# Resettlement and Local Livelihoods in Nechsar National Park, Southern Ethiopia

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Thesis Submitted for the Degree:
Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies
Faculty of Social Science, University of Tromsø
Norway, Spring 2009

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## Acronyms

APF: African Parks Foundation

CSE: Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia

DCUWP: Development Conservation and Utilization of Wildlife Proclamation

EPE: Environmental Policy of Ethiopia

EU: European Union

EWCO: Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organization

FDRE: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature

MAFWCDD: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Wildlife Conservation and Development Department

NCS: National Conservation Strategy

NNP: Nechsar National Park

NPRSEP: National Parks Rehabilitation in Southern Ethiopia Project

SNNPRS: Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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## Abstract

This Thesis deals with resettlement and local livelihoods in Nechsar National Park, in Southern Ethiopia. It asks three main questions: Why is resettlement of the Guji out of Nechsar National Park emphasized? What are the arguments? What is the relation between the park and its natural resources and the Guji livelihoods? What is the place and right of local communities in natural resource management in the national political context? To answer these questions, data was collected through fieldwork that involved the collection of both oral and written sources. Qualitative analysis of the data shows that the Guji in Nechsar area are dependent on the natural resources of the park for their livelihoods, as they get key resources like water and pasture for their cattle from there. Despite this, park development projects in Nechsar National Park have emphasized resettlement of the Guji out of the park. The move with which the park tried to implement the resettlement was more coercive than participatory and consensual, despite government decentralization policy's recognition of the importance of local communities' participation in natural resource management and the protection of their livelihoods, in case environmental projects impact them. Such emphasis on the resettlement of the Guji out of the park is embedded within conservation ideology, perception of mode of life of the Guji and local political contexts. In view of the fact that emphasizing on the financial and environmental aspects of protected area management to the neglect of its social dimension causes problems both to the resource users and the wildlife, the thesis recommends the pursuance of double sustainability, in which the protection of the environment and local livelihoods should be emphasized simultaneously, in line with Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau (2006).

# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1. Introduction to the Place and People of Study Area

This thesis deals with resettlement and local livelihoods in Nechsar National Park (hereafter referred to as NNP or simply, the park) in Southern Ethiopia. NNP is located some 500Kms away from the capital Addis Ababa, near the town of Arbaminch. Part of the park is located between Abaya and Chamo lakes, and extends to the west to the outskirts of Arbaminch town. It is connected to the Nechsar plains to the east of the lakes by a strip of land called God's Bridge, which separates the two lakes. In the east, it is bordered by Amaro Mountains. See the following maps for the location and landscape of the park.


Map.1. Location of NNP[1]


Map. 2. Landscape of NNP[2]

NNP is located between $5^0$51'N and $6^0$50'N, and $37^0$32'E and $37^0$48'E (Kirubel 1985:1). With an elevation ranging between 1108m to 1650m above sea level, Nechsar area has a semiarid type of climate. The area gets rain twice a year: while the main rain occurs in April and May, small rain occurs in September and October (Desalegn 2004:7). The mean annual rainfall is between 800mm and 1000mm (Getachew 2007:26). NNP consists of different vegetation types- savanna grassland, bush land, dense thickets, and riverine and groundwater forests. It also has various mammal, bird as well as fish species. For instance, it houses endemic animals like Swayne's hartebeest and other mammals such as, Burchell's Zebra, Grant's gazelle, etc. It is also a home of 40% of the country's bird species, including

[1] Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4272388.stm.
[2] Source: Adapted from Google Earth.

the endemic Nechsar Nightjar. Furthermore, fish species like Nile Perch and Cat Fish are available in the lakes Chamo and Abaya (Desalegn 2004:7-8).

In addition to being a host to the flora and fauna of the area, NNP (especially Nechsar plains to the east of the lakes) also hosts a mainly pastoral community called Guji. The Guji are part of the Oromo (i.e. the largest ethno-linguistic group in Ethiopia) speaking groups of people and hence Guji and Guji Oromo are alternatively used in this thesis. Although the Guji are living in a wide territory, those referred to as the Guji or Guji Oromo in this thesis are those part of the Guji that live in NNP, and hence sometimes referred to as the Nechsar Guji. In addition to the Guji another group of local community called the Kore, from the Amaro Mountains to the immediate east of the park, also cultivate in the park. Except in some cases where references are made to the Kore in relation to the Guji, the main people with which this thesis deals is the Guji. Accordingly, this thesis deals with the issue of resettlement and Guji Oromo livelihoods in NNP.

### 1.2. Research Frame

Man's activities are said to have greatly contributed to upsetting the balance and sustainability of the ecosystem and the loss of its biodiversity. The endeavor to ensure the balance and sustainability of the ecosystem to salvage the environment from such predicaments has thus involved the prescription and formulation of different resource management strategies. Accordingly, policy prescriptions vary from accepting local communities' participation in the resource management to creating a patch of land protected from any human interference and activity in the form of nature reserves and national parks. In line with this, as described in Neumann (2005:129;139), fencing off people for biodiversity conservation and allowing community participation in biodiversity conservation represent a form of "fortress conservation" and "society-nature hybrids" respectively.

One good example where such state of affairs can be clearly observed is in situations like biodiversity conservation in protected areas. The establishment of parks and other protected areas are taken to be one of the central strategies for the conservation of biodiversity (Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2006:1808). In biodiversity conservation activities, the role of traditional peoples in the management of natural resources is seen in different ways. On one hand, there is a view that makes such peoples "ecologically noble savages" who live very closely to nature and thus do no harm to nature. On the other hand, they are viewed as superstitious and backward, whose activities are inimical to the environment and its wellbeing

(Berkes 1999:146). Therefore, what is common in the discourse of natural resource management is that local communities are given either exaggerated credit or not given any credit at all. And yet it should be stressed that local traditional knowledge can never be perfect and neither is the scientific knowledge used by the authorities. So, "the problem is to maintain a balance between demonizing the practices of local people in relation to the environment and romanticizing them" (Fisher et al. 2005:31).

The growing approach in conservation is the tendency to see ecosystem as a whole unit in which people and their activity are seen as part of the dynamic and changing environment rather than keeping the environment separate from human as if the ecosystem is static. Some of the human activities in the conservation areas are even proved to be important for conservation. This can be useful to reconcile the human need of access to resources in protected areas and the management of wildlife. That is why it is recommended to undertake "conservation with a human face," where local communities are also stakeholders in the conservation of natural resources (Chatty and Colchester 2002:8).

Despite the evolution of such thinking in the conservation and management of natural resources, there are still instances in which local communities are fenced off their former lands in the name of nature conservation. This not only restricts access to the natural resource bases of the people depending on it but also becomes a threat to local peoples' livelihood. In line with this, Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau (2006) argued that restricting access of resources to local communities can be equated with involuntary resettlement. Based on the World Bank's revised position on displacement, they stated that "the involuntary taking of land resulting in… loss of income sources or means of livelihood, whether or not the affected persons must move to another location," can be taken as involuntary resettlement (Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2006:1810). Consequently, they recommended "double sustainability" in which they argued that real sustainability should be both social and ecological, i.e. it should address the protection of both biodiversity and peoples livelihoods (Cernea and Soltau 2006: 1810) (See chapter seven section 7.4).

It is true that large scale sectoral development projects may contribute to a general public good. However, this is usually done at the expense of vulnerable people's livelihoods and this unintentionally increases localized poverty. It means that while conservation is contributing to human wellbeing by safeguarding global public goods and by maintaining ecosystem services at regional and national levels, it is also at the same time contributing to local poverty by denying poor people control over and access to the natural resources that

underpin their livelihoods. Therefore, the tendency to focus on broader global or national public benefits at the expense of local benefits both in development and conservation efforts can adversely affect livelihoods. But it is often postulated that linking conservation with local livelihoods creates the opportunity of reducing poverty at a local level and for the improvement of human well-being (Fisher et al 2005: Xii).

Therefore, conservation practices that dichotomize between the social and ecological aspects of protected areas cannot bring long lasting solution both for human and wildlife needs. It rather creates animosity and turns the people against the wildlife with whom they have lived for long time. In addition, such measure affects the livelihood of local communities. To avert this, a framework in which the needs of both human and wildlife can be accommodated with the recognition of customary rights of local communities and their effective participation in the management of wildlife conservation is essential. This thesis is based on the case of NNP in Southern Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is internationally recognized as one of the most important conservation spots because of a great diversity of its natural ecosystem and its biogeographically isolated highlands that support high species endemicity (Allen-Rowlandson 1991:42). On the other hand, the dependence of local community on biological resources is high owing to the Life style of 85% of the Ethiopian people, which is rural (Desalegn 2004:2).

To better conserve the biodiversity resources of the country, land use systems like the establishment of national parks and other protected areas were introduced. Consequently, the country has nine national parks, three sanctuaries, eleven wildlife reserves and eighteen controlled hunting areas (Desalegn 2004:3). Together with protected forest areas, the sum of protected areas in Ethiopia is about 14%, which is above the global average, though its protection is poor[3]. However, the land on which these protected areas were established had been supporting local communities who rely on the resources of the park in one way or another. In Ethiopia national parks came into being in the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. Accordingly, they "share similar problems of evicting the local people, ill defined land ownership and conflict between the local people and park offices, beginning from their early stage of establishment" (Desalegn 2004:26).

In NNP, local communities utilize the resources in the park and its environs for different purposes. It has been mainly utilized by two communities, namely Kore/Amaro and

[3] See www.gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/GEF_C28/documents/5-3-06**494**ETHPASPRODOC03MAY.pdf.

Guji Oromo. The kore are living adjacent to the park. They are farmers and thus use the land in the park for subsistence cultivation. The Guji on the other hand are pastoralists. They use the land in the park and its environs for grazing and other activities to earn their livelihood. The Guji claim that the land belongs to them and they have nowhere to go from the land of their ancestors. However, to the park management and regional government of The Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (here after referred to as SNNPRS), resettling the Guji out of the park seems to be the only viable solution for wildlife conservation in NNP. NNP is administered under the SNNPRS. The Guji, on the other hand, ethnically and in recent times, administratively belong to Oromia Regional State[4]. Against this backdrop, this thesis strives to answer the following research questions:

1. Why is resettlement of the Guji out of NNP emphasized? What are the arguments?
2. What is the relationship between the park and its natural resources and the Guji livelihoods?
3. What is the place and right of local communities in natural resource management in the national political context?

### 1.3. Objective and Significance of the Study

The main purpose of this thesis is to investigate as to why resettlement of the locals out of NNP is emphasized. With that, it aims to explain the basis of the argument for resettlement of the Guji out of NNP and to show the relation between the Guji livelihoods and the natural resources of the park. Furthermore, this thesis explains how participatory the resettlement projects undertaken in NNP were and sees them against the national environmental and wildlife policies. With this point of view, the researcher hopes that this thesis helps to illuminate the issues surrounding resettlement and local livelihoods in NNP and indicates the way forward.

### 1.4. Methodology

#### 1.4.1. From Park Management to Guji Community

The data on which this research is based was generated through fieldwork that involved the collection of both oral and written materials during the period that spanned from June to August 2008. Accordingly, the procedures followed and the methodologies employed are presented below.

[4] SNNPRS and Oromia are two of the nine self governing regional states within Ethiopian federal system, that is structured along ethno-linguistic lines.

One of the major difficulties in undertaking a fieldwork is the suspicion that the presence of a researcher triggers in the communities in the study area. Depending on certain situations, people ranging from ordinary ones to those who are responsible for administration of an area can become suspicious of the arrival of a researcher at first. Accordingly, my presence at the park management caused moderate suspicion to the official I talked to in order to get permission and some technical support from the park management. Having heard why I was there and where I came from and what I am going to do there, he asked me for a letter of permission from the concerned bureau of either the central government or SNNPRS. Unfortunately, the only letter I had with me was the one I took from the University of Tromso. However, the official complained that he cannot know what I am going to do in the field once I am there, basing his argument on the sensitivity of the issue. According to him, the issue is a serious one that has come close to bringing the two regional states (i.e. Oromia and SNNPRS) into conflict and that some people whose origin and purpose is not known simply come and defame the government by the information they let on the internet.

Having been denied access to the park and the park communities, I had to go back to the capital Addis Ababa to get letter of permission. Here I was asked to bring my proposal and they had to see it. Having done that, they made me sign a memorandum of understanding in which I agreed to conduct the fieldwork according to the research guideline of Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority[5] and that I will provide three copies of the findings of my study at the end of the study. Here too, the official I contacted did not conceal that the issue is controversial and talked a lot on the issue. His suggestion was that my study is one sided and tends to be biased for the community. It took me eight solid days to get the letter. He did not write the letter directly to the park but rather to the SNNPRS. Again I had to go to the region with a letter from the central wildlife office and spent three days to go back to the research area. There too, the supposed one sidedness of my research was commented upon[6].

Now the park management became cooperative once I had letter of permission from SNNPRS Tourism, Parks and Hotels Agency. As the place where I was to contact the community is some 35kms away from the park headquarter (that is located at 3kms away from the town of Arbaminch) to the east, I could not easily go back to the town always. So, I

[5] The research guideline they made me sign is actually not for the Ethiopian nationals. It is for the foreign researchers. Some of the provisions talk about the non involvement of the researcher in the political issues and causing no harm to the resources there etc.

[6] People who are commenting my proposal as one sided are of the opinion that I also should write about the wildlife. I am not a professional in that regard and the scope of my study is limited to the human dimension of the protected area management being undertaken there.

had to stay with the park scouts at their campsite and make that my base of action. The park management volunteered to let me live there. In addition they provided me with a car when I am in need, provided that I buy fuel myself because they do not go to the Nechsar plains out of their schedules. But other times I went by car with the scouts to and from Arbaminch freely. When it is tedious to come back to the park campsite, I sometimes spent the night with the Guji families.

As described above, the presence of a researcher among the host community also raises questions and suspicion. Punch (1986:12) writes that "pivotal to the whole relationship between researcher and researched…is access and acceptance". In this regard, the fact that the fieldwork assistant I hired is from a known Guji family, the fact that I had letter of permission from Gelana Woreda (district) of Borana Zone to which this community administratively belong and the fact that I could speak their language enabled me to settle the issue. Actually, many of the informants I contacted had experience with researchers and media men who asked them about park issue for various reasons. Every time we meet with the informants, the informants warmly greet my fieldwork assistant and towards the end ask him "emaltichi kuni garamii deema" (literally means where is this passenger from?). He tells them that I am there for a study purpose. In the meantime I would intervene and explain the issue in the language they understand.

### 1.4.2. Oral Interview

As interview was one method of my data gathering, the key methodological issue in interview is to reach and then to identify the interviewee. The step I followed was that I first simply conducted random interviews with some of the people my fieldwork assistant helped me to identify. After that a snowballing method was followed, in which those I interviewed helped me in identifying knowledgeable informants on the park related issues. Since the nature of the data I need also is about how the community used to use the park resources, I preferred to interview the more adult and old people. This was made for the simple reason that this group of people has good knowledge on the developments that have been going on there since the establishment of the park. In addition some of those people who represented the Guji Oromo community in the discussion with the park issue were also interviewed.

During interview, the method one follows to record the information obtained has its own impact on the willingness as well as the amount of information one could get from the informants. Accordingly, I avoided using tape recorder in the first interviews I made with the

informants. Once I am familiarized with the situation and discovered that the informants do not as such have fear to have their sounds recorded, I started to use tape recorder. In addition I used my fieldwork notes to record the views of the informants. My Guji informants did not hesitate to have their sounds recorded. But I had faced difficulty with the Kore on this matter. I tried to record one of my informant's views and he refused to discuss much. At that point I shifted to the use of field notes.

In an attempt to know their view of the park management as it regards to the communities, I also interviewed two people in the park management. But most of the ideas they raised were not new to me. That being the case, it was still useful in indicating the politicization of the issue. When asked about the resettlement and regional issues, the officials declined to say about it simply because I had to get that information from higher officials.

As I stayed and dined with them, I also got opportunity to talk with the park scouts. As the situation is very tense, they are very careful about what they say. This further illuminates the tense situation of the issue.

### 1.4.3. Written Sources

The information from oral sources could sometimes be difficult to accept because of distortions arising either from memory failure or from deliberate manipulation of the information. As means to minimize the possible bias from the informants and as another source for my study, I also reviewed available written materials related to the study topic and area. Accordingly, I collected different written sources on the issue under discussion from various places.

At NNP headquarter written materials like minutes of meetings, agreements and some letters and few research papers were reviewed. Minutes of meeting from the discussion between the park management and the local community are mainly useful since they shade light on the relation between the park and the community and the major issue on the agenda. In addition I consulted sources at Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organization (hereafter referred to as EWCO) library. Here reports from the field biologists who surveyed the Nechsar area in the 1960s and recommended it as a game reserve were also obtained. These reports are helpful in the discussion of the history of human settlement of the area before the establishment of the park. At Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) at Addis Ababa University I obtained some literature on the study area. Some reports of organizations like Refugees International on resettlement in NNP were collected from the internet. It was these sources

that made me to choose this particular area as a main research focus of mine. In addition to the interview and the written materials I also made some observations. Especially, I observed the land use types in the park by the community.

### 1.4.4. Ethical Considerations

Any researcher has a moral obligation to consider ethical situations that concern the researched. This can be justified in different ways. As Marlene (2000:41) puts it, "Knowledge is power but those who leak knowledge that others wish to remain silenced are in positions of great vulnerability". Thus, anonymity and confidentiality of informants has to be seriously considered in fieldwork. This is because once the information is in print form it is no longer limited to the lived context but taken out of there to the public domain where alternative meanings are ascribed to it and may amount to "investigations and pressures ... to bear to find the informant" (Marlene 2000:41). Thus, researchers should consider this issue because what is considered to be of less importance to the researcher might be of crucial concern to the researched (Punch 1986). In line with this, I preferred to anonymise my informants.

### 1.4.5. Limitation

One of the limitations of this thesis is the failure to include the Kore community into the research. Initially, I planned to make the two communities of the Guji and the Kore my study subjects. However, this did not work out. This is because of two reasons. First, the Kore were mostly taken to some 15Kms away to the south of the park because of the resettlement of 2004. The Kore also are not permanent residents in the park as they live in the highlands and seasonally come down to the lowlands in the park to cultivate. Some young people I got on the farm in the park were too suspicious to be interviewed. Second, written sources on the Kore with regard to the park are too scanty. Furthermore, as the Guji are the main residents in the park, and as they are seen as the most obstacles to the ongoing wildlife conservation efforts in the park, the main issue of park-community relation is the relation between the Guji and the park and thus I limited my study to the Guji.

## 1.5. Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is organized in seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the people and place of the study area, research frame and objective and significance of the study as well as the methodology employed. Chapter two discusses conceptual framework that informs the thesis. In chapter three histories of NNP and the Guji in the area, from 1960s to 1991 is discussed.

Chapter four addresses national park projects and resettlement in NNP in the post 1991 period. In chapter five arguments for Guji resettlement from NNP, and NNP as the livelihood source of the Guji is presented. Chapter six contextualizes the place and rights of the local communities in national political context. Finally, chapter seven concludes the thesis.

# Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework

## 2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, conceptual frameworks that inform this thesis will be presented. Accordingly, the concept of "fortress conservation" is discussed as a model that dichotomizes between nature and human. This is practically manifesting itself in the form of the exclusions and restrictions, which is faced by the local people living in and around protected areas. National parks as *terra nullius* will also be discussed. This is particularly important in cases where the resource users are pastoral people, as is the case in this thesis.

## 2.2. "Fortress Conservation"

### 2.2.1. Concept of "Fortress Conservation"

Fortress conservation is an approach that gives primacy to the biological aspect over the human/social dimension of conservation. It is preservationist or protectionist in approach. As a way of preserving nature, it employs militaristic style and infrastructure through its "fines and fence" approach and hence its depiction by critics as "fortress conservation" (Fisher et al. 2005:20). It presumes that nature is best conserved in protected areas wherein disturbance from human activities should be precluded. Certain areas are designated as protected amid the wide environment. This idea has been shaping the planning and designing of protected areas in the 20$^{th}$ century and beyond. Consequently, protected area policies based on this model either restricted access to natural resources or led to the total eviction of local people living in and around the protected areas (Neumann 2005:129).

Historically speaking, this was the main approach to the conservation of nature in the 1960s and 1970s. This approach in turn has its roots in the thinking that magnifies the aesthetic value of "wild" nature as serving to "uplift the spirit" of man. Thus follows the dichotomization between man and the environment wherein the former is pictured as destructive and ignorant. By this equation, local rural residents and indigenous peoples who lived in and around the "wilderness" areas are seen as inherently destructive and hence their activities were seen as incompatible with nature conservation. Backed by elites both from the developed and the developing world, this gave rise to the prominence of parks as safe-havens to nature from the "ravages of ordinary use" or the "meddling hand of man" (Fisher et al. 2005:18).

Therefore, it is argued that such an "approach was undoubtedly elitist and very much favored the value of nature to humans in general (as defined by the elite view) [, as it

shows]… little interest in the value of nature to poor rural people" (Fisher et al 2005:19). Such elitist perspective becomes even a more serious problem to the livelihood of the poor rural people (particularly in Third World Countries) when it is combined with the environmental theories and thus:

> *Threats to nature in developing countries were usually framed in terms of the 'ignorant behavior' and 'reckless management' of rural peoples and in the context of 'uncontrolled population growth'. Problems identified with these threats included overgrazing and exceeding carrying capacity, slush- and –burn agriculture, the impoverishment of vegetation leading to the disappearance of climax vegetation, as well as the poaching of wildlife. Solutions for protecting nature inevitably followed. In the early years conservation funds financed preservationist approaches to conservation, such as establishing protected areas and reserves, removing local populations, supplying anti-poaching equipment, and conducting animal and plant surveys* (Fisher et al. 2005:19-20).

This paradigm of conservation policy whereby local residents are expelled from the areas designated as national parks and other protected areas has been the dominant conservation approach in the developing countries until very recently. In Africa, this conservation policy was introduced by colonial powers and later expanded by conservation experts (Hanna 2006:73-74). In Ethiopia, where physical colonial occupation is absent, the latter seems to have played the role, as described in chapter three.

The practical manifestation of this conservation approach comes as exclusion. As a result of such exclusion, resettlement of local people to other location; restriction of access to livelihood resources; break up of communal lands; collapse of local management systems and social structures; fines and imprisonment; and increased rural conflict and famine are among the impacts generated. Such conservation thinking influenced how the local people living in and around protected areas are perceived in conservation and thus: "Local people were – and still are- labeled as 'poachers' or 'squatters' rather than 'hunters' or 'settlers'" (Fisher et al. 2005:20). Consequently, resource extractions like grazing, hunting, gathering etc are no more accessible to the local people. They rather become under direct state ownership and designated as protected areas for the conservation of the flora and the fauna and for their touristic importance (Neumann 2005:129).

### 2.2.2. Criticism of Fortress Conservation

The protectionist nature of 'fortress' conservation with its philosophy of viewing nature conservation and human habitation as "inherently incompatible," prompted a heated debate about nature conservation. In this regard, it is the human dimension of biodiversity conservation that is the most debated. That is done both in an abstract way (relation between

humans and nature) and on a more practical level (how to deal with people living in and around protected areas) (Büscher and Whande 2007:23). Accordingly, to some (e.g. Attwell and Cotterill 2000) raising the issue of community stake in natural resource conservation is like questioning the role and legitimacy of conservation science. Still others (e.g. Sanderson and Redford 2004) would argue that conservationists have no responsibility for economic enhancement of the local people. On the other hand, others argue that conservation should consider the immediate need of the local people and thus should contribute to poverty alleviation (Brockington and Schmidt-Soltau 2004). This is because there is ethical and practical reason to consider in the creation and maintenance of protected areas (that usually involves the exclusion of local people) (Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2006). Yet some (e.g. Rolston 1996) argued that there is ethical responsibility wherein "saving nature" should be preferred to "feeding people". In response to Holmes Rolston III, Hanna (2006) wrote that Rolston III's idea is preservationist and that he gives ethical responsibility to the North (Developed Countries of North America and Europe) for nature conservation. According to her, the fortress model of conservation which Rolston III favors suffers from three faults: a) It is seen as illegitimate imposition by the local people; b) It relates conservation and human need as mutually incompatible means that it neglects the presence of environmentally sustainable patterns of resource use among the local people; c) it universalizes the preservationist value systems of the Northern minority (i.e. Developed Countries of North America and Europe) and silences the voice and value of the people affected by such exclusions elsewhere.

In the same manner, Fisher et al. (2005:21) argument reinforces this assertion when they write that fortress conservation is criticized because of its ethnocentric orientation favoring Western ideas of nature; its elitist approach ignoring the land rights of the indigenous inhabitants; its neglect of the wider ecosystem approach in which human are also a part in influencing landscape; and its separation of people from protected areas which has resulted in "ecological simplification" and pressure on resources outside of the protected areas that finally impacts on the protected areas themselves.

In general, fortress conservation marginalizes, criminalizes and impoverishes local people. This has resulted in the protest of the local people against conservation injustices. As a result, illegal hunting and grazing and other "everyday forms of resistance" became the signals of the failure of fortress conservation. From this it follows that fortress conservation often works towards its own demise. However, such protests from people are usually

presented as a problem caused by population growth and thus pressures from the surrounding areas and lack of appreciation of nature conservation from the part of the local people. Such view ignores the ways in which "protected areas are historically implicated in the conditions of poverty and underdevelopment that surround them" (Cited in Hanna 2007:75).

Therefore, the efficiency of fortress conservation has been questioned since the 1980s. As an alternative, Community Based Conservation (CBC) has come to dominate conservation discourse. Here it is argued that local people should be involved in the planning of protected areas and should get tangible economic benefits out of it thereby giving an economic stake for local communities in conservation. This has been the result of development thinking wherein participatory and bottom up approaches has been put forwarded. With that "the focus of conservation has consequently shifted from preservation to sustainable use, with income creation through controlled resource extraction, ecotourism, regulated trophy and subsistence hunting, and other activities integrated with conservation objectives playing a central role" (Hanna 2006:77). But today privatization of nature reserves is looked upon as necessary by many people and community conservation is thus seen as in line with market logic that correlates conservation and development. This can be problematic, because "in areas of the world where land rights and conservation are contested issues or where there are high levels of poverty, privatized nature reserves represent a new form of dispossession or obstacle to effective re-distributive reforms" (Büscher and Whande 2007:23). The recent activities of African Parks Foundation can be seen from this perspective as presented in chapter four.

In general, fortress conservation is criticized for its little or no attention to the human dimension of protected areas. This has led to the eviction of local people and /or restriction of access to natural resources in protected areas, on the basis of different justifications as explained below. However, the counter argument to such exclusions favors, to paraphrase Neumann (1995:364), a move towards "conservation with representation."

### 2.3. National Parks as *Terra Nullius*

*When it was established it was an area known for its populations of wildlife, and unusually for Ethiopia, was completely uninhabited. But past hardship had forced many people into the park with their livestock* (APF Annual Report 2003).

*Their coming may not be recent but they are pastoralists who have been on movement here and there having no permanent settlement areas* (Getachew 2007:97).

Assertions like the above quotations are one of the oft-provided justifications for the exclusion of people from areas designated as a national park, as it presupposes that such lands

were “uninhabited” at the time of park establishment. Where such discussion involves pastoral groups, the word “uninhabited” or “no man’s land” is understood not only in a historical sense but also in a legal sense. In a national park environment, the former seems to have been embedded in nature/human dualisms whereby the “un-populated wilderness” concept relates to ideas of conservation in protected areas. In the latter case, however, the “no man’s’ land” concept might arise either from legal misconception or from the lack of legal acceptance of pastoral modes of life.

### 2.3.1. The Historicity of “No Man’s Land”

Historically speaking, the philosophical basis that underlined the creation of the first national parks is rooted in dualisms that dichotomize between “natural” and “human”, empty and inhabited, and wild and farmed lands. This conceptual division based on Western thought about nature has manifested itself spatially in the creation of protected areas. The first national park in the world, Yellowstone national park of USA (1872), was the product of such thought. The American Yellowstone model of park creation has been the role model of park creation globally ever since. Such conception of nature, for example, shaped the colonial thinking about Africa as “unspoiled Eden” or “a lost Eden in need of protection and preservation”. Hence is the necessity to protect the “un-transformed” and “un –populated” lands by turning them into national parks (Adams and Hutton 2007:155).

The wilderness concept presupposes that the “wild” and “uninhabited” nature areas should be set for national park development. However, historians have uncovered the fact that such lands have never been pristine and un-transformed. Most of these areas are indeed anthropogenic landscapes that hosted inhabitants of different sorts. Almost, every face of the earth has been put to utilization by peoples for millennia. In Africa, for instance, much of African savanna lands have not been devoid of human elements and it rather is the product of pastoralists’ burning and herding activities (Neumann 2005:131).

Therefore, the promotion of pristine “wilderness” as a justification for the creation of national parks is more the result of the ideological framing of nature than reflecting reality. According to this framing, nature and human settlement are conceptually and spatially separated. As a result, “the demarcation of separate spaces for nature and human settlement continues to the present day, an integral aspect of the way modern state classifies, organizes and simplifies complexity. The specific idea that sparsely settled lands can usefully be

described as ‘wilderness’ or ‘Eden’ continues to dominate popular accounts of PA [Protected Areas] creation” (Adams and Hutton 2007:155).

The formerly inhabited lands are stripped of their human past in a self-consciously constructed idea of wilderness. Such are the ideologies at work in Africa (Adams and Hutton 2007:154). Thus the history of human habitation remains contentious, “as advocates of fortress style parks have tended to disregard or down play historic human occupation and the role of human use and management on the ecology and landscape targeted for preservation” (Neumann 2005:130).

The wilderness concept in which “nature was imagined as uninhabited and free of human influence” has a colonial antecedent. This is expressed in the concept of *terra nullius* and hence Locke’s influential argument that “indigenous peoples and nomads could neither acquire property rights to pasture lands, nor territorial sovereignty” (Riseth 2007:183). However, it is also argued that associating the modern concept of “wilderness” with the colonial concept of *terra nullius* is wrong. This refers to the fact that conservation policy today recognizes the importance of social justice for people in protected areas (Haydn 2007:443). In their argument that African conservation science is being influenced by postmodernist thinking, Attwell and Cotterill, (2000) write about the wilderness nature of most African parks: “Most African protected areas for wildlife were proclaimed in uninhabited areas, often infested by tsetse fly, and climatically unsuitable for rain-fed agriculture. In such cases of marginal land, it is hard to understand how indigenous peoples were significantly benefitting from natural resources before proclamation of the protected area” (Attwell and Cotterill 2000:561). In fact, this description may not be sound when it comes to cases like pastoralists who use the more marginal and diseases infested areas, with their flexible use of resources in alternates in response to such environmental hazards in time and space.

### 2.3.2. No man’s or Nomads Land? When Climate- Driven Thought Meets Climate-Driven Mode of Life

The use of “no man’s land” argument as a justification for park creation is particularly problematic when the resource users are pastoralists. One problem has to do with the mode of resource use of the pastoralists. It is clear that the pastoral use of key resources like water and pasture alternates in space and time in response to environmental conditions like prevalence of diseases and rainfall. This essentially makes mobility a necessary aspect of pastoralist mode of life. Consequently, “this climate-driven mode of land and resource use … has led to

their lands being dubbed as uninhabited barren or underutilized. As a result, these lands have been confiscated without concern for the pastoralist way of life on the pretext that they were 'no man's lands'."[7] This in turn plays a great role in defining property rights. As Helland (2006:11) writes about land tenure in the pastoral lands of Ethiopia, the difficulty arising from pastoral mobility between different patches of land at different seasons led to the conception that such lands are "no man's land", while it should actually be correctly described as *res communes*, communal land.

Such conception of pastoral lands as "no man's land," and thus implying that such lands do not belong to anybody, could be traced back to the theory of Tragedy of the Commons (Helland 2006:12). The fact that Hardin himself exemplifies the concept using cattle and pasture (saying "picture a pasture open to all") (Hardin 1968:1244) makes this concept influential in pastoral land policies. This argument presumes that such lands belong to no one and as such pastoral groups have no property rights to such resources. Hence in order to better manage the resources, regulation of some sort, either through government intervention or privatization, is essential since property regimes are thought to be key in resource management (Hardin 1968).

However, Hardin's depiction of the relation between man and natural resources in these terms is more important in implicitly implying intervention than revealing the reality. Hence, among the solutions prescribed to avert the tragedy of the commons include "enclosure of the commons, preferably through privatization but, if need be through government imposed regulatory constraints" (McCay and Jentoft 1998:25). Hardin (1968:1245) himself also writes that "the National Parks present another instance of the working out of the tragedy of the commons."

When applied to the creation of national park in pastoral areas, such prescription for state intervention ends up in exclusion of pastoralists from their former resources on the premise that their practices are contrary to the wellbeing of the environment. However, ecologically based arguments seem more economic in content. As Li, Douglas and Abdelkrim (2002) observed, this has to do with the difference in perception of land use. While governments mainly see the promotion of tourism, commercial ranching and other land uses, the pastoralists see the use in terms of having access to both dry and wet grazing areas. In regards to national parks, the intervention is presumably to generate income through the promotion of tourism from wildlife protection. Nevertheless, when tourism and tourist

[7] See Lissu http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/elj/lgd/2000_1/lissu/.

installations come to the pastoral areas, they usually "eliminate the flexibility in grazing management that was essential to the effective exploitation of and disaster avoidance in arid and semiarid environment [and hence] mobility of herds has been undermined in many places by the establishment of these enterprises and property relations" (Li, Douglas and Abdelkrim 2002: 2- 3). Furthermore, the marginal geographical, economic and political power of the pastoralists coupled with the support that wildlife gets from international conservation movement leaves them vulnerable to the land use changes like the creation of national parks for wildlife tourism (As Li, Douglas and Abdelkrim 2002: 2- 3).

However, the rationality behind the exclusion of pastoralists from areas designated as national parks is based on environmental argument. One is the environmental implication of the concept of tragedy of the commons that blows an alarmist bugle, that pastoralist collective mode of resource use coupled with the multitudes of their cattle, are bringing tragic environmental consequence. Hence such perception equates pastoralism to environmental degradation, desertification, drought and disaster (Tundu 2000). In Africa, the ecological degradation argument against pastoralists and hence legitimating intervention is based on the concept of ecological equilibrium and the carrying capacity of the environment. However, it has been shown that these concepts are tricky as they change in time and space in response to environmental conditions like rain and drought despite the number of cattle grazing on the field in arid and semi-arid environments. Hence is the argument that, "range lands may be overgrazed and under stocked at the same time" (Li, Douglas and Abdelkrim 2002:6).This concept is also behind legitimating the preservationist model of conservation in parks in that parks are taken to be in equilibrium while they are in a state of "wilderness" and lacks that state if people disturb the equilibrium state (Neumann 2005:61-63).

Such perception of pastoralism and pastoralists masks the various dynamics working in issues like wildlife conservation in national parks. One of the first basic question to ask regarding the relation between pastoralists and wildlife conservation in national parks, is whether the two systems of land use are compatible or not. At least historically, as in the case of East Africa, the answer to the question is yes. However, the dynamicity of the ecological, social, political and economic factors entails change in human-wildlife interaction. For instance, "modernization processes and changes in pastoral populations and land use have altered the patterns of interaction between pastoralists, wildlife, and their jointly occupied ecosystem" (Galvin et al 2002:37). While this implies that changes that are induced from external sources into pastoral land use systems are likely to change wildlife-human

interaction, the conventional conservation approach sees some environmental problems as inherently internal to pastoral land use systems and hence is a direct equation between pastoralism and overgrazing. Such presumed argument that environmental problems arise because of pastoral resource misuse and deterioration "has commonly been justified on the argument that pastoralists overstock, overgraze and damage their range while wildlife are seen as existing in harmony with their surroundings" (Rodgers and Homewood 1989: 111).

The discussion of the creation and maintenance of protected areas like national parks becomes incomplete when only viewed in terms of environmental or economic perspectives. The creation of such areas is inherently political. According to Adams and Hutton (2007: 148), social and political contexts of protected area creation should also be seriously considered.

In summary, one can rightly say that the creation of national parks can have enormous environmental and economic benefits. However, it usually comes at the cost of local resource users' livelihoods and rights. In this case, applying the "no man's land" concept to national park setting where pastoral people are the resource users, have two kinds of consequences. On one hand, it nurtures the wilderness concept of park, that such lands were uninhabited at the time of park creation and thus should be protected or maintained in its "natural state". On the other hand, the "no man's land" claim makes pastoral lands as no body's land implying that the property rights of such groups of people to such lands can be questioned. Such denial of historicity and legality to their existence in an area designated as a national park compromises their rights when it comes to displacement from within the national parks. Such historical and legal premises based on the "no man's land" argument turn the former users and residents of national parks into encroachers and squatters with no formal legal rights. However, such issue regarding conservation in protected areas and local livelihoods and rights has generated lots of questions and recommendations alike.

# Chapter Three: Wildlife Conservation and Guji Oromo Community in Nechsar, 1960s to 1991.

## 3.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is twofold: first, attempt has been made to briefly trace the genesis of wildlife conservation in Ethiopia, hoping to shed light on the connection between Ethiopia's adoption of a national park model of wildlife conservation and the discourse of conservation of nature and natural resources at the global level. This might be essential to understand the nature of conservation policies adopted and the expertise utilized in the conservation of wildlife in the country. Secondly, and most important, the history of wildlife conservation and human settlement and utilization of natural resources in and around NNP is presented in a time frame that spans from 1960s to 1991 on the basis of both oral and written accounts. This is to elucidate the contradiction between the Guji Oromo community and the park management on the issue of Guji Oromo presence and utilization of the natural resources in the Nechsar and its surrounding in time. The time span has been chosen on the premise that 1960s was the period of wildlife survey undertakings in Ethiopia at large and in Nechsar in particular and 1991 was a time when the Guji returned to NNP following the political vacuum created because of the fall of the Derg[8] led Socialist government in Ethiopia, after almost a decade of their eviction from the park.

## 3.2. Introduction to the History of Wildlife Conservation in Ethiopia

Unlike other African countries where one can see the establishment of game reserves in 1880s and 1890s under colonial game preservation laws and the establishment of a national park in 1920s (Adams 1990:18-19), such an establishment is a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia. The first attempt was in the form of regulating hunting. As such, at the beginning of the 20th century one can see the attempt to prohibit the hunting of big games specially elephants. Emperor Menilek II issued a proclamation to his provincial governors to this end (Boshera 2002:10). This issuance seems to have been prompted by external development. It was said that the 1900 London conference of African colonial powers and the subsequent signing of a convention for the preservation of animals, birds and fish in Africa (Adams 1990: 19), came to the attention of the emperor through a foreigner residing in Ethiopia in 1902. Consequently, he requested the then British councilor to Ethiopia to get him the agreement and accordingly

[8] Derg refers to the military junta that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991 after overthrowing the last emperor who ruled the country for almost half a century.

he sent letter to the British foreign secretary in which he declared to implement the objective of the agreement (Girma 2000:48). However, the proclamation does not seem to have been enforced well. Later, Ethiopia under emperor Hailesellasie passed game law in 1944, which required that one can only hunt with a licensed permission, and for that purpose, an office in the forestry department under the Ministry of Agriculture was established. This endeavor has been taken as the beginning of wildlife conservation in Ethiopia and remained in force until replaced in 1965. The enforcement of these laws remained difficult owing to the lack of experience and trained personnel in the field of wildlife conservation (Boshera 2002:13).

However, the gap arising from lack of experience and trained personnel for wildlife conservation was somewhat bridged in the 1960s due to the attention it got from the international climate of conservation of nature and natural resources of the time. When UNESCO held its 12th General Conference in Paris from 9 Nov. to 12Dec. 1962, it adopted two texts that were dealing with the conservation of nature and natural resources. The first text, which was about *Economic Development and Conservation of Natural Resources Flora and Fauna* stressed the benefit of natural resources to future economic development and benefits to the countries of the world and accordingly urged "all member states and particularly the developing countries to pay due attention to the conservation, restoration and enrichment of natural resources, flora and fauna…" and called upon the Director-General and upon international organizations "to give their fullest support and provide technical assistance to the developing countries in the conservation, restoration and enrichment of their natural resources and flora and fauna, and in increasing productivity in this sphere"(Huxley et al. 1963:5). The second text deals with the *Recommendation concerning the safeguarding of the beauty and character of landscapes and sites.* This text underlined the necessity of protecting such landscapes, which it said, are subjected to human damage and there by contributed to cultural and aesthetic impoverishment of the countries in particular and of the countries in the whole world at large. Thus , affirming the scientific and aesthetic values of national parks, it recommended that " … member states should incorporate in the zones and sites to be protected, national parks intended for the education and recreation of the public or natural reserves, strict or special" (Huxley et al. 1963:6).

At this conference, the Ethiopian delegation headed by the then minister of Agriculture, Akalework Habtewold, submitted their letter to the Director General to seek support in this field indicating that it is their " wish to manage and develop (national parks and Wildlife reserves) in such a way as to secure the preservation of their flora and fauna,

provide centers of biological and ecological research and contribute to the growth of national economy, especially through the development of tourism and game cropping" (Cited in Huxley et al. 1963:6 ).

Therefore, 1962 was an important year during which Ethiopia sought the assistance and advice of UNESCO on the possibility of the creation of National Parks and the necessary measures to realize such an endeavor. This request led to the advent of UNESCO team headed by the former UNESCO Director-General, Sir Julian Huxley, in 1963 (Blower 1971:6). It should be remembered that Huxley made a survey for UNESCO on the conservation of wildlife and natural habitats in central and east Africa in 1960. During that time, he did not visit Ethiopia but mentioned the abundance of interesting wild animals in the southern part of the country and that no wildlife conservation policy and efficient administration existed. Accordingly, in his specific recommendation he wrote that "IUCN, with the sponsorship of Unesco, should arrange to report soon on possible projects for National Parks and Wildlife Conservation in Ethiopia" (Huxley 1961:106).

In 1963, a group of international conservationists came to Ethiopia. This team of international conservationists[9] spent some days in Ethiopia and submitted comprehensive report on recommended conservation policy and proposals for further action. The mission was followed by a detailed survey study by two man team of UNESCO consultants[10]. These consultants stayed for three months during which they surveyed most major wildlife areas in the country. They prepared a detailed report and also prepared a three year development plan which was officially submitted to the then Wildlife Conservation Board in 1965. The report and the proposals were accepted by the Ethiopian government as a basis for its new conservation plan. The mission recommended the establishment of national parks in three areas in the country: Awash-Metahara, Semien Mountains and the Omo valley. It was Blower, a British biologist, who added further conservation areas like a game reserve in the Nechsar area, to the east of Lake Chamo, to provide protection for the Swayne's Hartebeest and other wildlife of the area (Blower 1971:7). Consequently one can see the establishment of national parks in Ethiopia in late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. Awash and Semien national parks were given a legal status and gazetted in 1969 (Desalegn 2004:24). In Awash national

[9] Persons constituting the 1963 Huxley team to Ethiopia included: Mr. L. Swift, former director of the division of Wildlife Management, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Dr. Barton Worthington, Deputy-Director- General of the Nature Conservancy, K.K., and Professor Theo Monod of the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris.
[10] Mr. Leslie Brown, former director of Agriculture in Kenya, and Major Ian Grimwood, former Chief Game Warden of Kenya.

park, former game wardens[11] from Uganda and Tanzania headed the park successively after its establishment and a biologist was provided by the UK Technical Assistance Program. This led to the eviction of the Karayyu Oromo from Awash national park in 1967. In Semien national park too, its first wardens were foreigners[12] (Blower 1971:9-10). So, the first main game wardens and experts in the wildlife organization were expatriates drawn mainly from colonial lands of East Africa. It was in the early 1970s that Ethiopian nationals started to take senior positions in EWCO. At that time the first batch of trainees from Mweka College of Wildlife in Tanganyika arrived[13] . According to Igoe (2004), Mweka College played a key role in the "Africanization" of national parks throughout Anglophone Africa. It served to train professionals according to Western ideologies and practices of Western resource conservation. In fact, Ethiopia was not physically colonized but the conservation expertise that it utilized was obtained from western experts.

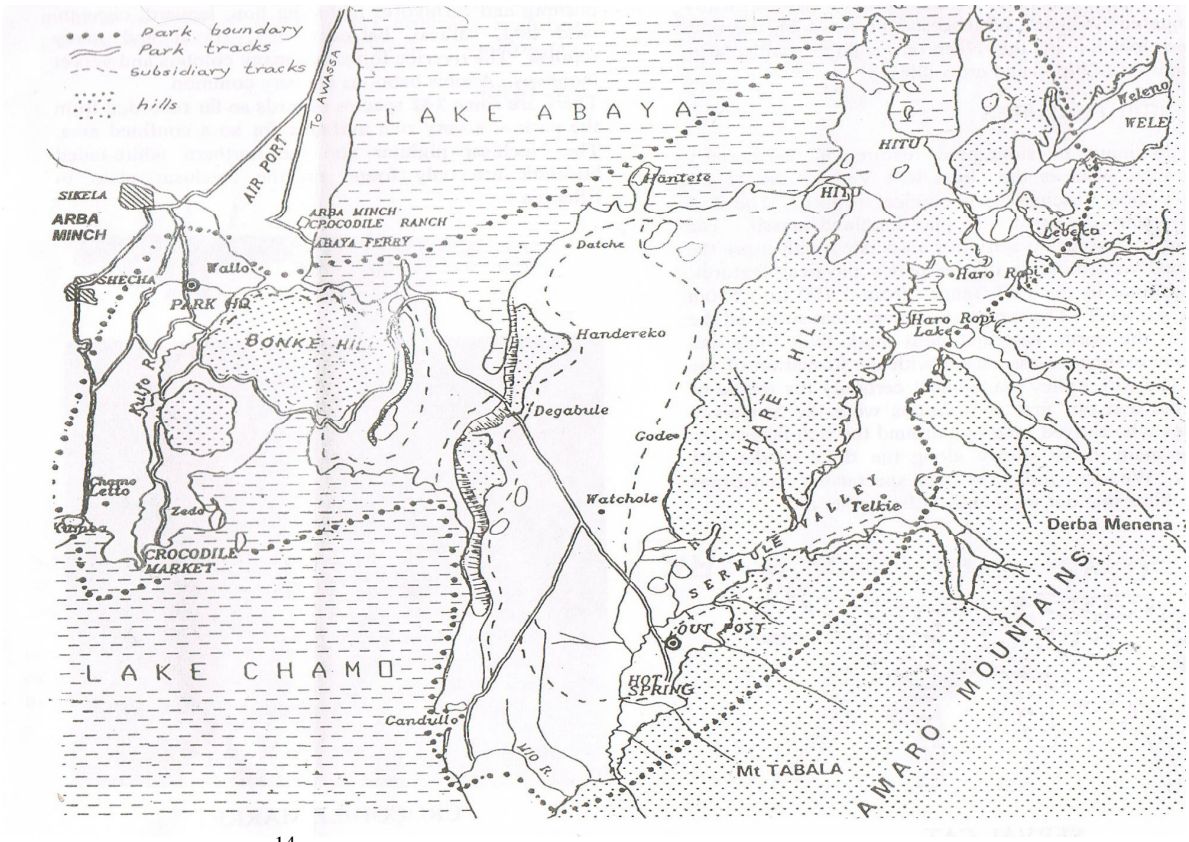
The existing expertise of conservation in the national parks at the time was exclusionary one as it follows the preservationist model. It does not allow settlement and exploitation of natural resources in such areas. It was this foundation that the First World Conference on National Parks firmly laid when it met in 1962. Hence parks were taken as safe havens where wild species can be protected against extinction and as such parks "should be looked upon as a *sanctum sanctorum*" (Neumann 2005:118).

### 3.3. NNP and the Guji Oromo Community: From Establishment to Eviction

#### 3.3.1. A Brief History of Guji Oromo Community in NNP Area

The establishment of NNP can also be seen as part of the endeavor of the 1960s to establish national parks in Ethiopia. The word Nechsar is a combination of two Amharic words: *Nech* means white and *Sar* means grass and thus it literally means *white grass.* Obviously, this is taken from the pale yellow color of the grass of the Nechsar plains (Kirubel 1985:4). My local Guji Oromo informants know the area as Irgansa.

[11] Peter Hay and Anstey respectively.
[12] Mr. Guth of the US National Parks Service and Mr. Nicole of the former Canadian Wildlife Service respectively.
[13] See http://www.biodiversityscience.org/publications/hotspots/EthiopianHighlands.html#biodiversity.




Map. 3. Map of NNP[14]

Nechsar was proposed in 1967 (Hillman 1993) and was officially established in 1974 (Tewasen 2003:67). Since then it has not legally been gazetted but functioned as *de facto* national park (Taddesse 2004:434). The major wildlife species conserved are Swayne's Hartebeest and Burchell's zebra. The official size of the park is 514sq.kms[15], consisting 436sq.kms of land and 78sq.kms of water (Hillman 1993:643).

Today, one of the most important issues is the controversy surrounding the presence of the Guji in the NNP borders and its surroundings. The park management stand is that the Guji have never been permanent settlers in the area and they only encroached upon the park following the fall of the Derg government in 1991 (See chapter five). The Guji on the other hand are of the claim that they have been in the area for so long and the whole of the park including the present area of the town of Arbaminch (to the west of the park) (See map. 3.) used to be the traditional grazing lands of the Guji Oromo.

Even though they could not say the exact year, my Guji Oromo informants are unanimous in their argument that before it has been gradually constricted to the present situation, the Guji grazing lands included the whole of the present NNP and even the town of

[14]Source: From information pamphlet by EWCO on NNP.
[15] There is some controversy surrounding the size of the park as some write that the size of the park is reduced for some unknown reasons.

Arbaminch and that they are not new comers to NNP as recently as the 1990s. According to my Guji informants, the presence of the Guji in the area dates back to generations. And thus an informant maintains: "Our birth place (Guji birth place) is there at Qaalluu Guji[16]. From there, through grazing and settlement, migrating through wild lands where one can see no remains of human settlement we reached here. It is not us but our forefathers who came to here while migrating. While we have been living here in Irgansa, this issue (issue of the park) came during the period of Hailesellasie."

The claim of the informant seems to indicate that the Guji occupied the areas in the lowlands step by step and that the lowland areas to which they migrated were not occupied. As Getachew (2007:41) clearly writes, the lowland areas were infested with tropical diseases like malaria and tsetse fly. But what made the area attractive to the Guji pastoralists despite harsh climatic conditions is that the area is full of rich water sources and grasses. Especially notable are the rich water resources of Abaya and Chamo lakes, Kulfo, Harre and Sermale rivers. In a similar way, the other informant maintains: "It is not now that we have come to this land. It is not us. It is our forefathers that came here. My forefathers died at Abulo. One can see the grave now. My father also brought us up all and aged and died at Tabala. His grave is there. Our forefathers built the land like this and we remained".

From the claims of the informants it seems that the presence of the Guji in the area is not recent. According to another source, the Guji expanded deep into the rift valley to Nechsar and its surroundings long before the extension of the Ethiopian empire state to the area in 1890s. As the hot lowlands of the rift valley could not attract agricultural communities, it was the Guji who expanded to the rift valley lowlands around lakes Abaya and Chamo. Moreover, the Guji pastoralists used to graze the lowland pastures on the western side of Abaya lake by crossing Bilate river in the north and the Busa Waqa (God's Bridge), the isthmus between lakes Chamo and Abaya in the south. Consequently, one can see that the present population of north eastern GamoGofa and South eastern Welaita constitute many Guji (Berhanu 1993:16).

According to Getachew (2007:40-41) the first movement of the Guji to the Arbaminch area can be dated back to the 16$^{th}$ century Oromo population movement. But it was following Menilek's conquest and the extension of the Ethiopian empire state to the area in 1890s that a lot of Guji migrated deep into the rift valley to escape the backbreaking naftagna system imposed on them. This was a system in which "a group of farmers [were] assigned to the

[16]Among Guji and the Oromo at large Qalluu is like a priest who mediates between humans and Waaqaa (the Oromo word for God). The Guji Qaalluu is located further northeast of Nechsar in Wonago, around Dilla town.

feudal military and civil appointee and pay taxes based on the amount of land they possessed and the number of livestock they owned" (Getachew 2007: 41). By migrating deep into the rift valley lowlands, therefore, the Guji took advantage of the hostile environment to escape from exploitative gabbar naftagna system.

Citing Guji oral proverb and place name, Getachew (2007:42-43) argues that the proverb is indicative of the fact that Guji were present in the area currently occupied by the town of Arbaminch before the advent of land use changes in the area. The proverb clearly shows the hostile relation of the Guji with the surrounding ethnic groups. Being at Siqalla, the Guji were looking down their enemies in Sile. The proverb goes that:

> *Siqalla duulli oolu, Silee huxurri oolu*
> *Siqallaan gaangessanii, mucaa sareerraa gurri hooru*[17]
> *Sikala is a place where the campaign of warriors stationed; Sile is a place where weak persons stay or take rest; the young active boys whose ears are proactive and sensitive are placed surrounding Sikalla.*

My informants also agree to the fact that they lived in Arbaminch area. According to them, they used to have settlements in Cheechaa (a sub-town of Arbaminch now called Shecha) and grazing their cattle in Siqalla (a sub-town of Arbaminch now called Sikela) and as Getachew (2007:43) also described some of my informants remember the name of their prominent people who have lived in the area of Arbaminch town.

However, the once vast grazing lands of the Guji diminished from time to time because of the land use changes occurred in the area. As Dessalegn (2004:33) writes, the ethnic groups living in the area were "evicted out in order to leave the place for the newly emerging land uses such as the park, commercial agricultural activities or urban centers." The Arbaminch State Farm was established in the area in 1951E.C. (1959 G.C.) and together with the Sile State Farm have become Sile-Arbaminch Farm. Furthermore, Arbaminch town was established in the area in 1962. These developments diminished the once abundant grazing and water resources and restricted the movement of the Guji in these directions and tense situation was created over resources with the surrounding farmers. This caused the congregation of the Guji around the Nechsar area and their movement further south to Konso and Gumayde areas. To make things worse, NNP was established in the area in the early 1970s (Getachew 2007:43-46).

[17] Siqallaa is an Oromo word which literally means we slaughter you. The surrounding ethnic groups know the Guji as fierce and cruel and thus the name siqalla might have been used to indicate such perception of the ethnic groups living in the area towards Guji .Sile is a place name located some 15kms away from Siqalla. At Sile are other ethnic groups like the Gamo, who predominantly live in the highlands west of Arbaminch town (See Getachew 2007:42-43).

Above all, the claim of the park management that the park was "uninhabited" at its formation is in sharp contrast with the records of the British biologists who surveyed the area and recommended it as a potential wildlife reserve. Mostly notable in this regard were the visit of Blower in 1967 and the visits of Bolton in 1969 and 1970. These men surveyed the Nechsar area and widely wrote about the physical and wildlife resources of the area (See Blower 1967; Bolton 1970). Even before these personalities visited NNP, the Sandhurst Royal Military Academy from Britain composed of military specialists and civilian scientists made an expedition to the Nechsar area in 1966 for training exercise (Bolton 1976:54). A zoologist from this expedition, Morris, witnessed that "over the route … and in the white grasses area, no fixed human settlements were seen. Small groups of people were seen infrequently and seemed to belong to a party of nomads who grazed cattle in the W.Grasses(white Grasses) "( Morris 1966). In addition, Duckworth et al (1992:2) hinted that Childs Frick expedition which surveyed bird species around Lake Abaya area in 1912 was affected by the inaccessibility of the area and the fierce custom of the Guji in the area.

It is from the visits of Blower and Bolton that the presence of the Guji in the Nechsar plains can be clearly seen. In his 1967 visit, Blower witnessed the presence of the Guji in the Nechsar plains in the following way:

> *There were a number of small temporary encampments of cattle owning Gugi [Guji] people throughout the Nechisar area. No permanent habitations were seen though it was understood that there were permanent villages in the hills to the east and signs of cultivation could be seen on the slopes of the Amaro Mountains. There were several thousand cattle in the area belonging to the Gugi [Guji], though for the most part these animals did not appear in very good condition and it was reported that mortality due to some unknown disease was heavy* (Blower 1967:2).

The other biologist who surveyed the area and recommended the establishment of Nechsar as a wildlife reserve with proposed boundary was Bolton. In his 1969 report, Bolton witnessed the presence of "scattered temporary dwellings … throughout the area*" (*1969:3). In his 1970 report, he wrote that:

> *Scattered dwellings occur throughout the proposed reserve but the only permanent settlements within boundary one are the police post, the tukuls of a few families who are cultivating the northern end of Gartirra hills and those of a few people who are cultivating near the shore of Abaya, just east of the spit of land known as Hanto. … Almost all the people are nomadic pastoralists who together graze thousands of cattle on the plains* (Bolton 1970:5).

In another visit to Nechsar with his other companion Bolton reported that in their journey to the Nechsar plains they "toiled in a crush of cows up a narrow defile to the Nechsar plains" and have seen a cowherd of about twelve years old (Bolton 1976: 59). He in addition wrote

that "at Nachisar the few resident pastoralists tended to keep their tukuls fairly close to the lakes though *they made full use of the plains for grazing stock*" ( 1976:59 My emphasis).

In one of the most contrasting ways to the claims of the park management, the 1972E.C. (1980G.C.) development plan for wildlife conservation, prepared by ministry of Agriculture, witnesses the presence of the Guji when it goes "A census conducted during 1966-1967E.C. by wildlife experts had shown that there were 1222 persons living in 302 houses with a livestock population of 5897 head, mostly cattle. Of these people, 502 live in permanent villages, while the others are pastoralists" (MAFWCDD 1980:74-75). The fact that the park philosophy of the time necessitates the banning of settlement and resource exploitation in areas designated as national parks means that those pastoralists that had been using the whole area of Nechsar for grazing had to vacate it. That was what the Guji faced in 1982.

### 3.3.2. The Eviction of 1982

Just after the British biologists started to survey the Nechsar area as a potential candidate for the establishment of a game reserve, they saw the Guji and their cattle as a hindrance to the conservation efforts to be ensued. Blower, for instance, postulated that overgrazing by the Guji cattle caused decrease in game population. Consequently, his first recommendation was either the reduction of the number of the Guji cattle or their resettlement elsewhere as a means of creating the safe havens for the wildlife (Blower 1967:4).

In the similar fashion, the other biologist who visited the area, Bolton, also saw the presence of the Guji pastoralists and their cattle as an obstacle to the would be coming wildlife conservation efforts in Nechsar. In his 1969 visit to the area, he wrote that the number of residents is not high but underlined that it is necessary to reduce or eliminate the disturbance from domestic animals so as to increase the number of the wildlife. A year later he was of the opinion that "every effort should be made to resettle the people at present living within the proposed reserve and grazing the domestic stock within the reserve should be prohibited" (Bolton 1970:11). In his 1972 report he made it absolutely necessary to ban settlement and grazing of domestic stock in the reserve as the first necessary step (Bolton 1972:20).

A development plan for wildlife conservation prepared by Ministry of Agriculture in 1980 also made it necessary to resettle the local communities using the park. The plan foretold the damage that may result from the presence of the inhabitants to the wildlife and their habitats in the future. According to the plan,

> *The few inhabitants around the area of the park and the few pastoralists are periodically encroaching into the parks. This could become a serious threat to the wildlife and their habitat in the future. There is no reason why these people could [not] be resettled elsewhere in the same region where better land, water and living conditions exist. Any such resettlement will only be in the interest of these people, and in turn would be most beneficial for the viability of the Nechisar national park. The concerned government agencies should without delay carry out the preliminary studies and resettle these people as early as possible* (MAFWCDD 1980:81-82).

It was towards the end of the imperial government of Hailesellasie that the Guji were informed of the establishment of wildlife conservation in the area. During that time provincial governors of Sidamo and Gamogofa (names of the then provinces) informed them that they should protect the resources of the area and promised to give them some social services. Accordingly, boat service over the lakes and establishment of elementary school took place (Getachew 2007:51). However, the situation was soon reversed and they were forced out of the park in 1982 during the Derg regime.

The new government that came to power following the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 bent on total conservation and forcefully evicted the locals in many of the protected areas including Nechsar. It merged wildlife and forestry and established Forestry and Wildlife Development Authority in 1980. It also issued Forest and Wildlife Conservation and Development Proclamation No. 192/1980. This proclamation made it necessary and thus gave legal embodiment to the measures taken by the government in the protected areas. According to article 22 of the proclamation, many activities were banned in forest and wildlife areas including settlement and grazing of cattle in forest, national park and game reserves or any other conservation area (Negarit Gazeta 1980)[18]. The eviction of the Guji from within the NNP in 1982 was part of this development. As Mateos (2007:8-9) writes, the issuance of the 1980 wildlife proclamation was followed by government political decision to free the parks from human contacts and as a result the former inhabitants of NNP were removed.

According to Getachew (2007:58) the displacement of the Guji from within the NNP was declared in 1982. The Guji were not informed about their displacement until it was declared by then. Consequently, they were forcefully evicted from the park at gun point. Getachew have a lot of cases of individual persons heavily affected by the displacement in his study of the impact of the displacement on the Guji.

[18] See also Essa and Hurni at www.eeaecon.org/.../John%20Abdu%20JonH_Institutions%20in%20PAs_evolution%20final%20%7Bsub%7D.htm.

The informants I interviewed also bitterly remember what they faced during the 1982 evictions. As will be discussed in the subsequent chapters, the Guji are suspicious of any talks with the park since then because they fear that they may face the same situations of 1982. One of my informants remembers the eviction as: “That time, the Derg burned our houses, blinded one of our children and chased us from here. After that we had been living facing hardships. When the Derg fell we returned to our land.” And the other informant remembers the situation like this: “During the Derg, they burned houses and killed people. They troubled us much. They said you have to go away from this land. They killed our cows; they killed our bulls, and troubled us much. Amidst this trouble, they told us to go away. They burned our barn and chased us from this land.”As result of the eviction of the Guji from the park in 1982, the park was free of human until 1990s. The pastoralists were dispersed to different areas because of the eviction. When the Derg government was deposed in 1991, the pastoralists were quick to return to the park area, which they claim is their land.

In summary, the history of wildlife conservation in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon. It was during the 1960s that national park model of wildlife conservation was pursued in Ethiopia. In this regard, the discourse of conservation of nature and natural resources of the time which was advanced through the agency of UNESCO helped the country to establish national parks. Notable international conservationists surveyed different areas and recommended the establishment of national parks. Due to lack of trained man power and experience in wildlife conservation, foreign expertise was utilized to fill the gap. It was this development that led to the establishment of NNP in the early 1970s. At its establishment, there were local Guji pastoralists who were using the entire Nechsar plains for the grazing of their cattle. In view of this, the current park management’s position that the park was free of human settlement at its establishment seems to contradict with the available oral and historical evidence on the Guji in Nechsar and its surroundings. The cause of the eviction of the Guji from the park in 1982 was the result of exclusionist or preservationist model of conservation implemented by the then regime. The eviction of the Guji in 1982 was a turning point in the park-people relation. This is because it drastically changed the attitude of the Guji to the park and the wildlife as will be shown in chapter four.

# Chapter Four: National Park Projects and Resettlement in Nechsar, 1991 to the Present

## 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, two themes will be presented: one is the return of the Guji to NNP after eight years of their eviction from the area, and the other one (and most important) is the measure their return prompted, i.e. resettlement. The focus will be on national park projects (National Parks Rehabilitation in Southern Ethiopia Project, hereafter referred to as NPRSEP and the contracting of NNP to a private conservation organization named African Parks Foundation, here after referred to as APF) designed for NNP during this time, which emphasized the resettlement of the Guji out of NNP.

## 4.2. When Exclusion Backfires: The Return of the Guji to NNP

As described in chapter three, the Guji were coercively chased out of NNP to clear way for wildlife conservation at gun point in the 1980s, and that most of protected areas in the country were established on the land that has formerly been utilized by local communities. So, this has created the tendency to see protected areas as an imposed government institution on local communities. Such institutions were also identified with the oppressive and dictatorial regime of the Derg. This can be an explanation for what happened to the protected areas following the fall of the Derg government in 1991.The change of government in 1991 in Ethiopia and the unstable conditions that followed for some time led to the overrun of the protected areas by the local communities. Thus, the years following the change of the government witnessed the retaliatory attitude of the local communities towards the national park establishments. They destroyed the park facilities and exterminated wild animals (Shibru 1995:17).

What happened to the protected areas during this time created concern among EWCO and UNDP (United Nations Development Program). Consequently, the incident prompted reaction from EWCO. National Wildlife Steering Committee under the chairmanship of the then Vice Minister of the Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection was formed to enquire into the case and "do something fast in order to salvage whatever was left of the parks, sanctuaries and the wild forms(fauna and flora) therein" in 1993 (Shibru 1995:17).

To address the same issue, NNP management in cooperation with the zonal and local officials conducted a socio-economic survey of the people living in NNP in October 1993. According to the report of this team, the main cause of "encroachment" by the local Guji

Oromo community upon the park was to escape ethnic conflict that flared up between the Guji and peoples like Konso in the Gumayde and Abulo Alfecho areas to the south of the park. Accordingly, the report recommended that effort should be made to reconcile the ethnic groups and take the Guji back to the Gumayde area, or if that is not found to be possible, the Guji should be made to go to Gelana[19] "where there is no problem of land since most of them came to the park from there 10 to 15 years ago"(Mateos and Bati 1993).

Eversince the forceful eviction from within the NNP, the local communities were in enemity with the park. Such strained relation with the park can be clearly seen from how the people reacted to their eviction and vented their anger. When vacuum was created following the collapse of the central government, local communities wasted no time to come back to the park. They retaliated their past eviction by killing the innocent wild animals. As Getachew (2007:59) had it, "following the increased encroachment into the park [NNP] and the killing of wildlives, the whole areas of the park turned into the piles of bones and home of vultures" among other things.

It should be remembered that the lawless period made the availability of fire arms easy and consequently contributed towards increment of poaching and escalation of ethnic conflicts. The Guji were engaged in such conflicts which also contributed to their coming back to the park. The case of Guji conflict with people of the Gumayde area as described above is one case in point. Following their eviction from the park, the Guji were disperesed to different areas and had been living under adverse conditions in those areas. Following the overthrow of the government, they came back to NNP, the land which they claim is theirs. It was those who settled nearby that came back and those of them who lost all of their cattle amidst of the difficulties and those who moved far off never came back (Getachew 2007:76). As Jacobs and Schloeder (2001) concluded, many of the problems that the protected areas of the country faced during the change of the government can be attributed to adherance to conventional conservation policy that is based on exclusionary approach. The end result was found to be disasterous as the park facilities were destroyed and looted, and grass land areas of parks like Nechsar were overrrun by pastoral groups like the Guji.

As Getachew (2007) very well documented the impact of the eviction on the Guji Oromo community in NNP and my informants maintain, they faced grim consequences as a result of the eviction. Many of my informants maintained that following the opportune condition

[19] Gelana is an area further to the east of NNP where most of the Guji people who are akin to those Guji living in Nechsar, is living. This area is under the jurisdiction of the Oromia regional state.

created by the change of government in 1991, they come back to Irgansa(as Nechsar is locally called). But their return and the increasing number of people and cattle in the park was an alarm for the park management. As Freeman (2006:9) put it, the arrival of "large numbers of Guji and Kore people … during the time of transition and this sudden increase in the number of people in the park began to have adverse effects on the park's eco-system."

Consequently, the plan to resettle the locals out of the park started growing. On the other hand, quick return to stability after the change of the government enabled donors to resume the already started conservation efforts and to design other new projects. After the collapse of the socialist government, two projects have began: EU's (European Union) NPRSEP and WCS's (The Wildlife Conservation Society) Omo National Park Project( Jacobs and Schloeder 2001:27). Particularly important to NNP is the former project.

### 4.3. National Parks Rehabilitation in Southern Ethiopia Project (NPRSEP)

#### 4.3.1. Objectives and History

In the post 1991 period, the European Union offered to fund costly wildlife conservation project that worth €16 million. The aim of the funding was to rehabilitate three national parks in southern part of Ethiopia: Nechsar, Omo and Mago national parks. It was a five years project .The main aims/objectives of the NPRSEP were:

- To improve the long term security and integrity of Ethiopia's wildlife resources and protected areas;
- To optimize benefits from the exploitation of the natural resources of these areas by way of sustainable development and management initiatives; and
- To improve the long term wellbeing of the local people through their participation in these initiatives (Taddesse 2004:433).

Prior to the launching of the project, two fact finding missions were dispatched to southern Ethiopia and came up with the main issues and constraints affecting conservation in the region. After that, the European Commission (EC) delegation arranged the feasibility study in 1993, upon the request from the Transitional Government of Ethiopia that it wanted to strengthen the protection and management of national parks in southern Ethiopia. Consequently, a financing agreement was signed in 1994 (NPRSEP Final Report 1999).

The necessity to reverse ecological degradation in the parks and the subsequent consideration of economic returns that could be reaped from the conservation of such parks justified the rehabilitation project. National parks have specially suffered from "spontaneous"

settlers and their livestock. The fact that the population is increasing and poaching is becoming prevalent coupled with the lack of financial and human resources to effectively tackle the problem from the part of the government underscored the undertaking of such project as a measure towards salvaging the diminishing wildlife species. The proper conservation of the wildlife resources is also seen as a source of national income through the promotion of tourism (Technical Proposal 1994: B10). In line with this, the aim of European Community's aid program was to conserve the wildlife resources of southern Ethiopia to promote wildlife tourism and other uses of wildlife and to create a comprehensive legal framework for conservation in a way it benefits the local communities and other stakeholders. To realize the goal, and proceed in implementing the project, a phase approach was followed on the basis of the premise that effective legal, policy, institutional, and social framework for the protection and management of national parks is lacking in Ethiopia. So, the first phase was designed to accomplish certain jobs upon which the release of fund for the second phase was made contingent. Accordingly, the following preconditions were set:

- Approval of a comprehensive policy for wildlife conservation
- Gazettment of the three national parks
- Establishment of the conditions needed to encourage the participation of the private sector in wildlife related tourism (NPRSEP Final Report 1999).

Nevertheless, the justification of the establishment and management of protected areas in ecological and financial terms usually fails to bring important questions into consideration. As Adams and Hutton (2007:2) argue, it ignores such important questions as "For whom are such areas set aside? On whose authority? At whose cost?" In other words, it does not give the attention it deserves to the social and political aspect of the establishment and management of protected areas. In fact, the NPRSEP underscores the necessity of the participation of local communities in the park issues, which it saw as "complex" but yet crucial to the success of the rehabilitation project (Technical Proposal 1994: B11). However, the ubiquity of the term "community participation" and promises of incentives to the local community is not usually a guarantee for the protection of the interest and rights of local community in resource management issues (See Turton 2002).

In addition to their ecological or environmental importance, protected areas are being increasingly seen as a source of income through the promotion of tourism. The EU project in Ethiopia was also geared towards the realization of this objective. As Abbink (2000:14) noted, "EU provided this fund with the underlying aim of stimulating wildlife tourism from

the EU to Ethiopia on the basis of the example of Kenya". He wrote this with reference to a people called Suri who live around the Omo national park, one of the parks in the south where the same project had to take place. Such examples of promoting ecological and financial significance of parks/protected areas has been assisted by global concerns of biodiversity conservation and the commercial interests of the tourist sector. This shows the way the local is connected to the global economy.

Despite the existence of people in the parks for centuries, the EU plan tends to see the parks in touristic image- an "impressive wilderness". As Abbink (2000:15) critically summarizes the issue, the globalist model of top-down planning that primarily targets conservation and tourist management seems to form the core of NPRSEP, as it has little detail on how the local communities' ecological knowledge is to be integrated. Also it has no detail on how the need for living space and the importance of cultural values is to be accounted for and accommodated. In addition to acknowledging the presence, attitudes and socio-cultural needs of the local community, it is also essential to recognize their customary rights to the area. In case this is not properly undertaken, the local community "can easily resort to ways of undermining game tourism, for instance, by killing the animals in the park and causing security problems for tourists and others" (Abbink 2000:15).

### 4.3.2. Local Community Participation in the Project

The EU project underlines the necessity of participation of the local communities for the effective implementation of the project, and thus stated "without their support, successful project implementation is very doubtful…active involvement at the very beginning of project conception is essential and will require *much time and sensitivity*" (cited in Taddesse 2004:436 My emphasis). As part of the implementation of the project, socio-economic consultant for the project carried out a socio-economic survey of the local communities living in and around NNP in order to gather necessary information in order to plan and execute the resettlement of some 1, 010 families (i.e. the Guji and Kore families) (Solomon 1996:1). However, Taddesse (2004) questions how much participatory the project planning was in the real sense of the term.

A critical understanding of the rhetoric of community participation may then require questions like: How much participation is needed? Who participates? What is the participation for? How participatory is the participation? Etc. This is because participation could be taken to mean different things. In conservation, it can be a "public relations

exercise… [to] justify the extension of control by the state or to justify external decisions" (Chatty and Colchester 2002: 10). Consequently, participation may range from passive form wherein people are simply told or informed what is going to happen or what has already in a unilaterally derived project management, through interactive form of participation in which the communities get a say in controlling local decisions, to self mobilization where people take initiatives themselves without external institutions (Chatty and Colchester 2002:11).

Regarding community participation in the process of NPRSEP in NNP (if it can be considered participation), there were two instances where the Guji Oromo community could have made their voices heard. One was the case when the project's socio-economic consultant surveyed the socio-economic condition of the area. Despite the necessity and importance of *much time and sensitivity* to handle the issue as outlined in the project proposal, the project socio-economic consultant applied inappropriate methodology and spent insufficient time when he carried out the socio-economic survey of the area as part of planning the resettlement. The method the socio-economic consultant (sociologist) employed to get data from the Guji informants was, mainly dependent on a questionnaire to get the socio-economic data to plan the resettlement. However, such a method could not generate debate and discussion with the local communities. This was despite the project proposal's claim that the participation of the locals would be ensured through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)[20]. Of the thirty days fieldwork in Nechsar area, the consultant only spent ten days with Guji. To make things worse, he did not spend the time with the wider Guji community but stayed with a Guji family who is employed as a scout by the national park. The second instance was when meeting was held in the town of Arbaminch between the 15th and 17th of May 1996 among different stakeholders to plan the resettlement. But it was only the local village elders who came to represent the Guji, despite the importance of the participation of the other sections of the society like the youth and the women. The lack of proper participation of the community in planning resettlement which directly affects their lives and livelihoods, actually runs against international instruments like that of World Bank on resettlement and violates the rights of local communities (See Taddesse 2004).

[20] "Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is a label given to a growing family of participatory approaches and methods that emphasize local knowledge and enable local people to make their own appraisal, analysis, and plans. The purpose of PRA is to enable development practitioners, government officials, and local people to work together to plan context appropriate programs. The key tenets of PRA include participation, teamwork, flexibility, optimal ignorance and triangulation." See http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sba104.htm.

In the same way, Turton (2002) argued that the way the project viewed the needs and aspirations of the local community in the Omo national park was based on the top- down planning, which failed to take Mursi resource management systems into consideration. Popular participation has become the norm of the day, but there is "huge potential here for well-intentioned rhetoric to take the place of action, or to provide a 'donor-friendly' screen behind which the same old 'preservationist' and ultimately unsuccessful policies are put into practice"(Turton 2002:97).

The discussion that was held between the local community and the park management and other stakeholders in Arbaminch between 15th and 17th of May 1996 seems to shade light on the rhetoric of community participation outlined in the project. As can be seen from the minutes of the meeting, the main emphasis of the park and SNNPRS officials was on the necessity of the resettlement of the Guji to another place. On the other hand, the Guji elders' emphasis was on the basic questions including the possibility of remaining in the park in such a way that the park should be demarcated in a way that it accommodates the needs of both wildlife and human beings (Minute of meeting 1996). As the socio-economic survey shows, the Guji community living in the park is bereft of any basic social services (See Solomon 1996), and the park and SNNPRS officials' emphasis was on these problems and the discussion was geared towards that direction. However, the provision of such basic social services was made contingent upon the society's acceptance of resettlement to another area. At the meeting, the socio-economic consultant underscored the absence of the basic social services, and yet when asked where such provisions should be given, his conclusion was that "it should be done in the resettlement areas" as it could not be done in the area designated as a national park (Minute of meeting 1996).

In fact, one of the preconditions of the EU project itself was the gazettment of the three national parks to be rehabilitated (NPRSEP Final Report 1999). For this to happen there should be definition and demarcation of the park boundaries on the basis of existing or anticipated level of human incursion. The technical proposal for the project stipulates that the parks would be conserved "through complete exclusion of people from some areas and limited access to others for controlled use on a sustainable basis" (Technical Proposal 1994: B12). Yet such options and the way the society is going to be involved in the park management for the future was never discussed at the meeting despite the elders need to raise such basic issues. Regarding the possibility of dividing the park into human and wildlife areas, the position of the park management was entrenched on the smallness of the size of the

park. The argument was that the size of the park is too small to accommodate both wildlife and human and their activities. However, some (Taddesse 2004; Desalegn 2004; Getachew, 2007) claim that the size of the park actually reaches up to 700sq.Kms contrary to the official size of the park that it is 514Km$^2$. Though these writers did not say as to why the park management reduces the actual size of the park, it seems clear that the argument is based on the carrying capacity concept (See Freeman 2006).

On the other hand, the aim of the meeting does not seem to ensure the participation of the local Guji Oromo community but to legitimize the resettlement through the persuasion of Guji elders. It is the attempt of persuasion because everything they did at the conference was to make local people agree to resettlement and yet to accept everything as before. For instance, they did not want to put the issue of the size of the park to discussion. They did not above all discuss on how the society is going to be involved and ensure their participation in the park issue in the future. What was said was that the local Guji community is going to participate in the park affairs and yet how that is going to be done was not discussed. This particular point can be taken to question how genuine was the park management to ensure community participation. As Taddesse (2004) critically observed, the park management and the SNNPRS officials were promising Guji Oromo community participation and yet underscored the resettlement of the Guji at an area that is about 160Kms away from the park. At this point comes the question, how are then they going to participate in the park management process? Viewed from this perspective, the rhetoric of community participation in the management of natural resources in protected areas like Nechsar is not participatory in real sense of the term but is a preservationist approach coated with the sugary term, participation.

It was only the village representatives that were present at the meeting and yet the other whole community was to be in line with the agreement. The elders questioned whether the people of the place where they are going to be resettled accept them and also complained that they were even not involved in the site selection. In general, the approach the park management and SNNPRS officials employed was like agree to the resettlement first and the others will follow later. However, as Jacobs and Schloeder (2001:34) write, if local communities' rights are not adequately ensured first, there is no way they can control resources as they have little negotiating power.

The ease at which the park officials tried to implement the resettlement seems to be in sharp contrast with the technical proposal which observed that "resettlement is always a

complex and sensitive task whether it is done on a voluntary or involuntary basis" (Technical Proposal 1994:B13). Hence, the proposal calls for the careful examination of the following key issues that needs to be taken into consideration:

- Whether the settlers could be provided with the means to improve, or at least restore their living standards, earning capacity and production levels in areas they are resettled in
- Potential problems in host communities
- The scope for integrating resettlement with a development program for both the people to be resettled and the host area
- Compensation policies for land lost due to resettlement (Technical Proposal 1994: B13)

One can thus say that the resettlement scheme that was proposed to move the Guji out of the NNP did not ensure genuine participation and protection of their rights. Accordingly, a complaint presented to the European Ombudsman on the implementation process of NPRSEP in the parks stresses on the flaws of how the proposed resettlement was being implemented. The observed flaws include lack of sufficient attention to cultural and social issues, lack of respect on international rule for resettlement, lack of consultation with the affected people, vague information and insufficient funding for the project. It specially stressed the need to inform the people in culturally appropriate manner and the need to observe international instruments on resettlement like that of the World Bank or the OECD. Above all, the project should have considered the formal rights of the local community rather than giving the vague information of the necessity to remove some" squatters" from within the national parks (European Ombudsman 2000).

### 4.3.3. Local Politics and the Freezing of the Project

In NNP, local politics (as it involves Oromia and SNNPRS regional states) gives insight into the politics of the human dimension of conservation activities there. The park is situated along the border between the two regional states. Administratively, it is under the jurisdiction of the SNNPRS. But the main residents of the park are the Guji, who ethnically belong to and identify with Oromia, where the other mainstream Guji people also belong. So, the Oromia regional government was asked to resettle the Guji to the Tore area, a place in Oromia regional state. As Tewasen (2003:97) writes, as much as it wanted the resettlement of the Guji out of NNP, the SNNPRS regional government did not want to resettle the Guji in its own

borders. The Guji also opposed resettlement from the land they have attachment to for long time.

If one observes the discussion between the local Guji Oromo community and the park and the SNNPRS officials during the planning of the resettlement as part of the NPRSEP, one can see the element of inter-regional competitions in it. Just at the beginning of the meeting at Arbaminch, the Guji were unwilling to discuss the issue of resettlement at the absence of their representative from Gelana Abaya Woreda (district) of the Borena Zone of the Oromia regional government, pointing to the importance of the issue and the past injustice done to them. They were highly suspicious of the discussion about resettlement for fear of eviction like in the 1980s. A representative from Gelana Abaya Woreda (district) also did not agree to the proposed resettlement scheme complaining that they have not been involved in it and thus know nothing about it (Minute of meeting 1996). As Tewasen (2003) correctly observed, this has made the management of NNP problematic.

Thus, the situation that defined the relation between the Guji Oromo community and the park management and the regional officials of the SNNPRS was not merely conservational; it is also political as it involves administrative claims: "The Guji are part of the Oromo people who, according to these officials, live outside the oromia Regional State, and yet administered under Oromia. The big fear of the officials is that Oromia may claim the park someday since it is Oromos who live there. The attempt to move Guji-Oromo to Torre over 160km seems to be a mechanism to overcome this fear" (Taddesse 2004:443).

As can be seen from this argument and as I described above, while the park management claims the participation of the Guji in the park management on one hand, on the other hand, that does not seem to be feasible given the distance of the place to which they were going to be resettled. Thus, the attempt seems to be implicitly political in nature whereby the Guji were to be taken to the region to which they ethnically belong and vacate the park areas for wildlife conservation to be managed by SNNPRS.

As the evaluation report on the progress of the rehabilitation project clearly indicates, the implementation of the project did not proceed as planned. The problem arising from inter-regional political complexities over who should manage the park was cited as the basic reason for the delay of the implementation of the project requirements like the resettlement of the Guji. According to the report, therefore, "the most serious delay was precipitated by a dispute between officials from Oromia and Southern Regions [SNNPRS] over whether NNP should

be considered as part of Oromia rather than the Southern Region" (NPRSEP Final Report 1999).

Consequently, owing to the lack of proper implementation of the project, and inter-regional competitions arising from local politics, EU freezed the budget that should have been released for the second phase of the project as the first phase was not successful. Commenting on this, Tewasen (2003) writes that the main reason for the failure to get the second round of fund from EU was attributed to the failure of resettlement scheme, especially because of the opposition from Gelana Abaya Woreda (district):

> *The park management in Nechsar blames the failure of the resettlement program as the main reason for the failure of the entire project. The manager of the park said that when the practical part of the project to be started, the Gelana Abaya Woreda was established and declined to accept the agreement, which was reached before its creation. The reason they gave was that the agreement was made without the woreda authorities' knowledge and approval. This created an obstacle* (Tewasen 2003:96).

He also quoted EWCO expert as saying: "The project was failed because the regions were not prepared and the efficiency has failed…The government and the region should have fulfilled certain preconditions, which they declined. Therefore EU decided to freeze the fund for the next phase" (Tewasen 2003: 97).

As can be seen from the quotation, in addition to the obstacle the project faced from local political complexity, inefficiency and thus lack of implementation of some of the preconditions upon which the release of the next phase of funds was made contingent was not fulfilled from the part of the government. But most of the reason provided for the failure of the project was mainly attributed to the inter-regional competitions. As one senior conservation officer for the southern region (i.e. SNNPRS) told Tewasen (2003:98): "The problem of ownership has created hindrances… It is a political issue. Therefore the technical work must be stopped. However, the work will continue. The settlements will be removed."

Finally, the project failed and the funds allocated for that purpose suspended. However, even though the proposed resettlement was stopped for the time being, the threat of resettlement of the Guji from the area did not end there.

### 4.4. Towards Privatizing NNP: The Advent of Private Conservation Organization

In Ethiopia, the changes since the coming to power of the new government in 1991 encourage the flow of foreign investment through the liberalization of the economy and the strengthening of the private sector. Accordingly, in December 2004, the management of NNP was transferred to a Netherlands based private conservation organization named APF on a

private-public partnership basis. In the private-public partnership, the idea is that the park remains the public property under the state but is managed by private conservation organization. In other words, the state owns the park but contracts the management[21]. Based on this philosophy, the chairman of the APF, Paul van Vlissingen, describes the role of the state and the APF: "The state could bring in expertise, scientists, and animals from other national parks and land, and I could bring in management expertise and the derive to make it go" (Cited in Buckland 2004:15). In line with this, APF took contract to manage NNP for twenty five years. Besides to NNP, it also took over the management of Omo national park, further to the south of the country. In addition to Ethiopia APF is managing national parks in African countries like Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi and Zambia (APF Annual Report 2003).

As stated in its annual report (2003) , the APF claims to make each of the parks it is managing a viable economic and biological entity through the promotion of social, economic and environmental sustainability of the most vulnerable and remote protected areas in Africa. In so doing, it emphasizes the symbiotic nature of the economy, the environment and the society as stated in the Rio Convention (APF Annual Report 2003). In other words, the attempt seems to create balance between people, planet and profit (Freeman 2006:35). With this mission, the organization vows to reverse the adverse impacts African protected areas are facing, most of which it said, are only a protected area on paper. This is to be accomplished in partnership with African governments and the funding to be secured from the industrialized countries and local communities in and around the protected areas (APF Annual Report 2003). It is said that the organization gets fund from the US State Department and the EU and that it has support from environmental groups (Pearce 2005a) [22].

In its effort to "salvage" the African protected areas from predicaments, APF follows a business-based approach. With that it purports to manage the protected areas in the trust for the nation and the world. The organization also stipulates that it abides by the international conventions and treaties to which the national governments with whom it is in partnership of protected area management, are a party[23]. It takes these instruments as a framework for

[21] Despite this, there were accusations from the opposition parties during the May 2005 election in Ethiopia that the government sold off the park. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4272388.stm.
[22] The organization was set up and chaired by a Dutch industrialist, Paul van Vlissingen. In addition to Africa this rich man has a 32,000 hectares deer estate in the Scottish highlands.
[23] Among such conventions and treaties it mentions are Convention on Biodiversity, the United Nations Agenda 21, the Targets Set by Johannesberg Summit on Sustainable Development, and the World Parks Congress of 2003.

effective private-public partnerships in conservation and sustainable development. The organization underlines the importance of making the local communities a partner in the management of protected areas. Such community participation is seen as the key aspect of ensuring sustainability, but "that must be based on clear business approaches, not unfocused charity" (APF Annual Report 2003:8). Thus it advocates the necessity of sustainably benefitting local communities economically. However, the interview chairman Paul van Vlissingen gave (Pearce 2005b) seems to indicate that the support of local community is very essential in any success and survival of the parks and yet the local communities' practice and knowledge is inferior to that of the park land use system: "No park will survive in the long run unless it is supported by the people living in and around it. They need to know something better to do with a zebra than eat it, that they can benefit from protecting it" (Pearce 2005b:2).

### 4.4.1. African Parks Foundation and Guji Community in NNP

In February 2004, African Parks Foundation signed agreement with the government of Ethiopia to manage NNP in the Southern region. As part of its biodiversity "restoration", the organization's intention was to introduce elephant and buffalo into the park. It also intended to surround the park with electric fence. However, problems arose on how local communities were treated by the SNNPRS to make the way clear for the management of the park by this private conservation organization. To prepare the ground for handing the park's management over to the private conservation organization, local authorities in the SNNPRS tried to forcefully alienate the Guji from NNP. A case in point is the burning of 463 Guji houses in the grassland areas of the park in December 2004. The temporary homes of the Guji to which they were returning during the rainy season were burned to ashes while they were in the dry season grazing area (Refugee International 2005).

The burning of the houses of the Guji in the park elicited a stiff resistance from the Guji and caused the rage of international human rights organizations. In many of such instances it was reported that the locals were thrown out of the park to allow in the tourists.[24] The chairman of the private conservation organization assured in an interview defending against the view that people were thrown out in order to make the way for tourists- his words seem to indicate that the Guji were recent enroachers: "It wasn't like that. The minister I dealt with told me the Guji shouldn't have been there. They moved in during the chaos that ensued

[24] See http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/ceesp/ceesp_alerts/evictions.cfm.

after Mengistu left power 15 years ago. A Guji professor in the capital, Addis Ababa, says they were there a few decades ago. I don't know. I just listen" (Pearce 2005b:3).

Some (Jones 2005) also claimed that Nechsar was uninhabited for thousands of years and it was in the past two decades that the explosion of population led to its inhabitation. And yet it is salvageable unlike the other Ethiopian national parks that are almost beyond repair. To ensure its long term management, it is recommended that it should be managed on the model of Kenya's Mara Conservancy and such that this "jewel in the crown of Ethiopia's National Parks" deserves special attention (Jones 2005:5).

As stated by APF, the organization insists on taking local communities as partners. But in addition to taking over the management of NNP, this same organization put a precondition that the government should first resettle the locals living in and around the national park to another place. Asked about this very situation, the chairman Paul van Vlissingen said: "The government had told us that it was going to resettle the Kore and Guji tribes outside the park. It was a political decision, and there was European Union support for it. We said that we could work with the people in the park, as we do in Zambia, but they said no. We didn't want to be involved in the resettlement, so I put a clause in the contract that said we wouldn't take over the park until the resettlement was completed" (Pearce 2005b:2).

Nevertheless, whether the inclusion of such clause is intended to get the people out of the park or to keep the organization out of the political issue of local community resettlement is difficult to say. Yet the organization also claimed that the locals were being relocated to an area that is favorable for the provision of social services with their consent (APF Annual Report 2003:16). What can be said is that the claims that the organization wants to work with people on the one hand and that it wants the locals relocated to another place on the other are manipulative and based on contradictory claims (Getachew 2007:59). Citing this very claim of APF in NNP, Brockington and Igoe (2006) wrote that this can be taken as a strategic alliance between states and private investors and international NGOs in this period of expanding political and economic liberalization. While the outsiders bring in money and other external resources, states bring sovereignty. Even though this does not mean that states just hand over their sovereignty in exchange for money and other resources, it means that, that is what the state actors can offer. This is important to the conservation NGOs like APF because "it provides plausible deniability with respect to evictions and other forms of displacement" (Brockington and Igoe 2006:449).

Whatever the case may be, it was written in the contractual agreement that the locals have to be relocated to another place and that was taken to be the responsibility of the government: "The Government, in accordance with its intention that the park shall meet the IUCN criteria for Category II Protected Areas and for other reasons, undertakes to relocate all people living within the boundaries of the park, their livestock and possessions, and to deal with all matters of compensation that may arise" (Cited in Freema 2006:10).

However, the procedure followed to take the people out of the park, particularly the Guji Oromo was coercive as the park scout and GamoGofa police burned 463 Guji temporary houses in the park in December 2004. Refugees International sent a group that investigated the situation and reported the seriousness of the issue (Refugee International 2005). The government in its letter to the Refugees International on its part claimed that what had been reported was false and the only thing it did was to resettle some 980 Kore families to much better land areas. In that letter to Refugees International no reference to Guji and national park development in Nechsar was mentioned (Letter from Ministry of Agriculture to Refugee International 2005).

It is necessary to get the will and consent of the locals into consideration before any kind of resettlement has to take place. Regarding whether the Guji were participants in the process of such forceful relocation, Desalegn (2004:41) quoted one Guji Oromo informant as saying: "Some came up with their pens while others with their match (to burn our houses and destroy properties) and still others came up with rifles. This was the whole story of participation in Nech-Sar."

The chairman of APF, Paul van Vlissingen, claims that he started such an initiative to conserve protected areas in Africa out of the concern for the environment and the poor subsisting on it. He explains how his meeting with Mandela led to this initiative:

> *It all started when I met Nelson Mandela the first time he cane to Holland, in 1998. We got into discussion about why ecology is not high on the priority list of the South African government. He said he needed to help the poor before he could think about wildlife. I said that the very poorest people in Africa live in the remotest areas, where his programs on education and water and housing weren't working. But in those very remote areas, properly run national parks could benefit both wildlife and the poor. Right there, he asked me to come up with a proposal- so I did* (Pearce 2005b: 2).

Yet his motive seems to have been more emanated from the need to promote tourism in the national parks. His comment on the interview he gave seems to indicate that he has seen Africa as a place where to go and take respite out of the polluted skies of Europe and thus when he was asked which he likes best (his European estate or African parks) his answer was:

"I think the best is sitting under a thorn tree in Africa. We have spoilt so much of Europe. Have you noticed how we rarely see the Milky Way here? There is too much light pollution. When I'm in Africa I see it every night. What is economic development when yop [you] can't see the stars?" (Pearce 2005b:4).

In conclusion, one could argue that the initiative of the African Parks to manage national parks in Africa is to exploit liberalization and privatization policies of the African governments to attract investment and increase business activity from Europe. In line with this, Büscher and Whande (2007:23) wrote that with the expansion of neoliberalism, the private sector started to get involved in biodiversity conservation. The fact that international ecotourism market is expanding means there is a lot of money to be obtained from involvement in biodiversity conservation. The private interests even can be served well because it is argued that community based conservation is at par with conservation and development combined. However, this can be a danger to local communities in poor countries as it dispossesses them of their land. Here too, they cited APF as an example of "an organization that [combines] business interests with biodiversity conservation" (Büscher and Whande 2007:23).

### 4.4.2. "…keeping the local people happy is more difficult than looking after the animals[25]": Guji Oromo- APF Negotiations and Its Subsequent Withdrawal

The main issue regarding conservation in NNP has been the presence of the Guji Oromo there. As presented above, it was the responsibility of the government to resettle the local communities in and around the park to another place before handing over the park to the private conservation organization. Yet the private conservation organization indicated that it took over the management of the park before the completion of the resettlement of the locals out of the park in the hope that the already started resettlement program would soon be ended. However, the negotiation between the government and the Guji could not bear fruit in the two years' time. Consequently, the organization itself took initiative to negotiate with the Guji Oromo. The negotiations made between APF and fifteen Guji Oromo representatives in the presence of officials from the Borena zone of Oromia regional state finally consummated in the signing of agreement between the two. The agreement redefined the boundaries of the park wherein some part of the former boundaries were left outside of the park for the human use and those areas in the newly designated boundaries are not to be used by the local

[25] Taken from news headline as written in a BBC report upon the situation in Nechsar.

communities except in cases where hardships like drought and the need for bole (salt lick) and hot spring for bath[26] arise and even in such cases the agreement says that solution will be sought together (The Agreement 2007).

Despite the efforts APF made in negotiating the park boundaries with the Guji-oromo, the end result turned out to be its withdrawal from NNP in June 2008. The organization made public its intention to withdraw from both parks it has overtaken to manage, in December 2007. Describing the challenges it has faced in each of the national parks, APF asked the termination of its management activities in both parks. Regarding the Omo national park, APF claims that the multiplicity of ethnic groups utilizing its resources and conflicting interests between them, made the sustainable use of the resources cumbersome. With that it was difficult to establish representativity and legitimacy. Above all, what the organization vehemently complains of is the activity of human rights organizations reports on how it handled the situation in the Omo national park:

> *… to make matters complicated, some human rights organizations immediately assumed mala fides on the part of African Parks, and without ever visiting the area and consulting with the very communities whose interests they purported to represent, publicly criticized African Parks for its endeavors. This criticism, although unjustified, has highlighted the need for this process to be objectively driven. If African Parks attempts to facilitate such dialogue, it will only attract hostility and legal challenges from one party or other* (APF letter of Management Termination 2007).

As it regards to the NNP, the main obstacle seems to be the internal political situations between the two regions. Here the APF claims that the presence of the Guji with their some 7000 cattle in the park created a problem to sustainably manage the park. The government could not negotiate to settle the issue with the Guji. At that point, the organization negotiated and reached an agreement with the Guji on 30$^{th}$ of September 2007. Accordingly, it succeeded in defining the core area where no human activity should be allowed and the other part of the park where human use has been permitted. Although such agreement has been reached with the community, it has to be sanctioned by the authorities. This however did not happen and the APF therefore terminated its activities in NNP (APF letter of Management Termination 2007).

Even though such an agreement has been made between APF and the Guji Oromo community, the organization had to prove to the central government that the issue was settled. Such proof meant that "the federal government requested a formal letter from the SNNPR

[26] The hot springs in the park are believed to have medicinal properties by the local communities.

government approving the negotiation between the Guji communities and Africa Parks. But the regional government would not approve the negotiation" (The Reporter 2008)

The case in Nechsar is clearly the result of the location of the park along the boundary of two regional governments and the presence of the Guji, who ethnically and recently administratively[27] came to belong to the Oromia regional state and yet live in a park that is administered under the SNNPRS. It seems that the effort of the APF in negotiating the boundaries of the park is equated with delineating a political boundary between the two regional states in that direction. This has never been acceptable to the SNNPRS and hence it refused to confirm the agreement between the APF and the Guji Oromo community. And yet in April 2008, some months after APF notified its decision to withdraw from the management of the two parks, as my informants maintained, presidents of the two regional states went to NNP in person and allowed the Guji to remain in the land that has been negotiated with APF. The park management on its part does not seem to recognize what the authorities has sanctioned. I will turn to this point in chapter five.

Generally, many of the protected areas like national parks were established at the exclusion of the local communities in Ethiopia. This not only harmed the local community through the loss of land but also harmed the parks themselves. The fact that lack of proper consultation characterized the establishment of these areas made the local communities' to think of the parks as imposed government institutions and consequently worked towards undermining them. This was what happened in NNP during the transitional period (after the deposition of the Derg). The Guji came back and settled in NNP, the land which they claim is theirs. This in turn prompted the need to resettle them out of the park. However, the park projects designed to do this were not participatory as they mainly remained rhetoric and seem less sensitive to the social dimension of the park. Consequently, what has been more emphasized is the resettlement of the Guji in order to develop the park for ecotourism. The fact that the Guji did not ethnically belong to the SNNPRS means that they have to be resettled to an area in Oromia region. But that ceased to materialize as both the Guji and Gelana Abaya Woreda (district) of Borana Zone of Oromia regional state opposed the move. The failure of NPRSEP and the withdrawal of APF seem to clearly show the role of local politics behind the push for Guji resettlement out of NNP and its failure because of the same reason.

[27] The information I got from Gelana Abaya Woreda indicates that the Guji in NNP are organized under a kebele (a lowest unit of administration in Ethiopia) called Irgansaa under the Woreda since 1998 E.C. (2005/2006 G.C.).

# Chapter Five: Park Development versus Local Livelihoods in Nechsar: A Dilemmatic Debate?

## 5.1. Introduction

At the crux of the matter that defines the relation between Guji Oromo community and NNP management lies the issue of access to and use of natural resources in the park by the Guji. The park management makes it necessary to resettle the Guji out of NNP if the continuing existence of the park is to be ensured and the benefits to be accrued from its management are to be enjoyed. On the other hand, the Guji are vehemently against any resettlement moves from the park management. Their argument is based on questions like: where are we going from our land? Where are we going to graze all these cattle? What would have the government conserved had our forefathers and we not protected the wildlife and instead killed it off? Characterizing the ideological base of the park management and that of the Guji Oromo community as ecocentric and anthropocentric views respectively, Tewasen (2003) described this situation as "dilemmatic". However dilemmatic it may be, it is also crucial to pose questions like: why is the park management making resettlement necessary? To what extent are the justifications presented for the case satisfactory? Is it possible to give conservation in Nechsar a "human face?"Are wildlife conservation and Guji resource use diametrically opposed to each other? Though conservation of natural resources is essential and justified in one way, and the stake of the government in it is undeniable, asking such questions could be useful in addressing the social dimension of conservation in protected areas. In line with this, this chapter analyzes the arguments from both the park management and the Guji Oromo community.

## 5.2. Arguments for Guji Resettlement

### 5.2.1. Human Presence in a Park as Against Park Principles

The assumption that people and their resource use in parks should not be allowed *because it is a park* seems to be one of the underlining premises for justifying the resettlement of locals from NNP. Such was the argument I encountered when interviewing a member of the park management. I asked him why it is necessary to resettle the Guji out of the park and his reply was that, first I have to see the very definition of park, that no human activity should be allowed within the land designated as a national park. This hints the persistence of a preservationist and exclusionist approach to park management in Nechsar regardless of government policy papers reference to community participation in resource management (See

Chapter six). As presented in chapter four, resettlement projects carried out in NNP were also more coercive and exclusionary than participatory and consensual. Such approach to local communities in a national park setting reverberates with the "fortress" model of conservation.

In this regard, Chemere's (2002)[28] article on the impact of livestock encroachment up on NNP highlights the position of the park management regarding the necessity of creating a park without man. After mentioning two concepts associated with park development, namely park with no man and park with integrated sustainable development, he comes up with the former as a realistic option for countries like Ethiopia. According to him, this is justifiable on many grounds: first, local people's awareness is so low that they do not consider wildlife as beneficial. Second, livestock encroachment exposes wildlife of Nechsar to transmission of diseases from domestic stock, and given the lack of capacity to curb such transmissions, it is preferable to create park without people. This also minimizes space and food competition between wildlife and domestic stock. Third, the encroachment of livestock on to the park reduces the scenic beauty of the park and this directly impacts tourism. Fourth, overgrazing and deliberate fire from the locals is becoming a threat to the existence of biodiversity. Finally, lamenting the loss of EU funded project for rehabilitation of national parks in southern Ethiopia, he writes that the failure to salvage the parks from domestic livestock encroachments and ensure its sustenance narrows the chance of getting the badly needed financial support from donors (Chemere 2002: 4-9).

Nevertheless, the justification for the creation of park without man seems a self defeating argument, as long as the resource needs of the locals is not given the attention it deserves. As Chemere observed, there might be problems that arise because of the presence of the locals in the park. However, putting the cost of park protection on to the local community cannot also be equally a fair justification and as such raises ethical, practical as well as rights imperatives. Such measure even may not guarantee the sustainable protection of parks in the long run as displacement may backfire (See Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2006:1823) as happened in Nechsar in the 1990s as described in chapter four. On the other hand, such option does not seem to be a realistic option given the dependence of the rural peoples in Ethiopia including the Guji on natural resources bases of their environment. Their exclusion from the park areas not only endangers their livelihoods but also limits the success of natural resource conservation in the park. It is argued thus:

[28] Chemere was a former head of NNP administration.

> *In poverty stricken areas like Ethiopia (including the Nechsar area), it is very unlikely that the application of "protectionist" approach, based on restrictive and exclusive state law enforcement of wildlife management, can achieve any reasonable success in the field of natural resource conservation. This is simply because people will, in one way or another, be forced to use those resources as far as they are poor and do not have any better alternative means of livelihood* (Taddesse 2003:445).

In addition, while it may be possible to resettle the people out of national parks, it creates animosity with people and thus "require an ever-increasing and, in the long-run, unsustainable level of investment in policing activities" (Turton 2002: 97). The overall scenario, therefore, cannot serve the sought after need of attaining "double sustainability", wherein a win-win (rather more realistically win more lose less) situations can be achieved. Forceful resettlement often creates lose-lose scenario as forceful displacement backfires (Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2006; Fisher et al 2005).

It is often said that the philosophical foundation of park creation is based upon a view that sees man and environment as separate entities. And such view that dichotomizes between human and their activities and conservation in protected areas like national parks has its roots in Western thought (Adams and Hutton 2007). But it is important to see man and environment as a set of continuously interacting units because seeing the one independently of the other cannot do justice to either of them. In addition, it is also equally important to recognize the impact of humans on the environment and hence the importance of "conscious conservation"- conservation whose aim is "the management of human use of organisms or ecosystems to ensure such use is sustainable" (Kalland 2003:171).

But problem arises on how to harmonize the relation between people and their environment when different national and international actors are involved. In most cases the locals have to be protected from entering into some part of the natural environment for the sake of conservation. The measure to ensure such protection gets policy backing from national and international conservation policies in protected areas. Emphasizing the role of global institutional network, Igoe (2004:11) writes that national parks are also one aspect of such global institutions and hence "forms a system of money and ideas". To get access to the money such institutions control, it is necessary to be in tune with the ideas. Such is the case with Third World countries when they have to be at par with Western Conservation policies if they should get money from international conservation organizations like IUCN and from governments in the West. In such process where the global institutions are controlled by powerful people, the voice of the marginalized peoples is too faint to be heard. Consequently,

"the ideas of marginalized people are almost never considered or implemented, although there are important exceptions to this rule" (Igoe 2004:11).

In fact one of the recommendations for the resettlement of the Guji out of NNP in the early days of its survey, was that the gazettment of Nechsar as a park or reserve with the evacuation of the locals, is pertinent (to work) towards qualifying its inclusion into the United Nations List of National Parks and Equivalent Areas. This in turn is crucial in that "when Ethiopia has one park on the UN 'Roll of Honour' she will be in an inestimably more favorable position to secure aid for more ambitious projects" (Bolton 1972:20). Today, the conservation and protection of biodiversity is not only seen as national and sectoral issue but also a global responsibility to sustainably manage the natural resources in the 21st century and thus "utmost efforts are made by enlightened people to harmonize humanity's relationship with living resources both at the national as well as the international level" (Leykun 1995:5). Such globalization of biodiversity conservation is not only conservational but also financial in content. The latter is linked to national and international ecotourism interests, as exemplified by the case of APF in Africa and the need to resettle local community to develop ecotourism in NNP.

In the same manner, when the Ethiopian government signed a management contract with a private conservation organization in 2004, it necessitated the resettlement of the Guji out of NNP because the government wanted to conserve NNP according to IUCN criteria for Category II[29] Protected Areas (Freema 2006:10). According to the agreement between the private conservation organization and the government, resettling the locals out of the park was taken to be the primary precondition for the former to take over the management of the park (Pearce 2005b:2). Abbink (2000:15) also observed that in the implementation process of the NPRSEP of the 1990s conservation and tourist management were emphasized through picturing the parks as "wilderness" areas to appeal to tourists. In the same manner, human rights organizations condemned the burning of Guji houses in 2004 as a forceful way of relocating the people against their wish to develop the park for ecotourism where in tourists enjoy the environmental facility at the cost of local livelihoods and rights. That is why the argument

[29] "National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. Natural area of land and /sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations , (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purpose of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which be environmentally and culturally compatible."
Seehttp://www.unep-wcmc.org/protected_areas/categories/index.html.

goes, while the benefit of environmental facility is enjoyed at national and international levels at its best, its cost is borne by the local communities to its worst (See Cernea 2006).

In fact, major policy changes have also been made to the favor of the poor against forced resettlement. Remarkable in this regard is the World Bank's recent policy on involuntary resettlement that recognizes restricted access to natural resources as an involuntary resettlement, whether or not it involves physical relocation. Resettlement in other words is not only a physical but also an economical issue. By that resettlement has become not only physical/geographical relocation but also economic dislocation. Thus, the social dimension of protected areas as it relates to poverty risks posed by impacts of people resettlement from the protected areas is increasingly coming into light. Such changes can be a springboard for addressing the social dimension of protected areas (Cernea 2006). Yet it remains to be seen in practice.

### 5.2.2. The Guji as a Cause of Ecological Degradation

It is said that the main threats to NNP mainly come from local activities in the form of overgrazing, fire, forest clearance for cultivation and poaching (Kirubel 1985; Chemere 2002). Guji and Kore peoples who utilize the natural resources in the park fall within this category. Regarding the Guji in particular, the park management base their argument on the Guji cattle and the overgrazing issue to legitimize the necessity of resettlement. In fact, their very physical presence in the land designated as a national park is also disputed. This has been the case since the candidacy of the area for national park development. The biologists who surveyed the area in 1960s for the possibility of national park development were of the opinion that the continuing human habitation of the area can pose a serious threat to the ungulates of Nechsar. Accordingly, the first target was the Guji and their cattle. Hence, the future of wildlife and maintenance of their habitat has come to be tied with the resettlement of the Guji out of the park (See Blower 1967; Bolton; 1969; 1970; 1972).

Since then the necessity of removing the Guji and their cattle from within Nechsar has been emphasized. Blower and Bolton recommended the resettlement of the Guji as an initial step for national park development. The failure to implement this is taken simply as getting closer to the dooms day of Nechsar wildlife. Hence, Blower (1967:4) underlined its necessity when he wrote: "Failure to remove or drastically reduce the cattle can only lead to the eventual disappearance of the wildlife".

According to Freeman (2006), despite dwindling number of wildlife resources in Ethiopia, we have a few in NNP. Yet problematic to their continuing existence is the threat the presence of the Guji in the park poses. First, the Guji cattle are inimical to the wellbeing of the wildlife habitat because of their overgrazing of the plains. Second, the physical presence of the Guji has become an obstacle to proper range management activities like controlled burning. Consequently, ticks have become a problem to wildlife. The white grass that gave the park its name and which also provided habitat for the wildlife is being degraded by the Guji cattle thereby exacerbating soil erosion. Therefore, the Federal and Oromia governments have to be lobbied to accomplish the resettlement of the Guji "as swiftly as" possible (Freeman 2006: 2-3). If, on the contrary, nothing is done to reverse the prevailing situation "and if the present pattern of exploitation continues the park as such will gradually decline" (Solomon 1996:1).

The other activities that the locals are blamed for are fire and poaching. As Chemere (2002) writes, the Guji and Kore deliberately start fire to encourage the flushing of new grass for their cattle and to prepare land for farming respectively. Kirubel (1985) also identified these factors as two of the eight[30] major threats he has identified. He reported that there was the increment of poaching in the Sermale valley. However, as my informants maintain, the Guji culturally do not eat the meat of the bush and thus the killing of wildlife for food is mostly frowned at among the Guji. Hunting is limited to some big games that are killed for cultural purposes as explained below under section 5.4. As far as the record on hunting in the area is concerned, Blower (1967:4) wrote that he saw the local people while they were hunting zebra. Even if he did not name which locals, it is not likely that the Guji hunt a zebra. On the other hand, Bolton (1969:3) reported that he did not see any act of poaching by the locals but he had heard that it existed. But he caught police man hunting in the plains and while asking the perpetrator as to why he was hunting, the police man replied "I was only trying to shoot a little one" (Bolton 1976:66). However, Solomon (1996:7) writes that now the locals living in the park are not a problem as far as poaching/hunting is concerned.

However, the extent of depletion caused by overgrazing in the park is not quantifiably indicated. It is rather based on anticipation of what would be the danger from the presence of the Guji and their cattle in the park. For instance, Blower and Bolton indicated the necessity of resettling the Guji out of Nechsar. Their statements on the impact of the Guji on the

[30] The threats he identified included fire, poaching, illegal fishing, overgrazing, removal of wood for fuel and building, cultivation unlawful entry and ticks.

wildlife population seem to have been based on guessing. For instance it can be seen from Bolton's (1967:4) explanation as to why larger mammals are small in number in Nechsar. His answer was that "this is probably due to excessive grazing pressure by cattle and also illegal hunting" and on the same page he argued that "…there is no doubt that overgrazing has caused a decrease in the game population" and thus reducing the number of cattle or vacating the area is key to the sustenance of the wildlife. On the other hand, in his first visit to the plains of Nechsar, Bolton (1969:3) observed that despite noticing some overgrazing and cattle pressure in some areas of the Nechsar, wildlife have suffered more from human and domestic stock disturbance than direct competition for grazing. A year later he reported that "overgrazing and trampling has caused severe degradation of the grass cover in several areas, notably in the center of the plains but the grass elsewhere including the hill sides, remains in good conditions" (Bolton 1970:5). Consequently, he recommended the complete vacation of the park and the banning of any domestic stock grazing in the Nechsar plains. This was found to be important to gazette Nechsar as a park or reserve to qualify it for inclusion into the United Nations List of National Parks and Equivalent Areas (Bolton 1972:20).

A development plan prepared for wildlife conservation by the Forestry and Wildlife Conservation and Development Department of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1980, however, described the situation in Nechsar differently. It was much concerned about the future damage that could result from the continuing existence of the locals than the damage they already caused. Rather the plan justifies the further conservation of this area "in view of the fact that the human encroachment in the area is insignificant" (MAFWCDD 1980:75). The main concern of the plan was that the periodic encroachment of the pastoralists "could become a serious threat to the wildlife and their habitat in the future" (MAFWCDD 1980:81). Therefore, this casts doubt over the assertion that Bolton made about overgrazing in Nechsar. Nechsar seems still to be a well protected and less degraded area a decade after Bolton's visit.

Yet the Guji were forcefully evicted from the park in 1982. Three years later, a biologist who studied Nechsar wrote that: "Bolton…reported the degradation of the grass quality in Nechsar plains through trampling by the nomad's cattle. The situation at present is completely different in that the plains retain their *natural condition*. This is because the pastoralists have moved their cattle from the plains and have settled in the Sermale valley and areas outside the park" (Kirubel 1985:14 My emphasis). At this point, if the plain has come to retain its "natural condition" in a matter of two to three years, it could naturally be followed from this that the extent of the damage said to have been caused could be disputed.

Duckworth et al (1992) who visited the area in 1990 cited IUCN/UNEP (1986a) as have described Nechsar as "one of the last untouched wilderness areas in Africa" (1992:1). Furthermore, while Freeman (2006) has described the situation in Nechsar very grimly[31], Jones (2005:5) described it as in a good condition compared to other parks and that it is "jewel in the crown of Ethiopia's National Parks". Taddese (2004:442) also saw the degradation argument as exaggerated. Consequently, it is reasonable to doubt the extent of degradation caused by overgrazing.

### 5.2.3. The Size of the Park as a Factor

This argument naturally follows from the ecological degradation argument in that the smallness of the area is one factor for the increasing of the ecological degradation of the park from Guji cattle that surpass the carrying capacity of the land. Therefore, Freeman (2006:36) argued that the Guji and their cattle are the main obstacle to the management of NNP and thus resettlement of the Guji out of the park alone is a realistic solution. This is because Nechsar is so small that it cannot accommodate both the needs of wildlife and the Guji cattle simultaneously. The smallness of the park also means that it is impossible to apply a zoning system. As described above, Chemere (2002) also dismissed the possibility of integrated sustainable development approach to park management based on zoning system in Nechsar as an unrealistic option to countries like Ethiopia. Yet if this can be a satisfactory justification for resettlement of the Guji at the cost of their livelihoods and customary rights, it remains to be questioned.

The pastoralist tradition that gives cultural importance to the number of livestock one owns was also seen as a factor contributing to the conflict between livestock population and carrying capacity of the land. Andeberhan (1982) therefore writes about the Afar, and Karrayu and Guji Oromo pastoralists that:

> *… the nomadic tribes have changed little from their traditional way of life. There has been no serious attempt to persuade or convince them to shed their age-long customs and traditions (such as reducing the numbers of their cattle to the capacity of the range) in favor of modern ways of living. In such a situation then, cattle and wildlife are in severe competition for both space and fodder. The overall effect is overstocking which definitely leads to habitat deterioration by overgrazing. The complete absence of any form of stock –limitation commensurate with the carrying capacity of the land is the basic cause of the lawless and uncontrolled overturning of the Awash and Nechisar parks today* (Andeberhan 1982:5).

[31] She writes that "it is clear that at present the people living in the park are not managing the natural resources in a sustainable manner and that the park ecosystem is now out of balance" (Freeman 2006:36).

This notion of carrying capacity concept relates to the ecological equilibrium concept and it implies that the activities of humans in protected areas lead to disequilibrium situation because of the disturbance it causes. The implication in a national park setting is clear- such disturbance should be stopped by banning local activities (Neumann 2005:61-63). In fact, resources need to be used sustainably but there is also a danger that such arguments can be used for other aims. In this regard, as described in chapter four, the actual size of NNP is underestimated for reasons unknown. It is true that NNP is small compared to other parks like Omo (Taddesse 2004:442) but one can doubt as to why the actual size is reduced and yet size is presented as one argument for the resettlement of the locals out of the park.

### 5.2.4. The Guji as Obstacle to Tourism

*"One day, perhaps, people will photograph the hartebeest from cars but if so there will be no cattle on the plains and the wildlife will be assured of a future"* (Bolton 1976:66).

According to Chemere (2002), Guji presence as obstacle to tourism seems to have emanated from two angles. The first obvious argument follows from the logic that the presence of the Guji and their cattle is a danger to the environmental wellbeing of the park in the form of habitat destruction and transmission of diseases. Therefore, ecological destruction results in the destruction of wildlife, together with which tourism also dies. Secondly, tourists and tourist organizations are not happy and complain about the cattle they see in NNP. Thus he finds it necessary; it seems, to resettle the people to appeal to tourist conception of parks as "wilderness". It also reflects the fact that the key to get financial resources from donors to conserve the area better lies in satisfying what the donors want, in this case resettlement of the locals. In fact, the 1990s NPRSEP put as one of its precondition the resettlement of the "squatters" out of the national parks. But it is also stated that it should be based on consultation. The officials of the SNNPR however failed to do so as explained in chapter four.

In fact, it seems that the economic need to generate income through tourism is even stronger than conserving the parks for the sake of environmental conservation. As the above citation suggests, the possibility of tourism is dependent on the protection of wildlife habitat from cattle encroachment. The presence of wildlife to be visited, the potential to fish on lakes Abaya and Chamo and the availability of Arbaminch town near to the park makes the undertaking of tourism in NNP a real possibility. That is why Bolton (1969:6) had no hesitation that "without doubt the Nechisar area offers considerable potential for development

as a tourist attraction"[32]. In this regard, both the 1990s EU funded project and the recent 2004 handing over of the management of the park to a private conservation organization emphasized the business/ecotourism aspect, as described in chapter four. Still NNP is one of the parks targeted for having huge potential for the generation of income through the promotion of tourism in a recent World Bank study for Ethiopia. This study recommends the participation of the private sector in tourism development. This would in turn boost the source of national income. [33]

The promotion of ecotourism is usually described as a "pro poor" one since it links tourism and poverty reduction, which by implication means that the local communities should be the beneficiaries of the ecotourism project. However, it becomes an anomaly when one observes forcing people out of the land they lived in for ecotourism project, as happened to the Guji in 2004. According to Alison (2006:15), this notion is not without hurdles. And thus it goes that "ecotourism is really just a new form of mass tourism, bringing globalized corporate profits at the price of localized hardship" (Alison 2006:15).

### 5.2.5. The Guji as "Encroachers" and Nechsar as *Terra Nullius*

According to the park management, the Guji are recent encroachers upon the land designated as a park. This stand then reduces the age of Guji presence in the area of Nechsar from 1990s on wards. As described in chapter four, the Guji moved into the park in the 1990s after eight years of their eviction from the same area. The park management does not seem to deny that the Guji were using the area as pastoralists, but implicitly objecting to the possession of rights to the resources in the area. Hence Getachew (2007) faced an official from the zonal administration of GamoGofa Zone of SNNPRS who told him that their presence in the area may not be recent but they are pastoralists on the move. In the same manner, two of the officials whom I interviewed told me that the Guji are not permanent settlers but seasonally come and go. Differently speaking, they cannot be right holders to the resource of the area as long as they are pastoralists who move on seasonal basis. This same fact seems to have been at the root of the argument that the park was "uninhabited" when it was established. As presented in chapter three, one can at least see that the Guji were using the Nechsar area when the British biologists surveyed the area in the 1960s for national park development. Therefore, seeing Nechsar as *"terra nullis"* could emerge from two things. As presented in chapter two,

[32] One can see the development of facilities like beautiful hotels in Arbaminch in anticipation of the further development of tourism in the area. Anything that interferes in the tourist sector therefore is against the business interests of the urban people in Arbaminch.

[33] See http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTETHIOPIA/Resources/ET_Tourism_Strategy.pdf.

the first source could be adherence to fortress model of conservation. This model turns the local people into encroachers by denying historicity to their existence in the conservation areas. Hanna (2006:74), therefore, observed "… people who, in many instances, had inhabited an ecosystem for centuries were summarily written out of the area's history as recent encroachers." The second source is the pastoral mode of life of the Guji. As described above, this seems to relate more to the legality of Guji claim that the land is theirs than to questioning their presence and use of the resource in Nechsar and its surroundings.

Solomon (1996:10) wrote thus: "They themselves say they moved into the park because it was a haven from conflict with other tribes of the region. While they nurse an image of themselves as nomadic pastoralists the reality is that nomadism is a thing of the past simply because vacant pastoral land no longer exists. All land within reach of the Nechisar Guji is either physically occupied or controlled by other people." This argument not only makes the Guji illegal settlers in the park but also that they are living on the other peoples land. It is true that conflict has played a role in forcing them back into the park but it was not in 1990s alone that they came to the park. Ever since their eviction in 1982, they have attempted to come into the park borders and graze their livestock. In line with this, Kirubel (1985) has documented that the Guji pastoralists were visiting the area because of the diminishing of grazing in the villages and that they were attempting to graze in the park area.

However, the implicit motive to characterize the Guji as new comers to the area (which necessitates their resettlement from their "illegal" occupation of park land) seems to be based more on political assumption as Taddesse (2003) argued. Indeed, the GamoGofa zone administration of SNNPR where the park is located sees the issue of the Guji as deeply political and territorial. Thus, the resistance of the Guji against resettlement and their allegiance with the nearby Guji administration of Galana Abaya Woreda (district) of Oromia regional state has been seen as an attempt to expand the territory of the Guji into the area "not hitherto known in history". Finally, the administration is of the opinion that there is a need from SNNPRS to ensure the territorial boundary of the region from that direction from the expanding Guji[34]. Consequently, the issue has been involving the higher officials of the two regional states[35].

[34] Letter from GamoGofa Zone to president of SNNPRS.

[35]The president of SNNPR, in his letter to the Ministry of Rural Development of the federal government, indicated the necessity of resettling the Guji and the failure to do that clearly impacts investment promotions and building positive image as well as to ensure stability in the area. In addition the letter from SNNPRS president to Oromia regional state president also stresses the necessity of relocating the Guji and calls for discussion with Oromia regional government on the issue. On the other hand, letter sent to the Federal Ministry of Rural

### 5.3. Natural Resources and Local Livelihoods

#### 5.3.1. Cattle as Livelihood Base of the Guji

The local Guji Oromo community makes use of the natural resources of the park and its surrounding to earn their livelihoods. In line with this, one can see different resource use categories and practices that underpin the livelihood of the Guji. Being a mainly pastoral group, the resource use system of the Guji depends heavily upon cattle rearing. Cattle are also important in the social and ritual dimensions of the Guji life and its importance can be summed up as follows:

> *The Guji have a mixed economy of animal husbandry and crop cultivation. They subsist mainly by cultivating grain, pulses and enset (false banana). But their real wealth consists in their cattle, sheep, goats and horses. Emotions and pride are centered in stock. People who do not own cattle are not considered to be proper Guji. Cattle herding is important not only for economic purpose, but is also important in social and ritual life. The social status of a person among the Guji finds its expression in the number of cattle that one owns. The owner of many cattle is a respected person. Ritually, cattle are used for sacrificial purposes* (Taddesse 1995:45).

Though Taddesse's writing is about the main part of the Guji located further north and east of NNP, it also applies to the Nechsar Guji. Yet the Nechsar Guji do not depend upon pastoralism alone. Guji households own plots of land in the Sermale valley for crop cultivation as explained below. Thus, one should not underestimate the contribution of cultivation. Nonetheless, cattle rearing occupy a central position in terms of social and psychological importance and in sustaining the subsistence need of the Guji. My informants are unanimous in emphasizing the importance of cattle in their culture. And thus is it common to hear songs that praise cattle (which they call *weedduu loonii*) and also common to see how cattle keepers care for their cattle. For instance, it is considered improper to scare the cattle. Instead, the herders sing the *weedduu loonii* as the cattle are teeming in line grazing on their way to the kraal (compound).

Consequently, it is important to focus on how the rearing of cattle relates to the subsistence need of the Guji. As any pastoral group, the Guji depend on their cattle for subsistence needs. This involves direct consumption of cattle products and the use of it for exchange in obtaining other subsistence commodities. Cattle products provide multiple livelihood services. Most food prepared in the Guji households are in one way or the other made from cattle products, particularly milk and milk products. As an example, during my

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Development from the office of the president of Oromia regional state indicates that the region has discussed the issue with the Guji and confirmed the negotiation they reached on with APF. However, this does not seem to have been acceptable to GamoGofa Zone and the park management.

visits to the Guji families I observed a variety of use: I spent some nights on the sleeping material made of cattle skin, I ate bread made of local crop called warqee (false banana) with a sip of milk, I usually had milk they offered me, and above all regularly enjoyed buna qalaa (literally means coffee slaughter) that is made of milk, butter and coffee beans and other foods made of maize and warqee along with milk and milk products. Thus, cattle play a crucial role in sustaining the subsistence need of the Guji.

On the other hand, it is from the selling of cattle products that they are able to get different commodities for their subsistence needs. The Guji women obtain food and other commodities from the local markets either with exchanging milk and milk products with other commodities with their jaalaa (customer) or sell milk and milk products and buy the other commodities they need. In this commodity exchange, they sell to and buy from the Amaro/Kore women and the Amaro do the same. Even though the Guji cultivate some crops like badalaa (maize) to supplement their livelihood, they mainly use waqee for food. The Kore/Amaro are the main producers of warqee and thus they get this food item from them while the Amaro get milk and milk products. Such economic exchange takes place at two markets, namely Korde and Golbo/Tsalke at the foot of the Amaro mountains in the Sermale valley. So, the Guji earn their livelihood necessities from their cattle directly or indirectly.

As a polygamous society, the Guji family is large and one man can have many children with the different wives. In order to sustain the subsistence need of all these family members, it is crucial to have many cattle. This is because the cattle products have to be sold and in return bring food items and also have to be directly consumed. At this point it should be clear that, as Getachew (2007) clearly documented, there are no other livelihood opportunities that might diversify the Nechsar Guji economy. Cattle are the basic subsistence base of the Guji of Nechsar area. To sustain such cattle based livelihood, it is crucial that they have access to the natural resource bases of their environment. Accordingly, natural resource use categories and practices of the Guji in NNP are presented below.

### 5.3.2. Nechsar as a Source of Pasture and Water

The richness of the Nechsar area in water and pasture makes it important area for the Guji pastoralists. The presence of two large lakes, lake Chamo (known as Abbayya Gurraattii by the Guji) and lake Abaya (known as Abbayya Diimtuu by the Guji) in the area present abundant water resources for their cattle. Consequently, they used to water their cattle from numerous malkaa (watering points) on these lakes. Among such malkaa are Beeltee, dhaacee,

Gaandullo, Burraa and Muka Gurraachaa. However, access to most of these watering points is diminishing from time to time owing to restriction of access imposed on them by the park management. For instance, they totally lost access to watering points on lake Chamo. This is because they have to pass through the central plains of Nechsar, which the park considers key to wildlife, to get to the lake's watering points. This specially happened following the burning of 463 temporary houses of the Guji in the plains in 2004 to clear them of the Nechsar plains for ecotourism development. Now they are restricted to the northeast corner of the park. However, many of my informants lament their loss of access to Abbayya Gurraattii, which they say has medicinal properties: *Abbayya gurraattiin looniif qorsa- Abbayya Gurraatii* is a medicine for cattle. They claim that it is *hora,* meaning that it has salty properties. In the same way, many watering points on lake Abaya are also no more accessible. According to informants only malkaa burraa (Burraa watering point) on lake Abaya is allowed for them. They claim that they were even denied access to this watering point during the negotiations with APF. It was the president of Oromia regional government who allowed them to use the burraa watering point. They said that there was also disagreement between the Guji elders and the APF on having access to dhaacee watering point on lake Abaya and three Guji elders refused to sign the agreement because of this. At the end, the representatives from Borena Zone of Oromia regional state begged them to accept the deal and they accepted. In addition because they lost access to Chamo lake, they asked for having access to lower Sermale valley around the park outpost (Tabala) for bole but they lost this too. As a result, one has to wait for long time to get turn to water his cattle on the limited watering points. Regarding this issue, a Guji pastoralist complains: "it takes some twelve hours to water the cattle because the cattle are many and the watering point is limited." They also complained that pasture land has diminished. An informant claims that there is nowhere to go to graze like the former period because to one direction is the Amaro Mountains and to the other direction is a cultivation area and yet to the other direction is the park

The other key important resource of the Nechsar area for the Guji pastoralists is pasture. They graze their cattle at different areas of the park at different times of the year. Such rotation of grazing of an area at different seasons is dictated by environmental conditions to which the Guji react according to the experience they accumulated over the years. Accordingly, they graze their cattle on the Nechsar plains, the heart of the park where most wildlife is found, during the wet season. And when the dry season comes they take their cattle to the Sermale valley and other areas. They come to the Nechsar plains during wet

seasons in order to escape the environmental conditions of the Sermale valley, which at this time of the year becomes infected with malaria. In addition, the valley harbors lots of tsetse fly which becomes an irritation for both animals and people in the area during the wet season. Rinderpest pandemic also becomes prevalent at this time. As the tsetse fly sting irritates cattle, they run wild to get to the Nechsar plains. As many places in the upper Sermale valley become water- logged during this time, they take their cattle to the plains. As the Guji informants indicate and Getachew (2007) and Kirubel (1985) wrote wildlife also return to the plains of Nechsar during the wet seasons.

During the dry season, the pastoralists evacuate the Nechsar plains and go back to the Sermale valley. During this particular time of the year, they evacuate the area in response to some environmental conditions. For instance, tick becomes a problem in the dry grass of the Nechsar plains during the dry time. Different types of tick harm cattle and the wildlife alike during this time. In addition, the herders maintain that since the Nechsar plain does not have shady trees, it is not good to keep cattle in there during the dry season as the sun harms the cattle. So, the cattle have to be taken to the shady areas of the Sermale valley that is covered with dense shady trees along the Sermale river. The grass of the Nechsar plains also becomes dry during the dry times and thus not suitable for cattle. That is bad for cattle since it dehydrates them and they cannot defecate properly if fed dry grass, according to the Guji.

Because of the rotational nature of their livestock herding, they have got two houses. The one they use during the rainy season is in the plains and they call it *mana gannaa* (shelter for the rainy season). And the other house they use during the dry season is located in the hills and they call it *mana bonaa* (shelter for the dry season). So, each herder has two houses which are used alternately during the dry and wet seasons.

However, according to Getachew (2007) such practice of the Guji are not given due consideration by the park management. They have lost access to the wet season grazing areas in the plains according to the agreement reached with the APF. By that the Guji are limited to the north east corner of the park, which is now no more within the core area of the park. However, the park management does not seem to have recognized the issue and when I asked an official in the park management, he gave me the former map that includes the present area where Guji are allowed to live as an area that belongs to the park. As Cernea (2006) clearly argues, such practice of limiting access to the natural resources can be seen as involuntary resettlement in its economic version. In this case even though physical relocation to other far off places has not been done, it can still be called displacement. Be it physical or economic

the end result affects the livelihood of local people. The economic one is even worse because the people do not get compensation for the opportunity lost because they are physically around. The Guji were denied access to the plains of Nechsar but not compensated for that. However, such approach jeopardizes the prospect of attaining double sustainability in which both the livelihood of the local community and the wellbeing of the environment should be protected.

In addition to the rotational system they use in order to escape environmental hazards and take advantage of the pasture conditions during the different times, they used to practice some burning in the plains. They practice such burning for two main reasons. One is to encourage the flushing of new grass. Burning eliminates the old grasses and replaces it with the new ones. The other is to eradicate the tick which is problematic both for the livestock and the wildlife. But they are usually condemned for doing that by the park management. Yet the burning practice is (controlled burning of course) good way of facilitating the flushing of new grass and eradicating the ticks. As Getachew (2007) witnessed, the park management also recently practice burning for the same purpose even though they do not recognize the Guji burning practice. The park guards also told me that they perform controlled burning.

In fact the prevalence of ticks in Nechsar was witnessed by the biologists who surveyed the area. They maintained that "clusters of newly-hatched larvae clung to the grass in brown blobs … brushed off against [their] legs and slowly exploded into thousands of minute ticks which disappeared into [their] clothing" (Bolton, 1976: 62) and such that they "scratched for weeks after visits to Nachisar" (Bolton 1976:63). In the same manner, of the eight major threats to NNP that Kirubel (1985) mentioned, tick problem was one. According to him, ticks have become a problem to wildlife like zebra and Swayne's hartebeest and such threats increased after the eviction of the Guji from Nechsar in 1982. In the words of Kirubel (1985:15), "the effects of the ticks has been increasing since the plains were made free from nomadic Gugi [Guji] cattle, which, prior to their expulsion, used to share the direct impact of the ticks with the wildlife". As can be seen from this explanation, the increasing of the effect of ticks on the wildlife is attributed to the absence of the Guji cattle that used to share their part of the ticks from the wildlife. While this explanation may not be underestimated, it also seems fair to follow a conclusion from this explanation that the increasing effect might also be attributed to the absence of the burning practices that the Guji used to perform[36]. Getachew (2007) argued that apart from the necessity to control the burning, the Guji practice of burning

[36] As a solution he recommends the practice of controlled burning.

is based on Guji traditional ecological knowledge and thus has a conservation value. Yet Freeman (2006) claims that the presence of the Guji has become problematic to range management through burning. That means the presence of people became an obstacle to the practice of burning regimes. However, it is not clear how it can be an obstacle while the Guji used to perform it themselves. But she insists:

> *… proper range management practices, such as controlled burning, cannot be carried out by the park management due to the presence of people living in the park. Without implementing these practices it is extremely difficult for the park to be managed and the eco-system to be kept in balance. For example, without burning practices it is extremely difficult to control ticks. They are currently at such a level that they are causing problems for both the Swayne's hartebeest and for small zebra* (Freeman 2006:13).

The wide Nechsar plains that the Guji used to have had a wider access to, used to be a communal grazing land for the Guji. Every Guji have had access to it. Like the Borana to the east who have devised elaborate laws that govern the use of water and pasture (which they call *seera marraa bishaanii*, means law of grass and water literally), such is not the case among Guji of the Nechsar plains. The pasture of the Nechsar plain was free for all members of the Guji community as a communal property and no strict traditional laws were applied. This situation can be explained in terms of the abundance of water and pasture resources in the area to which Guji enjoyed access to, before it progressively shrank owing to the introduction of other land use forms like national parks. In other words, lack of strict traditional rules on pasture and water can be explained in terms of how the environment shapes the way people make their life. However, people also adapt to their environment than simply being shaped by it. The Guji for instance started to cultivate when they suddenly lost their cattle amidst of tropical epidemic diseases during the imperial period (Getachew 2007: 62). The Guji use their grazing land in the plains of Nechsar in common, and apart from that each household has its own kaloo (grazing reserve) around its own house. Here only the weak, ill cattle and the calves are allowed to graze. Kaloo[37] is a personal property and thus no other household can use it except with the permission of the owner.

The Guji try to rear as many cattle as possible. As the Guji are polygamous, they divide the kraals among the different wives and as such all kraals are not at a place. There is no official and reliable data as to how many cattle there are altogether. The Guji do not count

[37] At specific areas in the Nechasr plains, there are names that indicate the existence of personal kaloo formerly. For instance, Kaloo Baattee and Kaloo Saddulloo.

cattle by the numbers saying one, two… They say that cattle should be counted in terms of kraal numbers and not in individual heads of cattle.

### 5.3.3. A Nechsar as a Source of Land for Cultivation

In addition to be a source of pasture and water for the pastoralist Guji, Nechsar also serves as a source of plots of land for cultivation along the banks of the Sermale river in the Sermale valley. They cultivate variety of crops like maize, sorghum and fruits and vegetables. One can see the planting of banana, avocado, coffee, mango and the like along the Sermale river. The river provides water for irrigation and as such they can produce crops twice a year. But in places where water cannot reach the field, production depends on rain which is unsustainable. In the Sermale valley, Guji households have a plot of land for the cultivation of badalaa (maize). Unlike that of the plains where grazing is common for all, here each household has its own personal plots of land. The Kore people also cultivate in the area.

Historically, the Guji were pure pastoralists and their lives and livelihoods were thus much dependent on the rearing of cattle. Through the passage of time they came to embrace the cultivation of crops as a way of surviving the loss of cattle during the bad times. The Guji of Nechsar area started agriculture when they lost their cattle because of drought during the imperial period (Getachew 2007:62). Today one can see that the role of cultivation in supplementing the livelihood of the Guji of Nechsar cannot be underestimated. This even becomes clear when one sees the current competition over land with the other ethnic groups[38]. In fact, by now, the Guji have lost huge areas of grazing land for management of the wildlife and this necessarily increases the value of land for cultivation.

### 5.3.4. Traditional Honey Production

The Guji also practice the production of honey through a traditional means. The source of traditional honey production is both from the natural caves and manmade beehives. But the park management frowns at this practice because this is presented as a source of sudden fire that may ravage the park. When the Guji cut honey, they use fire in order to scare and smoke out the bees to avoid the sting. Among the Guji the practice of honey production is especially important for the hiyyeessaa (poor person), who has no many cattle (See Getachew 2007). One can see the beehives on the trees along the Sermale river (see the beehives on the cover page).

[38] During field work among the Guji, the issue of land and competitions with Kore was a usual talk in the Guji villages.

### 5.3.5. The Use of *Bole* and Hot Springs

*Bole* is a salt lick that is obtained from the soil in specific areas of the park. In addition informants maintained that one of the lakes in the Nechsar area, *Abbayya Gurraatii* (as Lake Chamo is locally known) has *bole* properties and thus if cattle drink from in there they do not need *bole*. Currently, the access to this lake has been banned. One can see where *bole* is dug in the park area (see the picture on cover page) and in fact while the animals are licking in groups. There is such *bole* around the park outpost at Tabala. During the field work I also observed the zebras licking the *bole* that the Guji pastoralists dug for their cattle. The pastoralists claim that the use of *bole* for their cattle is important because it is good for the health of their cattle .Therefore, in addition to water and pasture *bole* is the other important resource for the Guji cattle in the NNP. Duckworth et al (1992:112) wrote such use of *bole* in the park even though they seem to hesitate its mineral content: "As the salt content of the soil seems to be the main reason for large scale incursion to the park, it is important to test samples to see whether this reputed mineral content is real".

In addition to the need for *bole* for cattle, people also visit hot springs in the park to take a bath. It is near to the place where cattle lick *bole*. The locals who frequently visit these natural hot springs believe that if one takes a bath in it, it has the power of healing someone from diseases. It is common to see people coming from near and far staying there for days and taking a bath. Again this is also seen as a possible source of sudden fire since those washing in the waters make small camp fires. With regard to this, the 1980 study of the Wildlife and Forestry Department suggested the development of this bath for the therapeutic value it may provide for park visitors (tourists) (MAFWCDD 1980:73) (see the picture on cover page).

## 5.4. People and Wildlife: Coexisting or Conflicting?

One of the themes that obviously define the relation between local communities and wildlife conservation is the existence and persistence of poaching. Among the Guji in NNP, poaching for bush meat does not seem to be a problem. Some (See Solomon 1996 and Freeman 2006) who wrote about the situation also did not see significant challenge to the park management from this aspect. My Guji informants claim that livestock and wildlife have lived together for centuries and that it is unfair to restrict their use of the natural resources for the sake of wildlife conservation. Their argument is that, there would be no park to manage had they eliminated all the wildlife before. By that they claim to have protected the wildlife. They claim that their presence there have made the existence of rich wildlife possible. According to the Guji, it is culturally forbidden to consume the meat of wildlife; that is seen as a bad luck

(*faroon isaatuu danchaa miti*, as they say). Some informants even maintained that someone who stabbed or killed wildlife is not allowed into the Guji traditional systems. An informant insists:

> *In the previous times, people do not even stab wild animal as our elders told us. Even if children accidentally did that, it is forbidden to take that spear into a house. Because of culture, someone who eat the meat of wildlife and who stab it is not allowed into the Guji traditional systems and gatherings. That is a forbidden thing. Even though our culture has been diminished now a days, our people still do not eat the meat of a wild animal.*

As to why the flesh is not consumed, another Guji elder maintains: "According to the story we hear, someone who kills wildlife becomes poor. It is a source of bad luck (*faroon isaa danchaatuu miti*). The future of someone who kills a wild animal is bad and we have seen that." It is also said that the consumption of wild meat destroys one's teeth (Getachew 2007). In fact some of the informants said that now some people particularly the young have developed the habit of eating a wild meat and apart from that such habit is still frowned upon. Actually, the informants are very careful when they talk about this issue because they seem to think that any exposition of what they are doing to the wildlife may bring serious consequences to them. Regarding the claim of the Guji that the consumption of the flesh of a wild animal destroys ones teeth, Getachew (2007) wrote that this can be explained in terms of bad times. In other words, "…wildlives are deliberately reserved for the material uses during those ills…" (Getachew 2007:50). It implicitly informs that they only consume the flesh from the bush when they lose their cattle to the drought or other pandemic. In other words, metaphorically, it seems to indicate that eating the flesh of the bush during the time of abundance is like wishing the bad time when bush meat is eaten.

Even though the Guji claim that they do not kill wild animals, they exceptionally kill some for cultural reasons. Someone who has killed some of the animals is regarded with high esteem within the society and as such holds a ritual ceremony to celebrate his deeds. Among the animals killed for such purposes are buffalo, rhinoceros, elephants and lions. In fact my informants admit that the killing of these particular wild animals was performed in the past but no more existent now.

In general, the Guji vehemently disregard the eating of the bush meat and claim that their presence did not do harm to the wildlife. Emphasizing how they were friendly to wildlife resources, an informant maintained that they used to catch the newly born gazelle and take home with their cattle and brand its ears and call A's or B's gazelle and they nurture it with the milk of their cow till it becomes big and escapes from the kraal. Some of the other

informants also claim that they are more knowledgeable about the wildlife than the park scouts and thus an informant claims: “what do the park people know about wildlife? But we know it”. They maintain that they know where the animals are, how they live and when it gives birth and the time of its gestation period. In fact some of the names in the park seem to indicate that the pastoralists indeed know where the wildlife lives. For instance, there are specific names in the park like *baddaa jeedalaa* (field of the jackal) and *kaloo qorkee* (grazing reserve of the Swayne) and indeed these specific places are where one can find these animals in large number.

Such attitude to wildlife clearly has a conservational value. Their norms of rebuffing wild meat also play a contributory role to the existence of wildlife. Also, their animosity with the neighboring ethnic groups might have contributed to this. The Guji are feared in the area as fierce and given this situation, not many people might have dared to go there and hunt.

In summary, one can see that the arguments for Guji resettlement out of NNP are based on economic and environmental/conservational justifications. Even if not presented as a justification, one can also see the role of local politics in the issue of Guji resettlement. But the Guji are dependent on the resources for their livelihoods and some of their practices have a clear conservational value.

# Chapter Six: The Place of Local Communities in Natural Resource Management in Post 1991 Ethiopia: The Political Context

## 6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, policy changes that came as a result of the change of government in Ethiopia in 1991 as pertaining to the natural resource management will be briefly presented. The main focus is on how the new government embarked on the policy of federalization and decentralization to address the economic and political situations of the country. This change prompted the decentralization of political power as well as emphasized the necessity of participatory approach to development, including ensuring community participation in the natural resource management. As a way to understand this change, the place of local community participation in documents like Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia (hereafter referred to as CSE), Environmental Policy of Ethiopia (hereafter referred to as EPE) and Development Conservation and Utilization of Wildlife Proclamation No. 541/2007 (hereafter referred to as DCUWP) will be discussed.

## 6.2. Federalization and Decentralization of the State

In May 1991, the socialist government of the Derg was overthrown. With that, a four year Transitional Period Government was set up to facilitate a transition to a peaceful constitutional order. The Transitional Government drafted the Transitional Period Charter, which served until the new constitution was adopted. This Transitional Charter can be seen as a departure from the past systems in that it created a framework to do away with the centralized structure of the former regime and recognized local self rule. Accordingly, based on ethno-linguistic criteria, 14 national regional states were created. Later the regional states in the south "willingly" united to form the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) thereby reducing the number of regional states to nine. The restructuring of the country along ethno-linguistic lines was believed to be necessary to ensure not only socio-economic development but also to bring peace and stability within a framework of unity in diversity, without which (it is said) the risk of disintegration was high at the time (Tegegne and Kassahun 2007:11-12).

The process of restructuring the country into "autonomous" national regional states has received legal sanction in the constitution of the country. During the transitional period, a constituent assembly was established to draft a new constitution that would be the supreme law of the land. Accordingly, a new constitution was adopted in August 1995. According to

the constitution, Ethiopia has become a federal democratic republic and hence the nomenclature of the state, The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). The federal government is thus the association of the federal units. Along this line, the administrative map of the country is reconfigured into a federal structure which consisted of nine member states[39].

Consequently, a two tier government (i.e., federal and regional) was formed, each with its own rights and responsibilities. The regional states were thus constitutionally entitled to exercise power over such spheres of governance as: establishing their own self government administrations, enacting and executing the state constitution and other laws, formulating and executing economic, social and development policies, strategies and plans of the state, administering land and other natural resources in accordance with federal laws, levying and collecting taxes and duties on revenue sources reserved to the states and to draw up and administer the state budget, enacting and enforcing laws on the state civil service and their condition of work, and establishing and administering a state police force[40].

The new arrangement devolved power and decentralized it to the regional level wherein each region runs its own internal affairs. As Black and Watson (2006:267) write, "…ethnicity became the main stay of the new state structure…." This in turn has its own implication for natural resource management and administration, as discussed below.

### 6.2.1. Implications for Natural Resource Management and Conservation

The federalization and decentralization of the state have its own implications for natural resource management and conservation. The federalization aspect is important, especially when it comes to the administration of land and other natural resources. As indicated above, land and other natural resources are put under the jurisdiction of the respective regional states. This not only raised inter-regional competition over the control of land and its resources, it also led to conflicts regarding customary rights to natural resources. This has been observed in conservation areas like national parks that straddle along the border of two national regional states. For instance, using the case of Awash National Park, Lane (1995) wrote that while the restructuring of the state seems to promote decentralization and community participation, it also led to competing interests between the regional governments of Oromia and Afar. It also further led to competing customary rights claims between the Karrayu and Ittu Oromos and Afar ethnic groups. In the same way, the case in NNP has a similar dimension. Consequently,

[39] These states included The State of Tigray, The State of Afar, The State of Amhara, The State of Oromia, The State of Somalia, The State of Benishangul/Gumuz, The State of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, The State of the Gambela Peoples, and The State of the Harari People.
[40] See constitution of the FDRE, article 52.

it not only raised the question under whom the park should be administered as indicated in chapter four, but also raised competing customary rights to land among local communities like the Guji, Kore and Gamo peoples (Desalegn 2004). In this context, the issue of Guji resettlement out of NNP can be seen as territorial question of land and resource control and administration between the two regional states and their respective ethnic groups. Regarding this very situation in NNP, Matthijs Blonk (2008) hinted that the need for resettlement of the Guji out of NNP can be explained in terms of "ethno-federalist fixation" of local authorities of SNNPRS: "The wish for resettlement springs from an ethnofederalist fixation harboured by the local authorities. The Guji are an Oromo people, and according to the southern regional government they belong in the adjoining Oromiya province, not among the Gamo and Gofa peoples of the Southern District, where the park is."[41]

It is clear that the necessity of environmental management and natural resource management is to mediate between the natural resources and the people depending on it. In other words, managing the environment and its resources has to do with sustaining the natural resource base and the livelihood of people depending on it. That of course needs the settling of disputes between different stakeholders through different mechanisms like formulating policies, laws and regulations, and together with that, an able institution that can implement these laws. In Ethiopia, such conflicts among stakeholders are observable when it comes to resources like forests, water and wildlife. These conflicts change in relation to the changing political systems. Therefore, natural resource management issues should be understood in terms of the ideological frame of the time and its policies (Melaku 2008:337-338).

Accordingly, while the 1931 constitution of the imperial era put everything under the possession of the Emperor, the Revised Constitution of 1955 made natural resources like forest, water, land and etc of the state domain and their conservation was seen as a "sacred trust" for all Ethiopians, including the unborn. Yet the privatization policy of the time violated the sacredness of these resources and large tracts of forest land were turned to agricultural plots. This was done by the Civil Code of 1960, which subjected resources like lands, forests, etc to the provisions of private property thereby commercializing the natural resources which the constitution made sacred. The New government under the Derg on the other hand, nationalized land and other resources along its socialist principles. Consequently, local communities were evicted out of the land that is regarded to be important for conservation by the military government. Under the new government, since 1991, policy and political changes

[41] See http://www.matthijsblonk.nl/paginas/AfricanParksEthiopieEng.htm.

regarding land and other natural resources is made once again. Accordingly, land now came to be seen as the common property of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples[42] and the Government. No land is thus to be sold or exchanged in any form. Furthermore, the restructuring of the country under federal system with new policies means that "policies greatly impacted on the earlier institutional arrangement and organizational settings of the natural resource management and environmental protection activities" (Melaku 2008:341).

### 6.3. A Shift towards Decentralization and Community Participation

As described above, the change of government in 1991 and the political structure and the consequent devolution of power to the respective regional states created a political framework for various policies to be adopted. Particularly important in this regard, is the shift towards "participatory" approach to natural resource management. The move towards community based approach is believed to be a good way wherein the role of local communities can be enhanced. This was the trend in African countries during that time. Such recognition is the result of different factors. First, fortress conservation failed to bring the necessary protection to the natural resources and countries were unable to effectively police such conservation areas (most of which are in remote areas). Second, development thinking based on the notion of community based development influenced the thinking and such that the indigenous knowledge of local communities in resource management and their dependence on the resources for their livelihood has come into light. Third, donors and non- governmental organizations based their emphasis on grassroots level based sustainable development and that is seen as a vehicle for development (Black and Watson 2006:263).

For about a decade, from 1991 to 2001/2002, the decentralization process was limited to the level of self governing regional states. After that it has been decentralized to the Woreda (district) level. The emphasis on decentralization is to initiate the participation of local communities, and according to Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) document of the government, that is taken to be important "for tackling poverty directly at the grassroots level" (Cited in Tegegne and Kassahun 2007:25). This, in turn, is found to be important to empower local communities and their institutions to enhance their participation in decisions that affect their livelihoods. Thus it is thought that decentralization has both political and economic significance. Decentralization in the political sense means

[42] A group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory (See the Constitution of FDRE, Article 39 sub article 5).

increasing the participation of local communities in the decision processes. In economic terms, that can be useful to tackle poverty. In line with this, Tegegne and Kassahun (2007:40) observed the decentralization process in Ethiopia in relation to poverty reduction: "… though the initial motives of decentralization in Ethiopia do not have much link with poverty reduction, recent developments have embraced poverty reduction as part of the decentralization effort." The decentralization aspect, however, seems a good way to ensure community participation, while one can also expect its subjection to rhetoric on paper. In this regard, Balck and Watson (2006) indicated through field work among the Borana Oromo in southern Ethiopia that decentralization and community participation rather undermined and corrupted local institutions because what it did was to simply legitimate the intervention of the government. Consequently, the need to empower local communities can end up with community disempowerment. The discussion of CSE, EPE and DCUWP regarding the place of community participation and rights can be useful in this regard.

### 6.3.1. Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia

In 1991, IUCN signed agreement with the government of Ethiopia to assist the formulation of the National Conservation Strategy (NCS) within two years. But given the prevailing instability of the time and the need to incorporate the political and policy changes into the document delayed its adoption. In 1994 the first edition of NCS was completed. The Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia (CSE) of 1997 is the improved and second edition of the 1994 NCS document. This document establishes the overall national conservation framework at the national level and its implementation is left to the regions, i.e. the national regional states (Melaku 2008:347-349).

Although organizational, human, legal and financial capacities need to be built for its proper implementation, the document remains to be important. First, the document is based on the concept of sustainable development. Thus, it indicates the importance of wise management of the resources rather than for just mere preservation of it. Second, it underlines the necessity of community participation in the natural resource management and conservation (Melaku 2008:350-351). While recognizing the intimate relation between the resources and the resource users, it argues that the relation is not always smooth. To smoothen it, it follows that, "creating a participatory management system will enable to ease the tension and establish sustainable utilization [and]…that participatory system need to be monitored closely" (Melaku 2008:348).

### 6.3.2. Environmental Policy of Ethiopia (EPE) and the Place of Local Communities

The EPE was issued in 1997. The overall policy goal of the EPE is based on the principle of sustainability and hence it reads as: "The overall policy goal is to improve and enhance the health and quality of life of all Ethiopians and to promote sustainable social and economic development through the sound management and use of natural, human made and cultural resources and the environment as a whole so as to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (EPE 1997:3).

Different approaches to the environment and its resources have been followed at different times. Unlike the former periods where either use oriented or resource oriented approaches were mainly emphasized, the current approach follows an eco-system oriented approach wherein human development and environmental needs are considered in a holistic and integrated approach. In short, it is based on the principle of sustainable development. The turn to sustainable development approach has been the main issue since the Rio Summit, and Ethiopia also learned a lot from the summit, especially the multi-sectoral nature of the environment and the necessity of legal regime for the protection of the environment in the country. Hence is the issuance of EPE in 1997 (Girma 2000:9; 27-28).

The language with which EPE is written is people friendly as it emphasizes the participation of local communities in the protection of the environment and the management of its resources. In case environmental projects interfere with the livelihood of local communities, it gives them not only the right to full consultation but also the right to participate and influence the decision making process. Interestingly enough, it anticipates the abuse the local communities may face in the name of "participation" when it stipulates the necessity "to develop the necessary legislation, training and financial support to empower local communities so that they may acquire the ability to prevent the manipulated imposition of external decisions in the name of participation, and to ensure genuine grassroots decisions in resources and environmental management" (EPE 1997:19). In addition, it recognizes the necessity of integrating people's knowledge and their organizational capacity and scientific research in complementary ways to each other and thus need to be sanctioned with formal and legal structures that ensure the participation of the local communities in environmental management. Put another way, it emphasizes the real empowerment of local communities not the imposition brought on to them (Black and Watson 2006:267).

Imposition upon the local people and their livelihoods leads to the lack of peace and personal security, which impacts the process of sustainable development. However, "this shall be assured through the acquisition of power by communities to make their own decisions on matters that affect their life and environment" (EPE 1997:4). This seems to emphasize the need to empower local community if they are to make decisions regarding the things that affect them directly.

When it comes to the issue of the rights of local communities affected by protected area management, like park, forest and wildlife, it seems to follow an incentive approach. In other words, it calls for trickling the economic benefits obtained from such areas down to the community. It further pledges the integration of local communities living outside protected areas through strategic land use plans. But yet it does not say as to whether it is possible to live in and/or use resources in protected areas and under what conditions, in explicit manner. There are two provisions that mention land and customary rights of local communities in protected areas:

- When taking the decisions to recognize that the constitution now ensures that the user of land has the right to a secure and uninterrupted access to it and to renewable natural resources on it (e.g. trees, water, wildlife and grazing)
- To recognize and protect wherever possible the customary rights of access to and use of land and natural resource which are constitutionally acceptable, socially equitable and are preferred by local communities (EPE 1997:19-20).

The constitution of FDRE on its part makes land the common property of Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples and the government. Thus, peoples who have been displaced or get their livelihoods affected as a result of sate programs have the right to get commensurate compensation or alternative means of livelihoods including relocation with the state assistance[43]. While it recognizes that the locals have the right to consultation to things that affect their life, the government has the responsibility and right to ensure private investors to the use of land on the basis of payment arrangements established by law. As it regards to pastoral communities in particular, the constitution stipulates that "Ethiopian pastoralists have the right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as the right not to be displaced from their own lands."[44] Pastoral communities have been the most affected ones because of environmental projects of the state, including national park developments for tourism. Their

[43] See Constitution of the FDRE, article 40 sub article 3 and article 44 sub article 2.
[44] See Constitution of FDRE, article 40 sub article 5.

"lands were virtually considered no man's land" because they are not leading sedentary way of life (e.g. See Mohammud 2004:39-40).

### 6.3.3. The New Wildlife Legislation and the Place of Local Communities

In August 2007, "Development Conservation and Utilization of Wildlife Proclamation No. 541/2007" was issued. As can be seen from the preamble of the proclamation, the wildlife conservation activities taken so far has not been productive, and lack of proper planning and appropriate utilization of this particular resource furthered their depletion. Therefore, in a view to allow the participation of local communities residing around the conservation areas and the private investors; to fit the wildlife conservation activities to the current objective reality and state structure; and to enhance the contribution of wildlife conservation towards poverty reduction, this proclamation was issued. The proclamation specifies three objectives:

- To conserve, manage, develop and properly utilize the wildlife resources of Ethiopia
- To create conditions necessary for discharging government obligations assumed under treaties regarding the conservation, development, and utilization of wildlife resource
- To promote wildlife-based tourism and to encourage private investment

As can be seen from these objectives, the conservation of the wildlife resources is more geared towards harnessing the economic benefits this resource can provide. As much as it seems to be propelled by the national need to promote income from tourism, it is also equally responding to the international scenes of conservation. With regard to tourism, though its realization is yet to be seen, the government strategy is to make Ethiopia one of the top ten tourist destinations in Africa by 2020. That is motivated by the role of tourism in poverty reduction as well as the use of it to transform the image of the country. Among areas considered to be important for such ecotourism development are Awash National Park, Bale National Park, NNP and Lake Tana and Blue Nile Falls[45].

According to the proclamation, there are various categories of conservation areas including national parks and wildlife reserves. It defines national parks as "an area designated to conserve wildlife and associated natural resources to preserve the scenic and scientific value of the area which may include lakes and other aquatic areas". On the other hand, it defines wildlife reserve as "an area designated to conserve wildlife where indigenous local communities are allowed to live together with and conserve the wildlife" (See DCUWP No. 541/ 2007: Art.4 Sub articles 8 and 10).

[45] See http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTETHIOPIA/Resources/ET_Tourism_Strategy.pdf.

As can be seen from these definitions, local communities can live and conserve wildlife in reserves while nothing has been said whether they can live and /or utilize resources in the national parks. The implicit message of mentioning local communities in the case of wildlife reserve and not saying anything in the case of national park seems that national parks have to be free from local communities. However, this can be subjected to interpretations because it neither grants nor withholds as to what should be the right and role of local communities in national parks. On the other hand, in article 16 of the proclamation the part dealing with penalty goes that anyone who carries out "unauthorized activities" in the conservation areas can face a fine of 5,000 to 30,000 Ethiopian Birr or a jail of 1 to 5 years or with both fine and imprisonment. Here it is not explicit as to which sets of activities (say for example, grazing, firewood collecting etc) constitute the case.

There is also the mention of local communities in the preamble whereby participation of the local communities and the private sector for the management and conservation of conservation areas is considered as important. Apart from that (according to art.7 of the proclamation), local communities can also administer conservation areas that are not under federal, regional or private. Hence, the concerned regional states can authorize the local communities to administer such areas.

The other important point about this proclamation is the issue of the administration of protected areas. Melaku (2008:354) observed that the way the power of the regional and federal governments is treated in the proclamation is not clear enough. For instance, it never says who is to have a final say in the event of disagreement.

The proclamation creates four types of administration of the conservation areas. The federal government administers areas that are nationally and globally significant because of the representative ecological zones they represent and those with immense diversity of wildlife; national parks and wildlife sanctuaries where endangered and endemic species lives; wildlife conservation areas that straddles two or more regions in Ethiopia ; and finally any wildlife conservation areas transcending the national border. Areas not designated as such are to be administered under the regional states. On the other hand, private investors can administer conservation areas under either the federal or regional governments by the concession agreements to be concluded with the federal or the concerned regional governments. Areas outside of these domains can be administered by the local communities (See DCUWP No. 541/ 2007: articles 4-7).

In general, while the proclamation makes the participation of local communities important, it does not explicitly put specific rights and participation mechanisms. With its emphasis on wildlife management for poverty reduction and private investment, it seems to emphasize the biological and financial aspects of conservation in protected areas.

# Chapter Seven: Conclusion

## 7.1. Why Resettlement?

The wildlife survey undertakings with the assistance of UNESCO resulted in the creation of national parks in the late 1960s and the beginning of 1970s in Ethiopia. NNP was established in 1974. In spite of the fact that it has been enjoying a national park status since then, it has not been legally gazetted. It is not a much developed national park, but yet hosts national and international tourists of various sorts. From the early accounts of biologists who surveyed the area to the present, the necessity of nature conservation in this park has been more geared towards developing it for tourism. In fact, NNP has immense potential to be a great tourist destination. It has various wildlife species including endemic mammals and birds. The range of its vegetation type from riverine forest to savanna grassland and bush land along with the strip of land that separates the two lakes (i.e. Lakes Abaya and Chamo) adds to the scenic beauty of the area. The proximity of the park to the town of Arbaminch makes service delivery to tourists easier.

For tourism to be developed, it has been taken that the natural resources of the park should be protected from the damages caused by human activities. Consequently, the need to protect wildlife and their habitat tied the fate of the park to the resettlement of the Guji out of there. Such move towards removing the Guji from NNP and resettle them somewhere else can be summarized within the contexts of conservation ideology, mode of life of the Guji and local political situations.

As I have shown in chapter three, the eviction of the Guji from NNP in 1982 to gun point was the result of exclusionary conservation policy. However, as discussed in chapter two, such form of exclusion based on "fortress" model of conservation only serves to undermine itself because it creates animosity between the park and local communities. As I have shown in chapter four, this was what happened in NNP following the collapse of central government in 1991. The Guji came back to the land they were forcefully expelled from and attacked the park facilities. In addition I have discussed in chapter three that the Guji were utilizing Nechsar and its surroundings long before the establishment of the park. In view of this, the claim that NNP was "uninhabited" at its establishment cannot be historically substantiated. It rather is reflective of the persistence of exclusionary conservation approach based on "fortress" model that creates the notion of "wilderness" by denying historicity of human settlement to lands formerly inhabited and/or utilized by local communities. Such

persistence of preservationist approach can be clearly seen in how the park development projects were handled in NNP as I have shown in chapter four.

The notion that perceives Nechsar as some sort of *terra nullius* and the Guji as new arrivals to the Nechsar area only in 1990s thereby necessitating their resettlement could rather well be understood if one considers the mode of resource use of the Guji and local political situations. As a mainly pastoral people, the mode of resource use of the Guji is dictated by environmental factors like diseases and availability of pastures as I have shown in chapter five. Thus, this necessitates mobility. But such movement between different places is misconceived as if the Guji were not inhabitants in the area. This implicitly indicates that the Guji have no rights to the land and other natural resources in the area and hence should be resettled. As I have shown in chapter five, the park management does not seem to deny that the Guji were used to utilizing the Nechsar plains on seasonal basis. They claim that the Guji were not permanent settlers, implying that they have no rights to the resources of the area. Furthermore, pastoral mode of life itself is seen as a danger to the wellbeing of the park and thus to the potential of the park as tourist destination. In line with this, the perception is that the Guji should vacate the land for wildlife conservation.

However, conservation ideology and perception of pastoral mode of life alone does not seem to have necessitated the resettlement of the Guji from NNP. There are also political and territorial dimensions particularly after 1991. As the failure of the 1990s park project in NNP and the withdrawal of APF as well as the discussion I made on the issue in chapter five clearly shows, the relation between the Guji and the park management is also political and territorial. In this regard, ethnic identity and the desire to administer the park between the two regional states of Oromia and SNNPRS can be an illustrative case. The latter has especially been pushing the necessity to resettle the Guji out of the park. Hence, one can see that the question why resettlement is emphasized in NNP is embedded in conservation ideology, perception of mode of life of the Guji and local political contexts.

### 7.2. Natural Resources and Guji Livelihoods

As I have shown in chapter five, cattle are the main livelihood base of the Guji. Thus sustaining such livelihood base demands access to the natural resource base of the environment like pasture, water, and salt lick (*bole*) for cattle. In addition they use the park environment for cultivation and honey production. They also use natural hot springs for health reasons. Despite such livelihood dependence on the resources of the park, their access to the

natural resource bases of their environment has been shrinking from time to time. Even though they are not physically removed to a far away geographical area, they are denied access to the Nechsar plains (i.e. their wet season grazing area) and to Lake Chamo watering points, and their access to watering points on Lake Abaya have been drastically diminished. The fact that necessitated resettlement and restriction of access to the natural resources of the environment is ecological/environmental argument that cattle overgraze and deplete the habitat of wildlife and that the fire that the locals set ravages the park. But the Guji have lived in the area for many years practicing their pastoral mode of life. As I have shown in chapter five, the overgrazing issue seems to have been exaggerated. As I have tried to show it historically, most of the recommendations for resettling the Guji out of the park were based on the anticipation of the coming danger because of continuing Guji inhabitation there. The fire burning practice that the Guji used to perform also has conservational value to manage pastures and to control ticks, except that it should be done on a controlled and monitored manner. Their tradition which prohibits the eating of wild meat also has a clear conservational value. In light of this, as much as the touristic and environmental importance of the NNP is emphasized, local livelihoods and practices also deserve attention. Otherwise emphasizing the environmental and touristic importance of NNP to the neglect of its human element neither benefits the park nor the people and this was seen in the 1990s.

### 7.3. The Local in the National

As I have shown in chapter six, government policy of decentralization and devolution of power recognizes the importance of local community participation in natural resource management. In this regard, CSE, EPE and DCUWP also encourage local community participation in environmental management issues. The EPE in particular even foretells the imposition that might follow the rhetoric of community participation and underlines the necessity of full consultation and participation of local community in planning and designing of projects that impact their livelihoods. Yet the way resettlement schemes in NNP were undertaken (discussed in chapter four) contradicts the principles outlined in these policies. The implementation was non-participatory and totally emphasized the resettlement of the Guji out of NNP. As Turton (2002:115) writes about the case of NPRSEP, this can be either indicative of "…the contrast between good policy and poor implementation" or it can be the continuation of top-down and exclusionary approach to conservation camouflaged under the veil of local community participation. In addition to the turn to participatory approach, the

new structure of the state along ethnic lines also has its own share in indirectly shaping the relation between the Guji and the park management, as it raises the issue of land and natural resource administration. The fact that NNP is found along the borders of Oromia and SNNPRS has created competition between the two regions and their respective ethnic groups.

### 7.4. The Way Forward: Trying "Double sustainability?"

As far as the case in NNP is concerned, the solution to the problem seems to lie in not only the concern for the environment and the money it brings from tourism (as is the case now) but also the people inhabiting the environment. In other words, the conservation effort in that park should equally consider both biodiversity conservation and local community livelihood protection. According to Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau (2006:1810), "real sustainability must be concomitantly social and ecological". In the context of protected areas, it should target the achievement of "double sustainability". In line with this, "double sustainability" refers to the social and environmental dimensions of nature conservation in protected areas like national parks. It signifies the necessity of biodiversity and peoples livelihood protection at the same time. While recognizing the importance of biodiversity conservation for the common good, it argues that the strategy protected area creation usually employs (i.e. displacement) alienates certain groups of people from the enjoyment of such common good. It even rather impoverishes them as it displaces them from the resource bases of their environment (See Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2006). However, this should not be taken to mean that the human dimension should overtake the conservation needs and priorities. Neither does it mean that the conservation efforts should take precedence over human livelihoods and rights. It does mean that "while conservation may be justifiable on its own account, conservation approaches should also be socially just in the sense that they avoid or mitigate the "actual or opportunity costs" of conservation to the poor" (Fisher et al. 2005:14). It is thus a matter of who benefits at the cost of whom and trying to narrow down the gap between the benefit and cost of nature conservation to the people subsisting on the natural resources. Even if conservation may not benefit the locals, it should not at least worse off their livelihoods .This is because it can lead to what Cernea (2006:4) writes as "subtracting without restitution from their [peoples] livelihoods".

The better understanding of the impact of displacement on the livelihood of the poor, therefore, necessitates the treatment of displacement in perspective. According to the revised World Bank policy on resettlement, physical relocation alone may not be the only aspect of

displacement. As far as the result it generates on the livelihood of the locals remains the same, displacement can either be seen as physical or economic. In the former instance, the locals are physically displaced from their former lands while in the latter case their access to the natural resources of the environment is administratively restricted. Viewing the adverse livelihood impacts it generates, Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau (2006: 1808) argued that "park - establishment strategy predicated upon compulsory population displacement has exhausted its credibility and compromised the cause of biodiversity conservation by inflicting aggravated impoverishment on very large numbers of people." Thus comes the recommendation that this strategy should be avoided utmost effort. If unavoidable, however, it should not be "a punishment tool but a last resort…while also materially enabling the area's native inhabitants and their children to achieve an alternative sustainable livelihood" (Cernea 2006:10).

In fact, the impact of protected area creation on the livelihood of the locals has been long recognized. But the prevailing situations still seems to favor the environmental aspect of protected area management than its human aspect. This can be seen from the asymmetrical nature of knowledge and power existing between positions favoring the environmental and the human aspect of protected areas. As knowledge asymmetry is concerned, the environmental and human aspects of protected areas can be represented by biologists and social scientists respectively. While the former well articulated their position and knowledge bases, the latter's is not well coordinated and cogently developed. In addition, the biologists have the financial and institutional backing from states to go after their biodiversity concerns. The representation of biodiversity concerns by various organizations on the international stage makes the biological aspect of protected area management even more powerful (See Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2006). In fact, even if asymmetries like this characterize the situation, it does not mean that either of them is not concerned about the biological and human aspects of protected area creation and management but the way they view such aspects from their respective academic backgrounds is likely to influence their priorities. Thus, the solution lies somewhere in between if eclectic approach to the issue is followed cooperatively. And that in turn is important towards strengthening the relation between biodiversity conservation and human inhabitants in a more mutually beneficial and complementary ways.

Although it may be easy to recommend the pursuance of "double sustainability" as a way of gluing the environmental and human dimensions of nature conservation, the dilemma remains to be finding the glue. In other words, how to do the connection seems more daunting. The current trend in oiling the friction between local communities and conservation

is more geared towards various forms of what Neumann (2005:139) writes as "nature- society hybrids". Examples of "nature- society hybrids" can be seen in different community participation and co-management initiatives. Yet while such arrangements work in some situations, they fail in others. Because of this, the effectiveness of such arrangements can be questioned. One of such difficulties arises from the multiplicity of stakeholders. In such situations, conflicts may start among the locals themselves when conflicting interests exist among them. This makes decision making very much daunting. Apart from the local communities, other elite groups like local chiefs, officials and business people also compete to capture new sources of income together with the vulnerable poor. Consequently, local communities usually end up as non-beneficiary and prey to other influences as they cannot strongly compete with other interests for lack of the necessary networks. In cases like tourism, for instance, it is the national and international companies that benefit more owing to the skill and money they command. In such and other cases nature-society hybrids may not necessarily benefit the locals most often despite the praises given to them.[46]

However, Adams and Hulme (2001:193) argued that "community conservation is not one but many [and that] it is evolving both as a concept and a practice that must be built on. It is not a project or policy 'choice' that can be simply accepted or rejected." Rather the key aspect to be emphasized should be "who should set the objectives for conservation policy on the ground and how should trade-offs between the diverse objectives of different interests be negotiated" (Adams and Hulme 2001:193).

Rather than endangering the livelihood of local communities, conservation can be pursued to better the livelihood and thus can contribute to poverty reduction. According to Brockington and Schmidt-Soltau (2004:140), "conservation can and should be a powerful tool for wealth creation and poverty reduction." However, some (e.g. Sanderson and Redford 2004) blamed such approach of relating poverty and conservation; and for them, "conservationists …have neither the legitimacy nor the power to redress the distributive inequalities nor the damages of development…" (Sanderson and Redford 2004:146). But the question remains, if conservation should not contribute towards poverty reduction, should it then contribute to poverty by the displacement it causes? In line with the role that conservation can play in poverty reduction, one can note that the fact that conservation usually takes place in remote areas where other chances are limited, it can even create a good opportunity to poverty reduction provided that the income derived from it is channeled to the

[46] See Honorata Gajda www.umb.no/ina/studier/soppgaver/**2006-Gajda**.pdf.

community living there. Otherwise, displacing people in such remote areas not only violates their rights but also serves to perpetuate localized poverty (See Fisher et al 2005). Thus, conservation and people need to be cemented in the way that encourages poverty reduction for the poor and environmental protection for the protected areas. However, as Adams and Hutton (2007) write, the link between poverty reduction and conservation is not easy matter as such. Seen at the local level, there are ample local social and political specifics that impinge on how best they can be linked. Taken at the global level, "the political challenge of conservation is increasingly being framed in terms of the environmental claims of the rich *vs* the subsistence need of the poor [and] global discourses of extinction bear directly on local issues of rights and human welfare… " (Adams and Hutton 2007:165).

Within this complex local and global context, achieving "double sustainability" cannot be that much easier. Other issues like ethnicity, indigenousness and identity can add more complexities into the issue (Adams and Hutton 2007). This in turn necessitates the "understanding of human-environment relationships, and sensitivity to the micro-politics of resource use" (Fisher et al 2005:42). In this regard, the simple notion based on local community as a homogenous entity may not work as there are gender, class, age and ethnicity with their corresponding interests. They may have different values and interests attached to the resources. That is why it is argued that "if different groups of stakeholders have different access to resources, and use resources in different ways, then they will be rich or poor in different ways and changes in access to resources will affect them differently" (Fisher et al 2005:44). Even though different divisions and interests create different challenges, the success of a participatory approach is determined by the degree of transparency, equity and trust it commands with the local community (Adams and Hulme 2001:197).

In line with the concept of "double sustainability", national park protection activities in NNP should emphasize on how to best create cooperation among the different stakeholders and contribute towards the improvement of the livelihood of local communities than insisting on resettlement. Even if the Guji are resettled out of the park, the location of the park still makes the involvement of adjacent local communities including Guji and local administrations necessary in one way or another. Thus, co-management arrangements with local community, in which a thoroughly negotiated agreement ensuring resource use tenure to local communities, should guide the process. Despite the challenges, the key to address the social dimension of protected areas including NNP in a way it benefits both the people and the environment seems to lie in the various forms of nature-society hybrids.

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