

***Daraba* in the Lowlands of Wallagga: Dynamics in Agro-Pastoral Economic Practices, 1840-1985**

Dereje Hinew*

Wollega University, College of Social Science, Department of History

Article History: Received: March 4, 2022; Accepted: January 8, 2023; Published: June 13, 2023

Abstract: *Daraba*, an agro-pastoral economic activity, was practiced on a broad scale in lowland areas of Wallagga, Western Ethiopia. The lowlands, including the Angar-Didessa, Gibe, Wama, Finca'a, Dabus, Birbir, and others, were centers for complementary grazing, *hora* (saltlick), swidden cultivation, and food gathering. This article deals with historical trends in the practice of herding livestock and swidden cultivation in these river valleys. Beginning in the early 19th century, *daraba* practice steadily declined owing to changes in land use and rights of access to lowland resources, such as grazing land and *hora*. The agents of these changes were the local rulers, including *abba-qoros*, and the state. The process negatively affected the livestock economy in general and herders' livelihoods in particular. Evidence for the study came from reports of travellers, documents on state farms, and settlement programs as well as oral accounts. By employing this evidence, the study tries to demonstrate that the agro-pastoral practices in the lowlands were intimately associated with the scope of farmers' access to valley land and the availability of pertinent resources there. This study argues that resource control and land use changes denied the rights of farmers' access to the resources and profoundly discouraged agro-pastoralism in favour of modern cultivation and sedentarization. Nevertheless, a land use policy that considers the preservation of saltlicks and grazing areas in the lowlands could mitigate the declining livestock economy.

Keywords: Agro-pastoralists; *Daraba*; *Hora*; Land use; Lowland

Licensed under a Creative Commons. Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.



1. Introduction

Livestock was an important component of the agricultural economy in Wallagga region. Livestock production was a superior activity of the vast highlands neighboring the lowlands, which enabled a more systematic use of land, and surplus production (Ta'a, 2002). Cattle were kept primarily because they were a store of wealth and a means of/for sustaining arable farming. Livestock was significant sources of food, such as milk and meat for diet, and their products, such as skin, horns and others were valuable in the production of material culture. In fact, the ownership of livestock has been indispensable for crop production and other socio-economic values.¹ In arable farming, livestock was crucial as a source of manure and labor for plough and threshing which every farmer had to obtain (Knutsson, 1969). The study area is also mentioned to have been a source of livestock for the major markets in Western Ethiopia and the Sudan (Bulatovich, 2000).

The large-scale cattle production was possible owing to the presence of sufficient grazing land and *hora* (saltlick). During rainy seasons, *daraba*² (lit: transhumance) was practiced on a broad scale in the lowlands. *Daraba* primarily implies seasonal herd movements to remote and vast grazing areas for pasture and *hora*. Unlike in other parts of Eastern Africa, the practice also includes the movement of farmers to lowlands to produce cotton, maize, sorghum, cardmon and others through swidden system.

Massive river valleys including the Angar-Didessa, Dabus, Wama, Finca'a and others were centers of agro-pastoral practices for the Macca Oromo. These areas were the most prominent centers where herders from different directions in Wallagga used to take their cattle for grazing and watering cattle. According to the tradition, the mineral content of *hora* served as medication for intestinal parasites because of which cattle's immunity to disease and appetite to graze increased (Informants: Mathious Ulfina and Mangistu Hirpa). However, since disease blocked access to the regular use of lowland resources, farmers used to take their cattle for grazing and watering in the rainy season when malaria and trypanosomiasis were less prevalent (Wakwoya, 1988; Hineu, 2018).

Studies of agriculture generally show that this practice was an adjustment to spatial and temporal variability in environmental conditions (Hineu, 2018). However, the distinction between pastoralism and *daraba* is important to avoid misconceptions. As opposed to pastoralism, *daraba* was practiced by sedentary population, who were engaged in permanent arable cultivation in the coterminous highlands. In western Ethiopia, *daraba* practices including transhumance grazing and swidden cultivation were the oldest agricultural practices. The range of the practices was limited with human and livestock disease hazards and access to lowland resources (Dina, 2016; Hineu, 2018). The presence of pasture and *hora* historically made the lowlands significant for herders and non-plough farmers. The herders/farmers/*gada* trainees who moved to far away areas for these purposes were called *darabdu* (those who campaigned). The system involved the seasonal utilization of pasture and avoidance of the anticipated disease (Informants: Dorsis Dhuguma and Ejeta Tolesa).

Grazing and crop production in the lowland ecologies was associated to the old agro-pastoral ways of land use and warriors' training practices in the *Gadaa* system. This implies the *Gada* military apprenticeship and *butta* ceremony, which required the travel to remote areas to test the stamina of the members for the actual *gada* leadership. Likewise, members of the *fole gada* grade (16-24 years) were required to display their military potential in the hostile environment as a mark of initiation to the next *gadaa* class. Herding cattle and cultivating lowland crops were also additional responsibilities of the *fole* grade to support their families (Legesse, 1973; Hassen, 2015). In the days of *Gada* administration, the lowlands were utilized as places of apprenticeship, which the *fole* performed

¹Lowlands are areas below 1500 meters elevation, which include river valleys. Historically, lowlands were too inhospitable for settled agriculture.

²The region has been identified as the home of long horned cattle known as *bote* (Zebu), long tailed highland sheep, and special horse species. These species have been proved best both in production and in reproduction (Dina, 2016).

³Seasonal movement for cattle herding was also widely practiced and known as *foora* among the southern Oromo. During *daraba*, only lactating cows, young calves, and oxen were kept near residence in the highlands (Legesse, 1973).

through hunting campaigns and taking cattle for grazing (Informants: Charinat Waqwoya and Hailu Debela).

Livestock production has been the subject in rural development studies. Scholars from different disciplines studied livestock production in relation to crop cultivation, and economic and other social aspects (McCann, 1995; Ta'a, 2002; Bekele, 2005; Rahmato, 2009). Nevertheless, their works do not relate livestock production to the changing factors. Specifically, the complex environmental issues related to grazing have not attracted much attention in the historical literature of Ethiopia. Bekele's (2005) study on the Rift Valley that expounds the dramatic change of the valley from a strong livestock-based agriculture to cereal production does not give space for the effects of modern agriculture on the grazing land and livestock economy. Ta'a's (2002) research on the farming system of the Macca Oromo assessed the indigenous agricultural skills and practices of farmers that enabled farmers to obtain sufficient harvests and maintain balanced relationships between agriculture and their environment. Yet, historical trends explaining livestock production and lowland ecologies have been missed (Ta'a, 2002). Tefera's (2009) study shows the impact of modern agriculture on the Angar valley does not provide sufficient data on the effects of resource depletion on livestock production. The study by Dina (2016) on "Land Tenure and Agriculture in Wallagga (1941-1991)," documents valuable data on agricultural systems and the vitality of livestock production. Nevertheless, changes resulting from the adverse effects of land use were not considered. This has certainly left a wide gap in our knowledge of the changes mainly in the livestock economy related to lowlands that this article attempts to address.

The purpose of this study is to show the historical trends in the practice of cattle herding and swidden cultivation in the major lowlands of Wallagga. It relates these practices to the changes in land use, rights of access to land and change in the livestock economy. In tracing the socio-political changes, such as the state formation, changes in mode of production and population increase that shaped land use systems among the Macca Oromo, the study tries to depict the magnitude of *daraba* practices from the early 19th to the late 20th centuries. In doing so, the study links the scope of *daraba* practices to the decline of lowland resource and the livestock economy in general. It also attempts to demonstrate how ecological constraints such as disease used to shape land use and food production system in the history of the region as a whole.

2. Research Methods

This research work is a history of transhumance in Wallagga. The study adopted historical and ethnographic methods. It employed historical method because the study attempts to trace *daraba* practices in historical sequence to understand the trends across time. It also studies changes in cultural and social institutions that governed lowland resources and practices. In this regard, the level of *daraba* practices has been analyzed in relation to access to lowland resource, resettlement and changes in mode of production since the late 19th century. An ethnographic method is also employed as the study examines *daraba* practices in relation to social and economic activities of the Macca Oromo.

2.1. Description of the Study Area

The lowlands under the study are located in western Ethiopia. The areas are geographical entities that include Angar, Didessa, Gibe, Wama and Finca'a River valleys, Birbir-Baro and the Dabus River valleys. By lowlands, we mean the low land areas traversed by these major river valleys mentioned above. These constitute extensive lowlands that were rich in nature described as regular gardens (Landor, 1907). In the lowlands, water was plentiful, and the soil was fertile. The lowlands were famous for diverse vegetation and grasses useful for forage. In particular, the lowlands were rich in *hora*. For instance, in Angar-Didessa lowland (that covers parts of Guto-Gida, Sasiga, Gida, Abe-dongoro, Gudaya, Bila, Gimbi and Limu districts) alone, there were sixteen centers of *hora*, namely *hora Biya*, *hora Canco*, *hora Dimtu*, *hora Donfe*, *hora-Gorocan*, *hora Mexi*, *hora Tuji*, *hora Urgessa*

(*milki guda*), *hora Wata*, *hora Wakalle*, *hora-Cabi*, *hora-Didiga*, *hora-Gorbi*, *hora-Lomica* and *hora-Qarsa abba moti* (informants: Mangistu Hirpa and Charinat Wakwoya). In the past, the lowlands were renowned for their *hora* and pasture. Until the late 1960s, almost all the lowlands with varying degree were infested with the dreadful diseases, such as malaria, typhus and trypanosomiasis that completely blocked permanent agrarian life (Bulatovich, 2000). The lowlands served as a seasonal grazing land and swidden cultivation for herders and farmers in the coterminous uplands. Since the late 1960s, the relative disease control by development agencies made the lowlands viable for large-scale agriculture and resettlement. The process has made the study area a centre of surplus crop production, which negatively affected the resources bases, such as pasture and *hora*.

2.2. Research Design and Approach

In this study, historical and ethnographic approaches have been employed. The historical human-ecology relations and the role of power in resource control have been the basic assumptions employed. To do so, first, travelers account and secondary sources were consulted to understand the environmental settings of the study areas and earlier human activities in relation to *daraba* practices. Next, the actual engagement into the research sites and conducting interview was made by preparing interview questions and checklist for the issues to be enquired. Interviews were held with elders. Finally, the collected data were interpreted to produce this report.

2.3. Data Sources and Types

This manuscript has been prepared based on data obtained from well informed elders, travelers' reports, archives, and secondary literature. Oral tradition offered a broad picture on the dynamics of land uses and resources related to the lowlands. Travelers' reports of the 19th and the early 20th centuries that are available in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies have been worth to obtain data on the environment and societies of western Ethiopia. The rich archives in the previous Wallagga province archive centers and National Archive have been sources of data for the study. Besides, the study benefited from diverse empirical studies in the region. Similarly, archives from 1880s to 1980s, including reports and correspondences provided useful information about land use and lowland resources.

2.4. Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted based on the major assumptions indicated above. The purpose was to understand and explain the chronological change in the *daraba* practices due to the control of grazing lands and the gradual depletion of resources. Thus, this manuscript has been produced through identifying and describing patterns of human activities in the lowlands and changes in land use. To do so, evidences obtained from oral and written sources were interpreted and triangulated against the broad assumptions. The data interpretation followed chronological approach to identify the anthropogenic factors in time and space.

3. Results and Discussions

A history of *daraba* practices in the region is generally related to a broader picture of highland-lowland interactions in the last centuries. The occupation of space in the lowlands for modern agriculture, habitation, and the subsequent land use changes and resource depletion brought about the decline of the agro-pastoral practices that negatively affected the livelihoods in general, and livestock economy in particular. In this section of the study, an attempt is made to describe the agro-pastoral practices in relation to land use and land governance across time.

The *daraba* practice entails the movement to the lowland for both cattle herding and swidden cultivation. Hence, the travel to such lowlands was in search of sufficient pasture, saltlick, and fertile soil. When pasture was scarce in the uplands herders from Sibru (West Wallagga), Leqa (East Wallagga) and Jawi (East Wallagga and Horro-Guduru) used to take their cattle for grazing to the

lowlands in their neighborhoods. The movement might take months during which cattle fed on the pasture and frequently drank *hora*. Etymologically, the term *hora* referred to the act of reproduction of cattle, possibly because of health from drinking *hora*. According to the tradition, the mineral content of *hora* served as medication for intestinal parasites because of which cattle's immunity to disease and appetite to graze increased (Informants: Mangistu Hirpa and Charinat Wakwoya). The following excerpt depicts the tradition and purpose of driving livestock to the lowlands.

Every year, starting from November, when malaria threatens least, people drive all their animals excepting the horses, to this salty region. The animals greedily lick and feed on the *hora* for several days. The local inhabitants have their cattle lick the *hora* as often as possible, while those from distant districts bring their cattle once in a year. The *hora* fattens the animals and provides them with the necessary mineral elements (Ambachew, 1957: 64).

The *darabdu* were strong boys recruited to camp in the lowland for keeping cattle for three or four months. The *darabdu* needed to be physically strong to defend themselves and the cattle from the attacks of dangerous wild beasts as well as theft. They stayed by establishing temporary huts and shifting their residence to obtain good pasture during less malaria and trypanosomiasis infestations. In this month the *darabdu* were expected to abandon the lowland since tsetse fly and other human and animal diseases began to prevail. Elders recall the *darabdu* song, which reflects the high values of *hora* and their courage in going to hostile areas to graze their cattle as follows.

<i>Eessaa gala saanoo?</i>	From where are the cattle returning?
<i>Horaa gala saanoo</i>	Cattle return from <i>hora</i>
<i>Maalfaa dheeda saanoo</i>	What do cattle graze on?
<i>Leensa dheeda saanoo</i>	Cattle graze on fresh grass
<i>Lugni na hinyaasinii</i>	Let no cowardice take me out
<i>Kattaa gubbaan oola</i>	I would stay on a high stony place
<i>Cirriitu narra oola</i>	I would be a prey for the peck bird

(Informants: Ejeta Tolasa, Mengistu Hirpha and Mathios Ulfina)

This *darabdu* song shows their achievement as opposed to the cowardice who failed to do the like. They also praised their cows returning from *hora* as:

<i>Saawwi horaa galu</i>	The cattle that return from <i>hora</i>
<i>Kan gurruun barcumaa</i>	Their udders as big as stool
<i>Kosorruu sochoosa</i>	They break <i>kosorruu</i> (a plant on the cow's path)
<i>Bosonuu dammaqsa</i>	They awake away antelope

(Informants: Ejeta Tolasa and Mangistu Hirpa)

On the other hand, *daraba* involves the seasonal movement for cultivation in the lowlands. The concept of *daraba* for crop cultivation is similar to a farming tradition of *mofez-zamat* in northern Ethiopia, but farming in this case did not involve the use of plough. Instead, cultivation was undertaken through a swidden and hoe system. Farmers who used to work on swidden cultivation are also referred to as *darabdu*. Specifically, however, those who used to travel to the lowlands twice a year to gather 'wild' cotton or to sow and pick cotton were known as *jirbitu* (Informants: Mangistu Hirpa and Doris Dhuguma). Other than cotton, swidden farmers used to cultivate *bobe* (caudatum sorghum), *bisinga* (durra bicolor sorghum), *kollo* (pepper), *dagussa* (millet), *ogiyo* (cardamom), and *boqqollo* (maize). It is suggested that the lowlands of western Ethiopia might have been the region from which sorghum dispersed to western Africa and India (Pankhurst, 1961). As a result, the western lowlands are referred to as old cotton (Simoons, 1960) and sorghum growing areas (Hiney, 2018). The presence of pasture, *hora* and possibility of crop production without tilling attracted more people to settle in the peripheries of the lowlands to use the resources more often.

3.1. Agro-pastoral Practices under the *Qabiye* System

In the study area, ecology greatly dictated land use systems and patterns of agriculture. Customarily, there were four major categories of land use: *masi* (land for cultivation), *lafa dhedisa* (land for grazing), *daggala* (grassland land for thatch), and *bosona* (forestland) (Ta'a, 2002). Grazing land

varied seasonally and was known by various names, such as *hura* (bush land), *baji* (fallow land), *daggala* (grassland), and *caffee* (wet lands). The land use category of the lowlands was forestland, which was the source of pasture, *hora*, animal products, honey, wild food, varieties of wood, medicinal plants, and other things. Lowlands were distant from residences and wet seasons grazing areas.

In the *qabiye* land holding system, prior to the state formation in 1840s, lowlands were communally owned. Communal implies the ecosystem with diversity of flora and fauna for which there were no private decisions or rights (Informants). According to the *qabiye* system, though as a marker of possession physical features, such as rivers, valleys, plateaus and others were named after the prominent figure who first occupied it, every member of the society had the right to utilize the resources (Triulzi, 1975; informants). In particular, *hora* belonged to the first person who discovered it and for that purpose, it was named after the name of the discoverer. However, traditionally like the communal grazing lands, *hora* was free to herders who needed their cattle to drink. It was not a problem to graze and obtain any resource from the lowlands freely if the individual in question fulfilled all customary procedures (Jamo, 1995). Until the early 19th century, it was governed as a common property by the customary laws. Following the evolution *motumma* (states), in the Macca region the *abba-qoro* institution replaced the customary rules in governing resources, including vast grazing land, *hora* and other revenue generating resources. Some of the lowlands, particularly the Dabus and the lower parts of the Didessa served as centers of hunting and shifting agriculture for the Nilotes inhabiting there at the time (Ta'a, 2006).

3.2. Daraba under the Abba-qoro Land Holding System (1840-1882)

The years beginning from 1830 witnessed the evolution of monarchical rules and competition among local chiefs who sought to monopolize resources. Agricultural economy (livestock and crop production) was the base of the wealth of the local chief that evolved among the Jawi, Leqa, and Sibü (Hassen, 1990). They were able to control the grazing lands, *hora* and cotton fields, honey, and hunting centers, which generated revenue for them. The case in point was the control of the Angar-Dhidhessa, Wama and other lowlands for grazing, cultivation, and hunting.

Beginning from 1840s, several Macca states had begun to institutionalize property ownership at the expense of the egalitarian system. The ownership of the lowland territory came to be the domain of local chiefs (Ta'a, 2006). The monarchies devised administrative structure with resource control institution. By controlling vast lowland territories, the local chiefs were able to produce more followers mainly fighters known as *abba-qoro*. *Abba-qoros* were the higher administrative personnel under the *moti* (monarch) whose major duties were resource control as well as supply. The *abba-qoro* utilized the opportunity to obtain uncultivated land and resettle their tenants (Gemedä, 1984). Each *abba-qoro* administering limited geographical unit was divided into a number of *abba-lagas* whose principal role was to administer forest and forest resources. The name was adopted from the *Gada* System of governance in which the *abba-laga* was responsible for preserving natural resources such as forest, pasture, water, and others (informants). The system installed a taxation system known as *luqqis* (li: share). The taxation was in kind and a person in charge of utilizing grazing land and *hora* for a period of one grazing season paid a bull/ cow per-hundred cattle. Similarly, while hunters submitted the skin/horns/ivory of the game they had killed, honey collectors were taxed one-third of the amount of what they had collected. The process at least discouraged the use of the lowlands for herding as well as swidden (Informants: Dorsis Dhuguma and Banti Hunde).

Since 1870s, the introduction of white maize and the need to produce more increased farmers intrusion to the lowlands for swidden cultivation through *daraba* system. For instance, *Dej* Moroda Bakare (r.1868-1888) is said to have encouraged farmers to cultivate white maize. *Dej*. Moroda also resettled the Nilotes in his territory of the Didessa Valley who were escaping the ill treatment of the then ruler of Beni-Shangul, *Sheik* Khojole (Ta'a, 2006). Although the process encouraged lowland cultivation, it limited access to *hora* and grazing land. Among others, the process led to

monopolization of *hora*. Agricultural plots in the lowlands were occupied for maize production known as *laga-boqollo*. Powerful individuals who repeatedly utilized the area occupied land in the name of *laga-cira* (swidden farms), *lafa gagura* (land to prepare hives and to produce honey), and *lafa dhedisa* (grazing land) (Wakwoya, 1988).

3.3. Conditions of *Daraba* under the Imperial Land Tenure System (1882- 1974)

By the early 1880s, the incorporation of the region to the Ethiopian state changed resource relations. The imperial conquest created opposing situation that affected the *daraba* practices. First, lowlands under the domain of the Leqa-state including the Didessa, Wama and Dabus were allocated as a *mabet*³ (imperial kitchen) territory for surplus extraction, lowlands such as the Angar and Finca'a fell under the imperial *mislane* directly managing the resources. This system replaced the *abba-qoro* administrative system in these areas (Ta'a, 2006). Secondly, the socio-economic order that engulfed the region pushed the local people to the lowlands who found the areas as opportunity to escape feudal burdens and to sustain their livelihood based on cultivation and resource extraction (Hinew, 2018). The process limited access to grazing land and *hora* that contributed to the decline of the *daraba* practices.

On the other hand, during the imperial period, the increase in hunting and the contest between the state and the local society on lowland resources hindered the safe and regular movements of herders as well as swidden cultivators. The case in point was the total protection of lowlands from herders and cultivators in order to protect games from hunters. In fact, the repeated cattle plague in the last decades of the 19th century, and the early decades of the 20th century devastated large herds of livestock. These include rinderpest, anthrax, blackleg, and bovine pleural pneumonia (Bulatovich, 2000). Evidence shows that livestock epidemics occurred every ten years after the incidence of the Great Famine in Ethiopia (1888-1892). McCann indicated that the loss of cattle from the disease left farmers empty-handed (with nothing) in larger parts of the country. In addition, the imperial land tenure and taxation on cattle also discouraged cattle husbandry (McCann, 1995).

The Italian rule period (1936-41) also witnessed the decline in the *daraba* practices. The Italians were interested in the extraction of forest products including wildlife. The lowlands of Didessa, Angar and Dabus were centers of resources extract because of which the Italians prevented the local people from having no access to lowland resources (Shuie, 2002).

In the post-Italian period, the imperial land tenure system discouraged grazing and swidden cultivation in the lowlands. Instead, the *balabbats* were engaged in the partition of land for cotton farms, honey production, and wood extraction. In some areas, *balabbats* who came to own *hora* asked herders to pay cash in return for utilizing the *hora*, which they found more expensive than what they had to pay for *amole* salt (informants). The system also discouraged swidden farmers who opted to cultivate the lowlands due to the loss of oxen from disease and harsh imperial taxation etc (Pankhurst, 1985). Although the resultant socio-economic upheaval apparently increased the number population movement across ecologies and lowland cultivators, the economic order of the period limited access to the resources in the lowlands. Besides, in 1960s and the early 1970s, development projects such as Dimtu and Angar Guttin Agricultural projects that launched settlement and modern agriculture through disease control discourages the longstanding swidden and pastoral practices (Hinew, 2018).

3.4. Changes in Land Use and the Final Demise of *daraba* Practices (1975-1985)

The dramatic change in the history of *daraba* practices took place following the openings of state farms and large-scale settlements in the lowlands beginning from 1975. Elders views focusing on Angar and Didessa lowlands reflect the changes since the mid of the 1970s.

³ *Mabet* was an arrangement in the political economy, which referred to areas from which the court obtained direct supplies for food materials (Tekalign, 1995).

The *Darg* government established large-scale resettlement and state farm centers in the major lowlands mentioned earlier. The attempt was to transform agriculture through cultivating vast lowlands. The state established about eleven extensive farms namely, Didessa, Balo, Bareda, Angar, Uke, Wama, Finca'a, Horro-Alaltu, Loko, Lugo and Kenaf in Angar, Didessa, Wama and Finca'a lowlands. In addition, these lowlands became centers of large-scale resettlement ("Ye Wallagga Kifle Hager Ye Sefera Pirogram Afexaxem Acir Report." Nekemte, *Yekatit*, 1978 E.C.). The *Darg* also established the Didessa Military Training Center in 1984. Besides, the completion of concession for Finca'a Sugar Factory and the processes of its establishment since the late 1970s narrowed the space for grazing and access to *hora* (Hinew, 2018).

The state's intervention in the lowlands for cultivation and resettlement and other development programs discouraged *daraba* practices in several ways. First, the occupation of space in the lowlands for cultivation, habitation, military training and other development projects greatly discouraged agro-pastoral economic practices. The system disrupted *daraba* practices by land alienation and resource bases of the economic practices. Such projects took over land that the local people had utilized for cultivation, saltlick and grazing. Some people in the lowlands lost their fields and homes to the state farms. By the 1985, the formerly known grazing lands and almost all the saltlick centers in the lowlands were occupied for either of the above projects (Hinew, 2018)

Secondly, the *Darg* government denigrated local practices, such as *daraba* and swidden farming because the practices did not fit to its development plans. The state considered the local people as 'ignorant' and 'slothful' and their livelihood practices as causes of environmental degradation (informants: Ejeta Tolesa and Mathios Ulfina). As a result, the state prevented local people from practicing grazing and shifting cultivation near the newly established projects in the lowlands. Limiting farmers' movement was also for security purpose. The case in point was the restriction of local people at 10 to 15km distance from the state farms (EWARO, Report on Wallagga State Farms, *Megabit 1975 EC.*). The government assigned police force to control movements of local communities in the Angar, Didessa, Wama, Finca'a lowlands where the state farmers were established. The restriction of people's movement was to secure state farms from wild fire and damage on state farm properties from either local people or bandits (Director of Crime Prevention and Investigation...1972 EC).

4. Conclusion

Surplus production in agricultural economy in Wallagga particularly livestock was because of the availability of sufficient grazing land and saltlick in the lowlands. Such ecologies were rich in pasture, *hora* and cultivable land where farmers not only seasonally took their cattle for grazing and drinking *hora* but also descended from the coterminous highlands and cultivate through swidden system. The change in *daraba* practices became evident beginning from the mid-19th century. While the increase in agricultural economy in 19th necessitated the increase in the use of lowlands for grazing, the evolution of *motumma* by the time resulted in the domination of lowland resources. The emergent monarchies in the Leqa, Jawi and Sibru not only controlled *hora*, grazing areas but also dominated the lowlands for honey gathering and hunting purposes. *Daraba* practices declined owing to the increase in the control of the lowlands for monopoly by these monarchies beginning from the mid-19th century, and then by modern agriculture and habitation since 1975. The process deteriorated grazing lands and saltlick areas. The control of the lowland human and animal diseases since the early 1970s, revolutionized crop and livestock farming as well as state sponsored resettlement. Conversely, the processes contributed to the gradual decline of *daraba* practices in the lowlands and deterioration of livestock production among the local people. In particular, the establishment of eleven state farm, settlements, and hydropower since 1975, as well as military training centre in 1984 severely affected the *daraba* practices. This was by occupying space, declining resources and limiting farmers' movement in the lowlands. The land use changes in the lowlands also negatively affected livestock economy in particular and subsistence agricultural economy of the region in general.

5. References

- Ambachew, Abebe. 1957. Field trip to Nekamte. *Ethnological Society*. Bulletin, No.6.
- Bartels, L. 1983. *Oromo religion, myth and rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia. An attempt to understand*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.
- Bekele, Getnet. 2005. Knowledge, power, and a region: The making of Ethiopia's south-central rift valley agricultural environment and society, 1892-1975. PhD dissertation. Michigan State University.
- Bulatovich, A. 2000. *Ethiopia through Russian eyes: Country in transition, 1896-1898*. Translated by Richard Seltzer. Asmara: Red Sea Press.
- Crime Protection and Investigation Office. 1972. E.C. EWARO. Sile Higewt Aden. File no. 5162 /69. _____ . 1972 E.C. EWARO. "Ye Akebab Hizboch." File no 2188/15217/107.
- Dina, Endalkachew. 2016. Land tenure and agriculture in Wallagga (1941-1991). PhD. dissertation, Department of History, Addis Ababa University.
- Gemeda, Guluma. 1984. Gomma and Limmu: The process of state formation among the Oromo in the Gibe region, C. 1750-1889. Unpublished MA. Thesis in History. Addis Ababa University.
- Hassen, Mohammed. 1990. *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History, 1570–1860*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 2015. *The Oromo and the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia 1300-1700*. New York: James Currey.
- Hinew, Dereje. 2018. Agriculture and environment in the Angar-Dhiddessa valley (ca.1840s- 2010). Unpublished PhD. dissertation in history. Department of History. Addis Ababa University.
- Jamo, Shiferaw. 1995. An overview of the economy. In: Bekele, S. (ed.). *Economic history of Ethiopia*. Vol. 1. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Knutsson, K. 1969. Ploughland and swidden: A dual system of agriculture in western Ethiopia. Mimeograph, Addis Ababa.
- Landor, A. 1907. *Across widest Africa: An account of the country and the people of central and eastern Africa, as seen during a twelve months of journey from Djibouti to Cape Verde* (Vol. 2). London: Hurst and Blackett.
- Legesse, Asmarom. 1973. *Gada: Three approaches to the study of African society*. New York: The Free Press.
- McCann, J. 1995. *People of the plow: An agricultural history of Ethiopia, 1800-1990*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- _____. 2001. *Maize and grace: History, corn, and Africa's new landscapes, 1500–1991*. Boston: Boston University.
- Pankhurst, R. 1961. *An introduction to the economic history of Ethiopia* London: Lalibela House.
- _____. 1985. *The history of famine and epidemics in Ethiopia prior to the twentieth century*. Addis Ababa and London, RRC.
- Rahmato, Dessalegn. 2009. *The peasants and the state, studies in agrarian change in Ethiopia 1950s-2000*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.
- Shuie, Alemu. 2002. Wallaga during the Italian Occupation. Unpublished MA. thesis, Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa University.
- Simoons, J. F. 1960. *Northwest Ethiopia: Peoples and economy*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Ta'a, Tesema. 1984. The basis for political contradictions in Wollega: The land apportionment act of 1910 and its consequences. *North East African Studies*, (VI.1-2) 179-197.
- _____. 2002. Bribing the land: An appraisal of the farming System of the Maccaa Oromo in Wallagga. *Northeast African Studies*. 9(3). Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 9 (3): 97- 113.
- _____. 2006. *The political economy of an African society in transformation: The case of the Macca Oromo*. Berlin: Otto Harrassowitz GmbH and Co. Kg.

- Tefera, Zelalem. 2009. State sponsored and self-initiated resettlements: Their impacts on the ecology of resettlement areas (the case of Angar-Gutin in eastern Wallagga). In: *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, PP. 881-895.
- Triulzi, A. 1975. The Guduru Oromo and their neighbors in the two generations before the battle of Embabo. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 13 (1): 47- 64.
- ‘Ye Wallagga Kifle Hager Ye Sefera Pirogram Afexaxem Acir Report.’ Nekemte, *Yekatit*, 1978 E.C.
- Wakwoya, C. 1988. Land tenure system and self-settled Wolloyes in Abe-Dongoro (1900-1974). B.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University.