work (Cambell, 1991: 17). Many are already living in crowded shanty towns on the edge of Ethiopia's growing cities but apparently this is the price to be paid for economic development.

Community members are expected to produce specific crops for market, namely onions, tomatoes, maize and cabbage. These crops do not form part of the traditional Karrayyu diet, so the shift presumably requires a change in diet as well as production. The Karrayyu, like most people, have firmly set dietary tastes and preferences and 'it is virtually impossible to get people to voluntarily change their habits, even if they are living under conditions of scarcity' (Rosset & Benjamin, 1994: 26). Rather than producing things to eat at household level and selling the surplus at market, they will be producing for market and buying the things they need using income generated from sale of crops. Many of the agro-pastoralists are growing a single crop for market in anticipation that if they time their harvest to coincide with peak holiday periods (specifically Orthodox Christian holidays) when prices rise, they can make a profit. However, this is risky in terms of food security, as they have no safety net in the event of crop failure, or poor market prices. It has been demonstrated that diversification is the best assurance in cases of single crop failure, environmental adversity and socio-economic shocks. It has been shown in other contexts that 'forcible incorporation of smallholder production into commodity and financial circuits tends to undermine traditional food security' (Watts & Peet, 2004: 31).

The approach being promoted requires community members to invest heavily in expensive inputs such as modified seed, chemical pesticides and fertilisers. There are concerns among agro-pastoralist community members about the use of such inputs because of the costs involved. Problems are being reported from similar schemes operating in other areas of the country: 'In order to improve crop yield in the region, the Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Tigray (BoANR) adopted the Sasakawa Global (SG) 2000 package, which is based on high input demanding varieties and chemical fertilisers. However, the cost of these inputs is beyond the purchasing power of the most farmers in the region and some of those who have used these inputs have fallen into the debt trap' (Belay & Edwards, 2003: 12). Poor households cannot afford production risks and maximum yields are not as important as securing

food for the family. There are limited options for community members: many of them are inexperienced farmers who rely on information from local government development agents (DAs). I have visited areas in other parts of Ethiopia where farmers are reported by DAs to the local administration if they stop using inputs. It has been suggested that access to inputs is used as a political tool in many areas of Ethiopia. A Human Rights Watch reports has drawn attention to this: 'Opposition supporters in Amhara described a trend of discriminatory resource allocation, with farmers unable to access seed and fertilisers if perceived to support the opposition' (2010a: 25).

In addition, community fears that the irrigated land may be taken over by investors may be well-founded. A report by the Drylands Commision states: 'The government is strongly encouraging irrigated agriculture in the pastoral lowlands involving the settlement of pastoralists. This has been clearly stated in the policies and strategies of the Oromiya Pastoral Development Commission. There are plans to develop irrigation agriculture on 75,000 ha of rangelands using spate irrigation to grow export crops' (Elias, 2008: 7). This is part of a wider global trend in land grabbing in which 'rich but resource-deprived nations in the Middle East, Asia and elsewhere seek to outsource their food production to places where fields are cheap and abundant. Because much of the world's arable land is already in use ... the search has led to the countries least touched by development, Africa' (Rice, 2009). These developments, described as 'agro-imperialism', are a source of widespread concern, particularly for marginalised communities in the targeted countries. Land grabbing is already affecting groups within Ethiopia. 'Ethiopia is one of the main targets in the current global farmland grab. The government has stated publicly that it wants to sell off three million hectares of farmland in the country to foreign investors, and around one million hectares have already been signed away' (Ochalla, 2010). Since the world food crisis the Ethiopian government has been offering what it describes as 'virgin land' at dirt cheap rates to international investors. This land is described as idle and ready for investment, but reports from local groups suggest that the land is already in use, mostly by pastoralists. A recent BBC report suggests that while some local farmers are being directly compensated, pastoralists are not (Butler, 2010).

There are reports that areas of Karrayyu land are being sold off to private investors but there is no concrete evidence of these deals. The Karrayyu are understandably worried about these

rumours because this would pose a threat to their survival and may ultimately lead to them being evicted from their ancestral lands entirely. Many external observers argue that investors offer prime development opportunities for countries like Ethiopia. However, there are also major criticisms of such schemes. 'there's a whole school of economic thought that says that big is not necessarily better in agriculture - and that the land deals therefore might be unwise not because they're wrong but because they're unprofitable. A recent World Bank study found that large-scale export agriculture in Africa has succeeded only with plantation crops like sugar and tea or in ventures that were propped up by extreme government subsidies, during colonialism or during the apartheid era in South Africa' (Rice, 2009). Local populations are also opposed. Reports from the BBC indicate that communities in Gambella in the West of Ethiopia are voicing similar concerns to the Karrayyu: 'People in the country's remote south-west fear that their pastoralist traditions, which have been a way of life for generations, could now be forcibly brought to an end. "There is a fear that there will be no more culture within the pastoralist area," says one man. "We're going to lose our culture and there will be nothing remaining for the next generation. I'm afraid this life may only be a story that we can tell our children."' (Butler, 2010).

Karrayyu past experience illustrates that irrigation can be potentially damaging for both the local population and the environment. The decline of pastoralism results in the loss of 'the intimate human-environment relationships that not only ground and substantiate indigenous world-views but also work to maintain local landscapes' (Crate, 2008: 573). The negative effects of sedentarisation, as articulated by community members, are unlikely to be heard or understood by policy makers, despite the fact that there is increasing acknowledgement that sedentarisation does not necessarily equate to a better standard of living: 'Throughout the world's arid regions, and particularly in northern and eastern Africa, formerly nomadic pastoralists are undergoing a transition to settled life ... Although pastoral settlement is often encouraged by international development agencies and national governments as solutions to food insecurity, poor health care, and problems of governance, the social, economic and health concomitants of sedentism are not inevitably beneficial' (Elliot & Roth, 2005). Several government projects aimed at settling local Afar on mechanised irrigation schemes, where they were to grow maize and practice animal husbandry and dairying on irrigated pastures, failed for a number of administrative and health reasons (Gebre & Kassa, 2009). However, a review of

Ethiopian pastoralist policy suggests that sedentarisation is seen as a step towards modernisation regardless of the consequences.

Aside from the impact on Karrayyu culture and values, the introduction of farming to semi-arid land which has never been farmed before should be a source of concern. The Awash National Park Management Plan outlines the dangers of implementing further irrigation in terms of both the local population and the natural resource base in some detail. This warn of decreasing soil quality and groundwater as well as 'intensifying an already serious political, cultural and environmental situation' (Jacobs & Schloeder, 1997: 72). The soils in the area, despite being fertile, are fragile. The environment is harsh with strong winds, high temperatures, and heavy rain during the wet season, all of which are damaging to exposed soils. The impact of irrigated agriculture in arid areas was seen in the Dust Bowl situation in the 30s in America. Conservationists working in Afar areas of the Awash Park are already reporting 'large dust bowls in areas adjacent to the park that have been completely overgrazed and where the timber has been almost entirely removed' (personal correspondence). This isn't likely to get any better with the introduction of ploughing and mechanised farming.

The destructive impact of farming can also be seen in other areas of Ethiopia, particularly the north where the soil has been degraded by generations of poor farming and most of its forests destroyed. In the Northern Regions of Amhara and Tigray, 'long and sustained human settlement in the absence of resource-management systems has led to an acute depletion of natural resources, particularly arable land and forests' (Ezra, 2001: 4). I spent time in the north before moving to work with the Karrayyu and saw areas where the degradation was so severe land had been abandoned. There are worrying reports from other areas of Ethiopia. An article featuring an interview with a community representative from the Anuak district states:

> 'The government is assuming that this is a fertile land, but the agricultural projects it is pursuing in the region will devastate the soil ... These large-scale projects will undermine the practices of the indigenous population and destroy the fertility of the soils, as has been the case in other parts of Ethiopia. One of the reasons why Ethiopia suffers from recurrent famines is because of poor agricultural practices that were encouraged by government programmes that did not consider the long-term health of the soils' (Ochalla, 2010: 12).

Declining soil fertility is a problem reported by farmers using chemical inputs the world over. Conservationists in the Awash National Park are already concerned that 'the irrigation water is going to increase the salt levels in the soil (possibly due to underground water mixing with the irrigation water in one of the dams and/or because of rising water tables)'. They are already seeing 'sections of the sugar plantation that are patchy due to high salt content' in Afar region where irrigated agriculture is already underway (personal correspondence).

Effects of irrigated agriculture on water sources can already be seen in the pollution of the Awash River including 'excess nitrogen leaching into the Awash River and Lake Basaka, following the application of fertilisers to the sugar fields; the indirect contamination of the River and Lake Water following the application of insecticides, particularly DDT; and the dumping of factory waste water directly into the River' (Jacobs & Schloeder, 1997: 62) This water will be used to irrigate the newly ploughed fields and is already being used by community members for drinking, washing and cooking in areas already reached by irrigation channels. Exposure to polluted water is likely to get worse due to widespread use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers.

There are also indications that the irrigation has not been properly planned. This year the section of the main road that links Addis Ababa with Djibouti running through Fantalle *woreda* was flooded by Lake Nogoba. The flooding is thought locally, both by community members and people working for the local administration, to be a result of run-off from the new irrigation scheme, as well as increased rain-fall over the last year. The rising water levels have also flooded significant parts of Matahara town, including the secondary school attended by Karrayyu students. In addition it is feared by some, including local conservationists, that the irrigation schemes have not taken into account the effects for those downstream, who are likely to face issues over both water quality and quantity.

There is increasing recognition of the flaws in modern technologies and modes of agriculture; modern agriculture has brought a narrow view of farming and it has led to a crisis (Altieri & Nicholls, 2005). Despite this 'conventional' models of agricultural development are still pursued. Ethiopia’s agricultural policy promotes extensive monoculture of foreign crop species, primarily for export, which requires a continuous supply of imported technology and inputs.

This promotes dependence on international markets and, through mechanisation, drives migration of people from rural areas to the city. Finally it degrades productivity, through erosion, compaction and salinization of soils, and pollution of water sources. (Rosset & Benjamin, 1994). There is ample evidence that such unsustainable models undermine local coping mechanisms and self-sufficiency and could lead to severe problems in the long term, particularly for pastoralist populations. This is critical because in the Karrayyu case it is taking place in food insecure, drought prone region. Pastoralism has developed as a mode of living in these areas for a reason. Helland states, with regard to Ethiopia: 'Pastoral production still remains the only sensible and sustainable way of exploiting close to 50% of the land resources of the nation' (2006: 16). What the pastoralist people at the receiving end of these 'developments' really want is 'government acknowledgement of indigenous tenure, which, unlike state tenure, they see as humane and flexible. They see state involvement as the cause of great suffering and ask only to be allowed to lead a secure lifestyle, free from the fear and famine they have experienced ... whenever the state has drawn close' (Tadesse, 2003: 457).

Ways Forward

Continuation of pastoralism seems an unlikely option for the Karrayyu. At the current time the policy regarding livestock under the new scheme is uncertain, but community members are adamant they do not want to convert to an entirely crop based system and lose their link with livestock. Attention must be given to how farming can best be adapted to the local situation and needs of the community. Pastoralists' relationship with farming is complex. Baxter points out that 'many pastoralists have always cultivated the earth while maintaining their dedication to their stock' (2001: 239). Farming does not necessarily mean the loss of animals; the two can complement one another. However, taking into account the rate of environmental degradation, alternative livestock management strategies will need to be pursued, include decreasing livestock numbers. In other pastoralist communities schemes have been established which convert cattle assets into non-livestock form, such as saving schemes and community projects such as water-development activities and grain stores (Coppock, 1994). The model of farming being pursued is based on an Abyssinian system which is very different to the collective ways of communities like the Karrayyu, but farming does not have to be conducted on an individualistic basis. Flexible systems could be developed through community participation

that can be adapted to local needs and give people options. There are already strong community institutions that could be used to develop more collaborative approaches to farming that are better suited to the local environment, and retain pastoralist systems and values.

There are more environmentally-friendly models of farming that can be pursued. Evidence suggests that organic agriculture has an important role to play in helping smallholder farmers to achieve food security and improved nutritional status while protecting the environment (FAO 2007, IFOAM 2009). Kassie *et al.* write: 'sustainable agriculture consists of five major attributes: it conserves resources (e.g. land, water etc.), and it is economically non-degrading, technologically appropriate, and economically and socially acceptable. Home gardens are one such example, they enable people to cultivate traditional plants and animal breeds and offer a promising option for improving nutritional status (Kumar & Nair, 2006).

Pioneering research into organic, sustainable agriculture in the north of Ethiopia has shown increased yields and an improvement in the local environment, 'it can be argued that sustainable agricultural production practices create a win-win situation: farmers are able to reduce production costs (by relying on renewable local or farm resources), it provides environmental benefits, and at the same time it increases yields' (Kassie *et al.*, 2009: 15). Regardless of the approach, sites for cultivation need to be carefully selected in order to protect fragile areas. Ideally there should be conservation and regeneration activities to improve surrounding areas which could include the re-establishment and enforcement of traditional-grazing reserves. The type of crops that people grow need to be chosen with care, ensuring that they are relevant and appropriate for both local diets and climate. Choosing local varieties will protect seed stocks and develop plant varieties that are more likely to cope with the local climate and conditions. People have to ensure they can cover their own food needs before selling to market.

Such alternatives are unlikely to sit well with those who are aiming for economic growth for 'national' interests, but sustainable approaches are increasingly recognised by international development agencies and are in line with current trends which draw attention to flaws in dominant models and ways of thinking. As Abrams writes: 'if humankind is to flourish without destroying the living world that sustains us, then we must grow out of our aspiration to encompass and control all that is. Sooner or later our technological ambition must begin to

scale itself down, allowing itself to be oriented by the distinct needs of specific bioregions. Sooner or later, that is, technological civilisation must accept the invitation of gravity and settle back into the land, its political and economic structures diversifying into the varied contours and rhythms of the more than human earth' (1996: 272).

There would inevitably be cultural resistance to suggestions such as those outlined above, but the Karrayyu are desperate for alternative ways forward. At least if they are presented with options they can formulate ways that work for them which are more likely to ensure food security and environmental preservation. Regardless of the policies pursued, experience has shown that local communities need to be at the helm. As Kleinman & Kleinman (1996) state 'The starting point of policymakers and program builders needs to be the understanding that they can (and often unwillingly) do harm'. Pastoralist policy in other parts of Ethiopia has largely been unsuccessful because they have not understood the needs and wants of pastoralists. As Coppock (1994: 3) rightly points out 'lack of development impact has not been due to scarcity of technology or inappropriate behaviour on the part of the Boran. Expectations were unrealistic because Western-trained planners had an inadequate understanding of social values and a production rationale that differed from their own'. Increased participation means that local ecology, cultural systems and knowledge can be taken into account and traditional social order can be maintained. This is an issue of critical importance for countries such as Ethiopia.

Ethiopia could be in a position to trial alternative methods and approaches to pastoral development, but this will require a high degree of creativity and commitment on the part of both the government and the local population. As Flintan writes: 'There is a need to lobby federal and regional governments to develop a well-founded, researched, and perhaps piloted system of land and resource tenure which begins with the incorporation of pastoralist needs, priorities and experiences while providing them with additional protection and management options to deal with contemporary pressures and challenges. Ethiopia is in the enviable position of being able to learn from the experiences of other countries in this regard' (2010: 167). However, this ultimately depends on the agenda and political will of the government.

Chapter Ten: Lessons from PV

PV and representation

The main aim of PV is to enable local communities to represent themselves. The importance of this is highlighted when comparing participatory videos made by community members with representations of the community by outsiders. One of the main reasons Karrayyu participants wanted to use video was to document their own culture by themselves, for themselves. They want future generations to know their truth: that they are proud people, bearers of an ancient and complex culture that has been compromised by a variety of forces and they are devastated by its decline. A report written by Avendale Old and Drumclog Parish Church in Scotland regarding donations they have made to assist Karrayyu development efforts, describes the Karrayyu as 'the poorest of the poor ... who lack many of the things we take for granted'. This portrayal contrasts markedly with Karrayyu perceptions of themselves. Although they are undoubtedly struggling, they do not see themselves as 'the poorest of the poor'. The use of such wording is no doubt intended to wring hearts and secure donations, whereas ‘proud Ethiopian pastoralists‘ is unlikely to do so.

Charities and the media are facing widespread criticism because of the damage they cause. The UK Charity Commission issued a warning to charities regarding the use of ‘excessively emotive language’ and ‘distressing images of beneficiaries’ due to the ‘reputational risks’, and ‘ethical implications’ of such approaches (Wicks, 2010). Such portrayals have a long-term impact on communities because they 'present people as stuck in poverty and unable to draw on their own communities and cultures' (Halkin and Cordova, 2004: 1). These representations filter down to communities themselves. Karrayyu community members are increasingly aware of how they are portrayed by others. I saw how students reacted when they read reports about their community, and how much it deflated their sense of self and identity. Exposure to the attitudes of others, and their forms of representation, undoubtedly affect people’s view of the world and their place in it. This knowledge made me acutely aware of the responsibility that comes with representation.

Community members have also reviewed research written by a range of academics, and commented that there is somehow a gap between what has been written and the way they perceive and experience things. This echoes Lassiter's observations during research with the Kiowa: 'the gap between academically positioned narratives about their community and community positioned conversations about themselves and their traditions' (2001: 137-8). This highlights issues of power and the politics of representation, and whose discourse is privileged in academic texts. As Speed writes, 'the casting of the anthropologist as "culture expert" reinforces hierarchies of power ... The anthropologist as expert, especially in the sole production of the written document, denies members of cultures the authority to speak for themselves or define their own cultures and identities' (2006: 72). Throughout the research I was aware that at the end of the process I too would have to face these issues. For this reason I attempted to take a reciprocal ethnographic approach which 'creates a much more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of how difficult representing Others (and by extension, Self) is'. (Lassiter, 2001: 142-43).

This thesis highlights that local realities and alternative cultural perspectives offer very different views of change and 'development'. Who gets to tell the story matters because the story can vary greatly depending on the perspective of the teller. This is particularly relevant when considering 'development' interventions, such as the Awash Irrigation Scheme. As Pretty writes: 'Those pushing out the frontier see it as progress; those exposed to the invasion see mainly destruction and loss. In the end there are clear winners and losers ... Today such frontiers are played out in the rainforests, swamps, hills and mountains of Latin America, Africa and Asia, and in the landscapes overwhelmed by modern agricultural technologies and narratives' (2002: 22). As these changes are enforced a new story is told and written and the old slips away without notice. 'It is of course easier to lose, intentionally or by accident, stories handed down by word of mouth. Once they have gone, there is no one to oppose those who dominate with their own narrative' (ibid.: 26). Unfortunately the dominant representations get translated into policy documents because these voices are stronger than those of community members who get 'silenced, repressed, pre-empted, denied or at best translated into an alien dialect' (Morris, 1996: 29) Biodiversity and local traditions slip away and only the local indigenous population notice; but they are powerless in the global scheme of things. Tools like PV offer a democratic potential where alternative views can find expression. However, there

are limitations because PV unfortunately does not entirely render irrelevant the structures of power, knowledge and technology that they are struggling against.

PV as a Form of Cultural Brokerage?

A claim of participatory video is that it helps to bridge gaps between people from different backgrounds and perspectives. One of the secondary aims of the Karrayyu videos was to reach outsiders, not with the aim of getting money or assistance, but mainly for recognition. Despite their lack of faith in researchers and development workers, there is still a hope that the world from which so many people have come to photograph and live among them may be interested and offer them support. However, the majority of the Karrayyu do not realise that they are one voice among many. The people in the West to whom the Karrayyu are reaching out to are often 'overwhelmed by the sheer number of atrocities. There is too much to see, and there appears to be too much to do anything about. Thus, our epoch's dominating sense that complex problems can be neither understood nor fixed works with the massive globalisation of images of suffering to produce moral fatigue, exhaustion of empathy, and political despair' (Kleinman & Kleinman, 1996: 9). Roba was chosen to represent the Karrayyu community at a Slow Food conference in Italy recently and came back amazed at the number of indigenous peoples who are in similar situations to the Karrayyu. He was both inspired by the fact that they are not alone, but also demoralised. This news will undoubtedly be shared with other community members.

In order to gauge the effects of the participatory videos I screened them to people in Britain (Figures 52-53). These people included family and friends, a Permaculture group, members of the Oromo diaspora, professional filmmakers and video editors, and a range of academics. People commented that the films were very different to documentary films made about Africa where people are represented by foreigners, and are spoken for using voice over or explanations. This format alters one’s impression and makes it seem that people from African communities are unable to speak for themselves. They felt that the Participatory Videos were refreshing in contrast because they showed people talking directly to an audience, themselves, in their own words. This echoes Ruby who wrote that 'being able to hear people tell their stories and observe their lives instead of being told what they think and the meaning of their behaviour clearly offers subjects a greater say in the construction of their image' (Ruby 2000: 204). PV

enables participants to be given the chance to be themselves without the restrictions of voice-over, on-camera experts interpreting their lives, or the artificiality of formal interviews.

Figures 53-54: PV Screenings in Dublin and Cardiff. Source: Author

There was however a comment that the structure and content of the videos were sometimes difficult to understand. The videos were made primarily with a Karrayyu audience in mind and therefore assume the audience is interested in watching the complex rituals and processes that are expressions of their way of life. These things are important and have significance for them but conflict with the needs and expectations of a western audience, who often want to watch and immediately understand. People commented on the fact that I did not feature in the videos and references were made to popular television formats such as 'Tribe' with Bruce Parry and 'Tribal Wives'. These formats seem to work because they feature people from the West who are familiar to the viewing audience interacting with 'tribal' people. Due to the gaps between societies and culture I am not sure that participatory videos alone are likely to provoke much interest in people who are not anthropologists, or who are already interested in other societies and cultures. There is increasing recognition that although many of us in Western countries are suffering from an empathy deficit empathy can be a radical tool for social change (Krznaric, 2008). Zeldin argues that ‘the most important changes in human history have not occurred through the imposition or evolution of new political institutions, economic system or laws, but rather through individuals developing deeper understanding of the perspectives and experiences of others, and changing the way they treat one another on a personal level’ (1995: 326). I believe that PV can play a role in encouraging empathy, and it seems this can be facilitated by someone who is able to form a common link.

There were aspects of the videos that people were unable to understand without explanation by me. This highlights the tacit knowledge contained within the videos. There are things which may not seem significant to people from outside the Karrayyu community, but which speak to the Karrayyu. 'What may be bizarre to audiences is not bizarre to the film subjects. The bizarre is only that which is not understood' (Steele, 1962: 51) Through my interactions with community members I could see the significance of certain things that went unnoticed by people I screened the films to. Without knowledge of the context one still needs help in 'reading' the videos to understand what is being seen. This highlights that there are potentially very different levels of engagement with, and understanding of, the videos depending on the audience. I therefore believe a written accompaniment is helpful in aiding understanding. The need for this may, however, vary depending on the subject of the film and how explicit film makers are in the message they want to convey. The difference can be seen in the videos that

accompany this thesis. They range from a video that documents a ceremony from start to finish with no explanation or subtitles, to videos with more of an explicit message accompanied by subtitles and voiceover explanations by community members. It seems that my presence as a Westerner does serve in many ways to bridge the differences between the filmmakers and the audience, which may have important implications for anthropologists.

Despite aspects that may not be entirely understood, I believe videos produced by Karrayyu participants can and do successfully communicate messages from the community to outsiders. Despite the limitations of the political environment, there is great potential for video to be used as a communication tool for a variety of purposes. For example as a monitoring and evaluation tool for development work, enabling community members to document project progress, successes and failures from their perspective. After the PhD work finished community members were left with a video camera. They documented a training course which taught people how to build micro windmills. This may be a powerful way of gaining community views about development projects and could be used as a basis of comparison with views of higher level stake-holders. In this way PV could be used to reduce the costs of project evaluation, and get around the problems caused by 'development tourism' and tarmac bias. Videos could provide visual evidence of project progress to donors and interested parties and provide visual evidence to accompany reports. It is widely acknowledged that it is important to actively include community members in these processes and PV provides a way of doing this.

I also believe there is great potential for PV to link communities so they can share knowledge, experience and innovations across distances to stimulate locally-led development both between groups in the same country, and between countries. The power of video in this respect was shown when I worked on a participatory video project with a neighbouring community to the Karrayyu who have already made a transition to agro-pastoralism. The video featured community members describing the successes and weaknesses of a fodder project (see Mieso video). Most of the fodder varieties had been introduced by a development agency and were unknown to the Karrayyu. When I showed the video to members of the Karrayyu community they were very interested and wanted to know how they access the fodder crops. They responded well because the information was passed to them in their own language by people who were similar to them. I believe that video can be used to facilitate community experience

sharing, particularly among pastoralist groups who are learning to cope with these transitions in different ways.

The biggest role that video could play in terms of bridging divides would be to help overcome some of the misunderstandings about pastoralists that exist within Ethiopia. Much needs to be done to challenge misconceptions of pastoralism and show that such communities hold valuable knowledge. Video can potentially play a role but it is a major challenge as the attitudes and misconceptions are firmly entrenched and supported by particular political, social and economic relations. There is a danger that the videos produced by Karrayyu participants could reinforce outsiders' ideas. The images focus on traditional culture which participants are proud of, but may be perceived very differently by outsiders. I screened the videos to a range of Ethiopians, namely development workers. Because I have lived with the Karrayyu, and am seen as sympathetic, I suspect many masked their feelings. I found it difficult to gauge what they really thought. Before watching the films comments were made about Karrayyu being smelly and unclean, lazy and violent, which perhaps indicated deeper feelings.

Many Ethiopians who watched the films were shocked that I had lived with a Karrayyu family, they were surprised I did not experience any problems and were concerned for my safety. Some pointed out that while the Karrayyu were friendly and accepting of me, it would have been impossible for an Ethiopian of another ethnic group, particularly a highlander, to go and live with them. In many ways telling stories of my time with the Karrayyu challenged people's preconceptions, rather than the videos themselves. This again perhaps highlights the potential role that outsiders can play as mediators. Krznaric argues that development strategies overlook the importance of personal relationships in promoting mutual understanding as a strategy for change. 'There is a much greater scope for development organisations to pursue strategies that encourage mutual understanding, empathy, and trust by creating personal relationships between those who have and those who have not, and which contribute to changing the attitudes and beliefs of those in power' (2007: 45-6).

PV and Vertical Communication

PV is most often used as a way for marginalised or voiceless communities to communicate with those in power who are hard to reach. PV has the potential to be used as a political tool, and to raise social consciousness. This has been demonstrated in numerous cases: for example the Kapayo. They initially used video to preserve the cultural memory of the community and to record their rituals. It was later used as a way of assisting communication among villages and their chiefs, but developed into a more political tool used to exchange political speeches and to document their protests against the Brazilian government. The Kapayo had a high level of understanding about how media interacted with public opinion and the 'image hi-tech Indians quickly gained the front pages of important journals, including the cover of Time magazine when they denounced the construction of a hydroelectric dam in Altamira that would flood their land' (Dagron, 2001: 65). In the Karrayyu case, community members also identified the capacity for PV to be used as an advocacy tool. However, this is not always possible, particularly when working in restrictive political environments. The very act of handing over a camera in such an environment, is in many ways a form of resistance.

I was open about the use of video. I requested and was granted permission from both Addis Ababa University, and the local administration in Matahara. I made it clear to participants from the beginning that PV could not be used as an advocacy tool, for the safety of both myself and them. Participants understood both the dangers and potential repercussions of using video in such an environment and it was decided that video would be used to document culture. However, in this context cultural representation is a political act and participants are in many ways documenting their culture as a form of resistance. Although it may be subtle, the videos counter dominant representations and therefore allow more than one construction of truth to take the stage (Ruby: 2000: 231). Initially there was no intention of discussing the irrigation project. However as the research progressed it was impossible to avoid the question of the scheme and the impact it will have. When addressing the issue of the irrigation scheme I had to tread carefully. As a Human Rights Watch report on Ethiopia states: 'in practice, Ethiopia's citizens are unable to speak freely, organise political activities, and challenge their government's policies- through peaceful protest, voting or publishing their views- without fear of reprisal.' (2010a: 2)

Community members were aware of what they were doing and put a lot of thought into the videos and the editing process. As Tuhiwai Smith points out, the difference between 'insider' and 'outsider' research is that 'insiders have to live with the consequences of their processes on a day-to-day basis for ever more, and so do their families and communities' (1999: 137). Due to this awareness there was a difference in what was said depending on the recording media that was used; the videos do not articulate all of the things that were said during interviews. I was careful about screening certain videos in Ethiopia, particularly those that mention farming and irrigation, for fear of how they may be viewed by others. This was incredibly frustrating and illustrates the Karrayyu situation. A Human Rights Watch report states, in reference to Ethiopia, 'There is a significant element of self-censorship, there are many stories we cannot write, many things we cannot say. We are not told the red-lines, we have to guess' (2010a: 50). In such circumstances, the inability of PV to aid vertical communication is apparent. I did, after discussion with participants, screen the films to development workers at an African-wide development conference in Addis. The films received very positive responses, but I am not sure to what extent they will influence policy, if at all.

There have been a huge number of papers and studies written on the crisis of pastoralism in recent years, and many of them make the same recommendations: to support pastoralist efforts to diversify their incomes, to allow communities to benefit from developments which have alienated them from key resources, to advocate for land use and tenure legislation specific to pastoral areas, to protect and promote pastoral culture and mobility, to give legal backing to customary institutions, to recognise group user rights, and to integrate ecological considerations into land policies. The answers are there, and are known but this does not mean they are translated into appropriate policy or action on the ground. For change to take place there needs to be emphasis on influencing the state and the politics of ownership and control, but this is extremely difficult in countries where opportunities for open dialogue are rare.

In addition there is a gap between policy makers and those at grassroots, particularly pastoralists. A number of people working in Ethiopia have observed that decision-makers who write about local people and formulate development policies often have limited understanding of rural people's environments and pay little regard for locally experienced realities. As Harrison (2002: 602) has said, 'there is a vast gap between policy-makers in Addis Ababa and

the realities of implementation'. This is a common problem as policy makers 'often tend to belong to an urban-based educated elite … They usually have little long-term experience of living in more disadvantaged locations … It is difficult for them to fully understand the realities of poverty in such places' (Porter, 2003: 139). Kelbessa also (2001: 5) writes in reference to Ethiopian conservation measures, 'the conventional top-down fashion was used to design and implement government policy with little room for adaption to individual and local conditions … Policy makers hardly recognised the diversity of farming systems and agro-ecologies in the country'. There is much to suggest that we can only know the needs of any particular region by participating in its specificity; those who are unfamiliar can be incongruous, disruptive and even destructive. The destructive effects are exacerbated by differences in ethnicity, religion and culture which become political. Efforts need to be made to bridge these gaps. As Gadihoke has written 'Ultimately we must not forget that any venture with participatory video has to be accompanied by other political action. There has to be a deeper socio-political engagement with a community that goes beyond making images. Video or film can only be a facilitator in a larger process that involves other agents' (2003: 282).

One way of bringing change is to work directly with communities at the grassroots level. Changes to Karrayyu culture are inevitable and little can be done to resist the coming developments, but community members feel they need support in navigating these changes. Whatever work is done at community level needs to place emphasis on a non-confrontational approach, and have an explicit aim to work in partnership with the local administration and other key actors in the area. Taking a confrontational stance is not likely to bring change, as NGOs working in the Fantalle area have already found out. As White notes in relation to PV, 'advocates for change need to establish trust not just with the project participants, but with the target decision-makers: political will and space on the part of local authorities is needed' (White, 2003). I believe that outsiders who have an understanding of the complex dynamics in such areas, and who are sensitive to the concerns of community members, can play an important role in facilitating dialogue and action at local level. This is not an easy path to take because it requires time, commitment and continuous presence. As Cain has written 'it takes time to conduct genuinely participatory processes: it takes time to get people on board; it takes time keeping them onboard. And during all this time the situation is ever changing' (2009: 194). This is not a step that everyone, understandably, is willing or able to make.

PV as a research method

PV has been extremely successful in revealing areas of the community's life that were inaccessible to me as a researcher, despite the fact that I lived with the community. Videos enabled me to gain an insight into aspects of Karrayyu life and experience that I could not have understood otherwise. Footage men took of each other whilst herding cattle was unique, it gave me an understanding of what the men did when they were away from home, how they behaved with each other, with their animals and the dangers that they face daily. The videos certainly give an insight into Karrayyu life, particularly the sensory elements such as colours, sounds, places, people and animals that are lost through writing. Community members have commented on how 'real' the videos are, they can hear the sounds of home, see familiar things, even smell the smells. This is important because culture is often represented in written form which contrasts with fieldwork which involves all of the senses. As well as recording the more sensory aspects of experience film is also particularly good at conveying emotion 'by providing the protagonists with the opportunity to give their own explanations.' (Henley, 1996: 8). Describing a culture is not just a matter of describing the mechanics of the way of life, culture is also something perceived, something felt. Culture is about what people think as well as what they do, their beliefs, values, principles and emotions.

As a method, PV complemented and deepened other methods of engagement. Teaching, filming, screening and review processes created spaces and opportunities for dialogue between me and participants. It enabled two way exploration, collaboration and mutual understanding. But this was not necessarily about the method itself, but the way in which it is used. Successful use of PV with the Karrayyu has depended a lot on my attitude towards and relationships with community members. The overall approach of collaboration and participation, involving commitment, friendship and mutual trust has been crucial to the success of the method.

This was highlighted when I was commissioned to undertake a piece of PV work for a prominent research/development organisation. The aim was to use PV to enable beneficiaries to document and assess one of their projects. The community involved was Oromo, neighbours of the Karrayyu, and had already converted to agro-pastoralism. The entry point and time scale was very different from my research with the Karrayyu. I came to the community through a

development organisation, with a pre-planned agenda and had five days in which to train, plan and facilitate filming. During the process I was acutely aware of how video could potentially be hijacked by more powerful actors, in this case development workers and government administrators who had a vested interest in the end product and message of the video. Attempts were made to influence and direct community members to portray the positive and hide the negative aspects of the project. There was little opportunity for me to counter these forces because of the limited time available, the political situation and the lack of trust and rapport with community members. These dynamics changed the PV process and the resulting film, the difference is clear when comparing and contrasting the commissioned film with the Karrayyu films.

While I see the advantages of PV as a method, it is also important to urge caution in its application. PV is often treated as a tool for empowerment, but there is a need for deeper introspection. Gadihoke (2003) argues that PV faces certain dangers 'because of its user friendliness and seemingly instantaneous ability to replicate "reality", which in many ways makes it vulnerable to manipulation and abuse. I know from experiences how receptive people are to being taught a skill which involves handing over control of equipment which is associated with people in power. For people at the grassroots in developing countries like Ethiopia, handling expensive technical equipment such as cameras is unheard of, particularly for members of marginalised groups who are often looked down by those in senior positions. This process involves trust and intimacy which people often do not experience and raises hopes and expectations. If one introduces such a method there is a duty to follow through. However, as the Karrayyu example highlights, even when the tools are handed over the people holding the camera are still aware of the context in which they are working. In this sense politics and influence can still be brought to bear, while videos appear to be directed by the grassroots, therefore giving the illusion of 'truth' and 'authenticity'. It takes someone who is familiar with the context in which PV is being used to be able to detect the ways in which it can be hijacked by more powerful actors.

There is a danger that using video in such circumstances, can perhaps do more harm than good, unless there is a genuine collaboration and commitment to the people involved. While video can undoubtedly be used for empowerment, the perceived impact of video needs to be

questioned and there is a need for a critical engagement with relationships of power inherent in the process (Gadihoke, 2003: 282). Here it is useful to acknowledge Cooke and Kothari's assertion that in order to build a more sophisticated and genuinely reflexive understanding of participatory processes and dynamics, it is essential to acknowledge the critiques of participation. This 'requires a level of open-mindedness that accepts that participatory development may inevitably be tyrannical, and a preparedness to abandon it if this is the case (2001: 15).

From a research point of view, taking an engaged, collaborative approach combined with PV enabled me to feel I was giving something back in a number of ways. The way in which the research has been conducted has meant that it meets the interests and requirements of the community, rather than the researcher alone. Fantalle Gile commented:

> 'You came with no questionnaire and no research topic. You wanted the community to have their own research topic and you wanted them to say their own thing, for them to set the questions to be asked. You wanted them to talk about the things that touch them, and the areas that they are interested in. This is critical'.

Rather than just collecting data, I have been able to teach community members a skill they recognise and value, which can be used for their own purposes in the future. The fact that participants can teach other members of the community means that the skill is sustainable, particularly as cameras and video technology become cheaper and more widely available. Karrayyu youngsters have already started to use video to produce their own music videos for public dissemination. Interestingly they feature Karrayyu traditional culture and lifestyle, they have not adopted 'modern' or American styles used by other young artists, particularly those from urban areas like Addis. Many of the Karrayyu see those who follow American trends as having lost their sense of self and identity. There is increasing evidence of cameras being used increasingly by indigenous groups to assert their identity including other Ethiopian groups. A film 'Shooting With Mursi' (2009) (www.shootingwithmursi.com) was made by Olisarali Olibui, a member of the Mursi, with the assistance of Ben Young.

Although indigenous groups are increasingly able to appropriate media without outside assistance, collaboration is often still important. I gradually realised throughout fieldwork that

my role as witness was significant for community members. 'Seeing, listening, touching, recording can be, if done with care and sensitivity, acts of solidarity. Above all they are the work of recognition. Not to look, not to touch, not to record can be the hostile act, an act of indifference and of turning away' (Scheper-Hughes, 1995: 418). Participants felt that, as well as witnessing, I was helping them to document their situation. This made a significant difference to my interactions with the community and to my own feelings about the research process. I identify with Swantz when she writes: 'I do not separate my scientific inquiry from my life. For me it is really a quest for life, to understand life and to create what I call living knowledge-knowledge which is valid for the people with whom I work and for myself' (Marja-Liisa Swantz, quoted in Reason and Bradbury, 2006: 1).

Implications for anthropology

Throughout the research process I was aware that collaborative approaches are considered problematic and face resistance from within academia, namely due to their lack of objectivity and subjective nature. 'Despite nearly four decades of debate over the impossibility of objective research and the importance of a researcher's subjective location, the academic establishment still values dispassionate and "clear-headed" science above personal testimony and experience' (Menzies, 2001: 20). Participatory approaches are acceptable as long as researchers are sufficiently in control of the process, particularly in the stages that matter, namely the writing up. Although participants are increasingly recognised as capable of providing data, they are not necessarily thought of as being able to analyse those same data at the sufficient theoretical and critical level to participate in the academic process. The same arguments are made by those writing policy, namely that communities are unable to participate in policy design because they are unable to understand their situation. The reality is perhaps that participatory approaches undermine the position and agendas of both researchers and policy makers alike.

Despite the huge changes in anthropology in recent years, researchers who engage in collaborative, engaged research still face criticism. The nature of these criticisms is demonstrated in an article written by Roberston in response to Flood's (1975) article about the Afar, neighbours of the Karrayyu. 'His study becomes political, and as such it demands

particular care in the treatment of social values. Constructive comment on the situation depends on methodological and balanced study of all the interests, issues and activities involved, if he throws in his lot with one party the anthropologist puts the credibility of his analysis at stake'. He goes on: 'Far from making a cool, critical appraisal of the relations of a peripheral community in the development of a particular country, he may give a one-sided, emotionally committed account which stresses the integrity and validity of tribal life. This is not only bad tactics, it is bad anthropology' (1975: 7). I am aware that my research may be criticised due to the engaged approach. However, doing research with the Karrayyu demanded active participation which challenges the critical detachment of the classic participant-observer. This piece of research would not have been possible if I had not taken this approach. If I did not align myself with community members they would have closed their doors. The relationships I have formed with Karrayyu participants have been life changing and have altered my view of the world. I have attempted to understand the Karrayyu experientially and going back over my experiences, the videos, the interviews and life stories has been a meditative process, one that has enabled me to realise more deeply the significance of the message that the Karrayyu are trying to convey. For me this demonstrates the importance and power of participation as a transformative experience.

This account may be seen as biased, both because of the PV process and my explicit allegiance with participants, but this also depends on the perspective you take. All accounts are biased to some degree, from official histories to ethnographic accounts to development policies. Crapanzano (1986) argues that ethnographies are based on systematic and contestable exclusions; this many involve silencing incongruent voices or deploy a consistent manner of quoting, 'speaking for', or translating the reality of others (Clifford, 1986: 6). The Karrayyu are aware of these processes of exclusion through their own under-representation. The truth of a situation, as understood by indigenous peoples themselves, is often left out of academic research due to concerns with objectivity and neutrality, meaning that the resulting research is alienating and sometimes destructive. As Lassiter writes, for many indigenous people the issue they have with academic research is the complete irrelevance of academically positioned interpretations; and perhaps most importantly, it is about the power that these interpretations have in defining the community to the outside and to future generations (2001: 143). In contrast PV is explicitly about giving voiceless people an opportunity to express their views. 'The term

indigenous media is a means of self-expression that necessarily involves the political state of affairs for first nations and indigenous peoples who struggle against ongoing forces of subordination or neo-colonial circumstances in combination with the institutional apparatuses and representational forms of media industries and technologies' (Himpele, 2008: 357). This research may be biased towards a certain portion of the Karrayyu population, but regardless of the partiality of the accounting, the process and the results enable us to know something about how they see the world, which is important and no less valid than other accounts.

In this research the process has been as important, if not more important, for research participants than the end result. This contrasts with orthodox approaches which are focused on 'the "ends" of the research and pay 'Little or no concern ... to the manner or means in which the research process can affect the lives of the study population' (Fals Borda, 1989). Ultimately I believe that a more collaborative, engaged approach using tools like PV leads to more ethical anthropology. Despite the necessity and validity of collaborative research approaches, although 'a terminological and thus ideological shift from "informant" to "collaborator" or "participant" may be underway ... the fundamental paradigmatic change in research methods and analysis that is represented by this shift is fundamental and radical, and is therefore not to be seen as easy or inevitable' (Fluehr-Lobban, 2008: 180). PV enabled a collaborative approach to this research, but it raised a number of challenges and problems. I agree with Bainton (2007: 42-3) when he says 'While we acknowledge that other cultures might have other alternative knowledge, the theoretical tools of academia's "knowledge production" remain western ones ... unless we go further and look to decolonizing theories, we have missed out a crucial aspect of the knowledge production process'. This is of critical importance to anthropology's relevance in our current times. As Andreasson writes:

> 'Let us think again about the North American and European PhD student, how she is conditioned and 'professionalised' to then be sent out in 'the field', armed with her knowledge, her theory, her method. What are the tangible results of more than half a century of such 'policy relevant' endeavours? If we are to judge the utility of African studies and development studies based on what has actually transpired on the African continent and by our ability to find 'solutions', then surely we have a cause for comprehensive re-examination of our field' (Andreasson, 2005: 983).

Despite the evidence that participatory processes can be effective, communities like the Karrayyu still need assistance in getting their concerns heard. It is extremely difficult for the Karrayyu to articulate their point of views and concerns, even using a participatory technique which has the specific aim of bridging the gap between community members and those in power. The Karrayyu know this and have requested support in voicing their point of view. As Tadesse has written: 'Being vocal involves a variety of risks for indigenous people. By being silent, on the other hand, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities risk remaining invisible and without a voice. In most cases these groups are not in a position to embark on the trail of visibility on their own. They need the support of global forces to aid them in this endeavour to be heard and to be visible' (2005: 4). As anthropologists, we have a critical role to play in assisting the people we work with and alongside. Taking an active role is often a source of dilemmas for anthropologists, due to the non-interventionist ethic, but the times suggest that this position is no longer tenable. We have to consider how we can translate, advocate, educate and mediate between our research communities and the larger global community, particularly if the communities we work with request our assistance.

However, this does not mean that, as researchers, we are always able to, or should, represent the people we work. I know that, despite the time I have spent with the Karrayyu and the work that we have done together, there are still many things I do not understand at sufficient depth to be able to represent them. We can, however, play a role in facilitating communities to represent and empower themselves. Kirsch writes that anthropologists are 'well-positioned to analyse the social costs of environmental problems. Drawing on their understanding of local views on social and environmental issues, they can facilitate communication between the respective parties. Ideally anthropologists will also provide local communities with information and resources that will assist them in presenting their own claims more effectively' (2002: 178). What is clear is that conducting research and walking away is not enough. More engaged and active responses on the part of academics are necessary if changes are going to occur. As a result of my experiences I am committed to working with the Karrayyu in the long term. I write this with the realisation that it makes me vulnerable to charges of emotional involvement, but I feel that to deny alignment is an implicit commitment to the dominant social order (Menzies, 2001: 26). An applied sensibility is paramount for an anthropology of the twenty-first century

attempting to deal with issues like those facing the Karrayyu and other indigenous groups (Durington, 2009: 204).

Future of the Karrayyu

The Karrayyu see their future as uncertain. As previous chapters have illustrated, the Karrayyyu recognise that their lifestyles and traditions have changed and adapted over time, and will always change. They realise that their culture and history is not static, indeed culture change is a given and necessary process of all human societies as they adapt. However, the Karrayyu, like indigenous groups the world over, assert that they are watching the disappearance of their culture. The concerns the Karrayyu are voicing and the implications of the changes they are facing deserve to be taken seriously. A UN Human Rights Minority Report on Ethiopia states: Some smaller minority communities in Ethiopia are considered to be in danger of disappearing completely as distinct ethnic groups and cultures, due to factors including resettlement, displacement, conflict, assimilation, cultural dilution, environmental factors and loss of land' (McDougall, 2006: 8). Karrayyu pastoralists were specifically highlighted in this report as a vulnerable group (ibid.: 17). The report goes on to recommend that 'every effort is required to protect those small groups that wish to maintain their distinct characteristics yet are vulnerable to factors beyond their control, such as the impact of conflict or forced displacement from their traditional lands. Further research into such highly vulnerable groups is required to enable effective policy responses to protect their existence and preserve their cultures, also for the wider benefit of Ethiopia generally' (ibid.: 9).

The Karrayyu account highlights their struggles against forces over which they have no control. External influences are having a major impact on their way of life and culture which has led to a sense of cultural disorientation or what Sztompka (2000) has referred to as ‘cultural trauma’. He writes that cultural trauma ‘is apt to occur when some significant, sudden and unexpected episode of social change gives a blow to the very central assumptions of a culture, or more precisely is interpreted as fundamentally incongruent with the core values, bases of identity, [and] foundations of collective pride’ (2000: 453). The Karryyuu have already experienced the loss of their traditional land and water sources, which started a process of cultural disorientation and deterioration, and are facing a final blow with the loss of pastoralism. For the

Karrayyu the conversion to agriculture represents a break in continuity, a fundamental change that is being enforced from outside. The difference between this and the changes they have experienced in the past is that they do not have control over the process. The cultural implications of the Karrayyu conversion to agriculture are, as Crate writes about the impact of climate change on the Viliui Sakha of north-eastern Siberia, 'analogous to the disorientation, alienation and loss of meaning in life when people are removed from their environment of origin' (Crate, 2008: 573). The difference is that the Karrayyu, like the Viliui Sakha, are not moving from their place of origin, they are watching as the earth literally changes beneath their feet and their livelihood is taken away from them. I am aware that I am painting a dark picture but as Crate writes 'as anthropologists we need to grapple with the implications of the loss of the animals and plants that are central to a people's daily subsistence practices, cycles of annual events, and sacred cosmologies (2008, 573).

We have a responsibility as researchers, particularly if we are conducting collaborative research to represent the point of view of the people we work with in a way that does them justice. We have a duty to listen to their concerns, in the way that they voice them, and try to understand what they are saying from their point of view. During this collaborative research process the Karrayyu participants have told a collective narrative which places emphasis on ‘culture’, ‘community’ and an assertion of their core values. The videos are their attempt to document and communicate this, both for future generations and outsiders. As researchers we can point out that these narratives are partial and selective versions of reality (Eastmond, 2007: 623); but we must take care not to undermine these accounts. We have to be aware that 'objective' assessments of these narratives can serve to reduce the power of what groups like the Karrayyu are saying, and the urgency of their message. Proximity to and empathy with participants does not exclude analytic distance and researchers are in a position to place these narratives within the larger context in which experience and action are embedded. This goes back, full circle, to the need for collaborative and engaged research approaches and to decolonise not just the methods we use but the theories we work with.

This piece of work is not advocating that the Karrayyu stay as they are, or that their culture should not change, but rather that the community should be able to decide for itself, and have a say in the policies that affect it. Indigenous populations have the capacity to analyse their

knowledge and to make decisions that relate to their community and environment. In order to bring a change in the way in which pastoralist policy is designed and implemented there needs to be 'not only engagement with what is at stake for participants in those local worlds, but bringing those local participants (not merely national experts) into the process of developing and assessing programs. Such policy-making from the ground up can only succeed, however, if these local worlds are more effectively projected into national and international discourses on human problems.' (Kleinman & Kleinman, 1996: 18) I believe this is where tools like participatory video can play a role.

As Jackson reminds us '*without listening to one another's stories*, there can be no recovery of the social, no overcoming of our separateness, no discovery of common ground or common cause (Jackson cited in Eastmond, 2007: 263) From the perspective of a shared humanity we cannot afford to ignore the struggles being faced by communities like the Karrayyu. It is increasingly recognised that pastoral and other indigenous systems and knowledge are important to global society. Current research suggests that pastoral communities have much to offer in the current debates on how best to adapt to climate change where concepts such as variability, resilience, risk management etc. are given increasing prominence' (Nori *et al.*, 2008: 16). Crate in her work on indigenous people and climate change highlights an urgent need to 'develop collaborative research models, from small projects to large scale research programs and extending from identifying research needs to designing response strategies' (2008: 572). However, it is these marginalised groups who are suffering most from 'development' interventions. Resource degradation and climate change, expansion of commercialisation into the hitherto impenetrable fortress of nature has affected communities whose livelihood depends on the preservation of the environment, biodiversity and the climate. Pastoralists ... are among the first to be affected by the degradation of the environment and ecological changes' (Tegegn, 1998: 5)

The effects of 'development' and climate change on marginalised populations have brought these issues to the attention of a global audience who are now reflecting on the implications of the changes that are underway. There is an increasing understanding 'of nature as a realm of complexly interwoven relationships, a field of subtle interdependencies from which... no single phenomenon can be picked out without "finding it hitched to everything else"' (Abram, 1996:

85). This reiterates a message that arose from this research: the Karrayyu assertion that everything is connected. This has implications for the planet as a whole and thus for every one of us. With the loss of bio and cultural diversity we, as a collective, are affected, we are diminished, we become increasingly impoverished and empty. Struggles by indigenous groups like the Karrayyu are therefore everyone's struggles, and those who work with and alongside can play a role in the outcome.

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