



PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN EAST AFRICA

The Case Study of the Bale Mountains, Ethiopia and the Transferability to the Kakamega Forest, Kenya

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Background Information

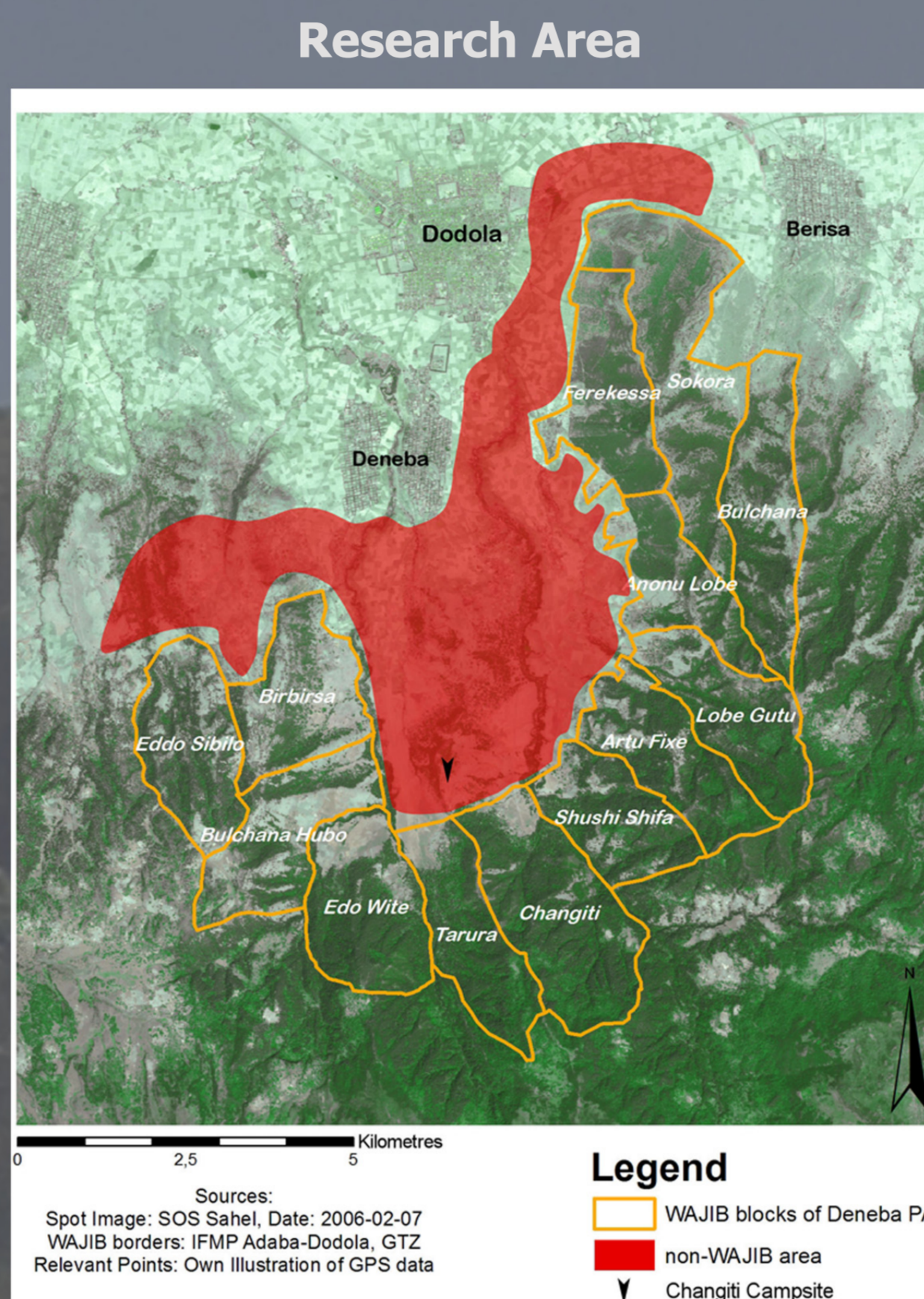
The project was implemented by a group of students of the Faculty of Spatial Planning at the Technische Universität Dortmund. It dealt with the themes of Participatory Forest Management and income generation in rural areas in East Africa. The case study area was the Bale Mountains region, Ethiopia.

The Bale Mountains are...

- ... a mountainous area with altitudes up to 3,700m a.s.l.
- ... covered with pristine natural forest and possess a huge biodiversity, signified by an endemic flora and fauna.
- ... a region with four typical vegetation zones (mountain savannah, alpine forest, erica forest and afro-alpine vegetation)

Problems:

- Forest degradation due to uncontrolled anthropogenic use
- Long dry seasons
- Intensive farming and livestock herding, overuse of resources
- High dependency on forest products
- Decreasing forest and biodiversity
- High population growth rate (about 3 per cent/year)



In 1995 the GTZ (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) assisted the Ethiopian government in introducing a community based approach which was named the WAJIB approach (local language abbreviation for forest dwellers association). The related project was called the Integrated Forest Management Project, Adaba-Dodola (IFMP).

The Objectives of the IFMP, Adaba-Dodola are...

- ... the protection of remaining natural forests
- ... to develop, use and manage the forest sustainably
- ... to achieve a sustainable forest management through community empowerment
- ... the Improvement of livelihoods in long-term

Procedure of the project group:

- Conduct an impact assessment of the IFMP (social, economical, ecological impacts)
- Work out action recommendations and an action plan
- Examine transferability to Kakamega Forest, Kenya

Impact Assessment of the IFMP



To fulfil the explained objectives the forest was divided into forest blocks, the so called WAJIBs, of about 400 hectares where a particular number of dwellers has the right to live and use the forest. In exchange they have the duty to maintain the forest cover and use the resources sustainably. This caused many impacts on the ecological situation of the forest and the economic and social situation of the forest's inhabitants as well as dwellers living nearby the WAJIB blocks.

Impacts

Ecological Impacts

- ... the forest cover increased totally within the WAJIB blocks
- ... the forest could rehabilitate through planting of indigenous trees, no grazing in areas with young trees
- ... due to logging, WAJIB blocks near settlements and the border of the forest face immense problems to rehabilitate the tree cover
- ... logging is shifted partially into the remaining non-WAJIB forest

Social Impacts

- ... while the responsibility for the forest was given to the WAJIB members, non-WAJIB people depend heavily on forest resources but have no right to use it

... Non-WAJIB people are excluded from the benefits of the IFMP and this results in envy towards WAJIB inhabitants
... the envy and unequal distribution of access to natural resources leads to violence which scares WAJIB members and hinders them to fulfil their forest protection duties

Economic Impacts

- ... Economic impacts of the IFMP were beneficial for the WAJIB members, prices for wood products increased
 - ... Inhabitants of the non-WAJIB area could not improve their economic situation
 - ... The legal and exclusive rights to use the forest created higher prices for the wood products on the local markets
 - ... Especially non-WAJIBs accented the importance of the forest grazing lands for the WAJIB members (more productive)
 - ... The creation of alternative income opportunities for the non-WAJIB people, which should have been accompanied by training measures, left no considerable impact
 - ... Only the implemented eco-tourism project is creating income for some households in the area, for WAJIBs as well as for non-WAJIBs, but there is criticism on the distribution of the jobs
- The economic measures of the IFMP were inadequate for those living outside the WAJIB blocks.

Methods

The project group applied a multifaceted range of methodology in order to examine the local situation and gather results from multiple sources.

These were for example...

- ... Semi-Structured Interviews (Guideline Interviews) with experts and initiators of the project
- ... Market Survey
- ... Structured Interviews with local inhabitants
- ... Transect Walk through the area of the PFM
- ... Resource Mapping with participants of the PFM
- ... Scoring
- ... Group Discussion
- ... Presentation and Discussion at the University of Addis Abeba



Going Further Into Detail

Example for the manifold information the project group gathered through structured interviews with the local population:

She is a 60 year old widow living next to her sons, who have their own compound and family. Because her husband died a few years ago, her sons earn the livelihood even for her. She said that her living conditions have become worse due to the increasing prices for most of the available products on the market. For instance, the prices for Eucalyptus seedlings have increased. She plants them to compensate her huge demand for firewood and wood for construction. Nevertheless, in her opinion the WAJIB approach is a good idea because the user-rights for local inhabitants help to protect the forest. Thinking of the future, she wishes a better life for herself and her family. Moreover, she hopes that the forest will regenerate itself and that more water will be available for all local inhabitants.

Action Plan

Priority list of short-term or medium-term measures:

1. Group discussions between WAJIB and non-WAJIB people, mediation between parties
2. Extend and improve afforestation measures outside the WAJIB blocks
3. Support of crop diversification and alternative livestock
4. Create value chains and strengthen SMEs through training, e.g. to use forest goods for higher quality products (like essential oils)
5. Distribution of entrance fee (tourists) for the Bale area to local communities, money could be shared in communities

Transferability to Kenya

With regard to the relation to the BIOTA Africa sub-project e14b, the transferability of certain measures of the IFMP has been examined for the Kakamega Forest in Kenya.

- The community-based approach is essential and should be applied when aiming at an adequate solution through forest management
- The transferability of the rights and duties would probably be successful in Kakamega Forest, too, but should nevertheless be adapted to the different circumstances (particularly higher population density)
- Due to the higher population density, a buffer zone concept with an inaccessible core could be an adequate solution

