

The Gedeo after Jensen's Ethnographic Fieldwork¹

Changes and continuities in religion and the *baalle* system

GETACHEW SENISHAW

Introduction

Jensen, together with his colleagues from the Frobenius Institute, made two field trips to the land of the Gedeo: the first took place in 1934/5² and the second in 1955. In his unpublished manuscript detailing the trip, he noted that the objective of the second field visit was to understand if and how socio-economic dynamics had changed since 1935 (Getachew 2017). In keeping with this tradition, the following mainly focuses on the socio-political dynamics at work since Adolf Ellegard Jensen undertook fieldwork on the Gedeo of Southwest Ethiopia in 1955 1955.³ Jensen's 1955 manuscript serves as a starting point from which to trace and understand changes and continuities among the Gedeo since 1955. During the two periods of fieldwork, the German research team took more than 500 black-and-white photographs and produced documentary films⁴ on ensete (*Ensete Ventricosum*) plantation and processing, tanning, and mourning ceremonies. The photos show different aspects of Gedeo daily life, such as dressing styles, marketplaces, landscapes, mourning and *baalle* – the Gedeo political and grade system – grade ceremonies. These are important documents for understanding developments among the Gedeo, since there is no other photographic documentation from that time. My own fieldwork among the Gedeo was conducted in 2012/13 and 2016 in Mekonesha Kebele, and explored Gedeo *baalle*, religion and other ethnographic issues. I used a qualitative approach to explore, describe and interpret major issues that required in-depth analysis. Participant observation was employed to observe everyday events and rituals. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews were held with interviewees drawn from diverse sections of the society. In order to generate data from different groups, focus group discussions were held with men, women and youths.

1 My special thanks go to the Frobenius Institute at Frankfurt University for financing my trip to Germany to access the archival materials on which this article is based.

2 The findings of the first research trip are published in Jensen 1936, the travel report in Jensen 1936 as well as in Wohlenberg 1988.

3 The manuscripts and documents of the legacies of Jensen and Haberland are being digitalized, analysed and made available to the public through the, 'Indexing and Digitizing of the Archival Material on Ethiopian Studies of the Frobenius Institute' project. The typewritten manuscript with the title 'Die Darassa' can be accessed in the legacy of Eike Haberland in the Frobenius Institute's archives. It is written in German and contains sixty-nine typewritten pages plus some sixty handwritten pages with additions and comments. The main chapters cover: social life, clans and dualism, the *gada* system, despised castes, religious and spiritual life, concept of God, mourning ceremonies, other ceremonies and ways of curing diseases.

4 The photos and documentaries can be found in the archives of the Frobenius Institute. See photo albums no. 013 Äthiopien (1934–35) and 027 Äthiopien (1945–55), and for the films see Ä 09, 15, 22, 30 and 76.

Following this introduction are four sections: the first section describes the study area; the second discusses Gedeo religion and spiritual life; the third is about the Gedeo *baalle* system and related political values; and the final section is a conclusion, containing remarks on continuities and changes among the Gedeo over the last six decades.

Study Area

During Jensen's two fieldwork trips, the Gedeo, Amaro and Guji Oromo were part of the Derasa Awraja⁵ (district), in which Dilla was an administrative centre. In 1975, because of the negative connotations of the name,⁶ Derasa was renamed Gedeo by the *Derg*⁷ government. Then, in 1989 the *Derg* changed the country's administrative structure and Gedeo became a separate administrative zone. Finally, Gedeo became one of the zones of the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) with the coming to power of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The Guji Oromo became part of the Oromia Regional State, and the Amaro became a special *woreda*⁸ in the SNNPRS with the advent of ethnic-based federalism in 1991. Today's Gedeo zone is geographically smaller than the previous Gedeo district.

The Gedeo zone is bounded by the Sidama zone of the SNNPRS to the north and the Borana zone of the Oromia Regional State to the south, east and west. Dilla, the capital of Gedeo, is situated 365 kilometres south of Addis Ababa. The total area of the zone is 1,210.89 square kilometres and it is divided into six *woredas* and two city council administrations (Getachew 2017).

At the time of Jensen's fieldwork, the Gedeo lands were green and covered with agro-forestry. The photos and documentary films made by Jensen show the territory covered with trees and different plantations, mainly of ensete. As Jensen stated, the region became involved in the international coffee market in the 1930s.⁹ As a result, the expansion of coffee as a cash crop in the area changed the complexion of Gedeo's agriculture. Coffee plantations continued to expand at the expense of ensete plantations, and in 2012/13 coffee constituted 41 per cent of cultivated land in Gedeo zone (Getachew 2014: 126).

Jensen did not give a figure for the Gedeo population because there was no statistical data available at that time. However, he gave us a clue about population density in the area by explaining that the Gedeo land was highly populated compared to the neighbouring Sidama territory. In the 1950s there was no grazing land, except in some smaller places in Dumerso, because of population pressure and a general shortage of land.¹⁰ Those Gedeo who owned cattle at the time had to send them to the Guji area.

5 *Awraja* was an administrative structure below the province. At the time Derasa Awraja was under the Sidamo Province.

6 During the imperial period, the term Derasa that referred to the Gedeo was associated with "uncivilized people" who did not have equal socioeconomic status with the ruling elites and the urban population in the towns of Gedeo.

7 *Derg* is the abbreviation for the military regime that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991.

8 An administrative structure under the zone and above the *kebele*.

9 EH-70-001:2.

10 EH-70-001:2.

According to a 2014 Central Statistics Agency (CSA) report, the population of the zone was projected to be 1,054,764 in 2015, the majority of which (81.5 per cent) lived in rural areas, with only 18.5 per cent living in urban areas (CSA 2014). Six decades after Jensen's fieldwork, Gedeo is still one of the most densely populated areas in the country. According to the 2014 CSA report, the estimated population density in 2015 was 871.1 persons/km² (CSA 2014).¹¹ In some places like Mekonesa Kebele, the crude density in 2012 was as high as 1,823 persons/km² (Getachew 2014: 58).

The name 'Gedeo' is directly related to the people's language Gede'uffa, which is one of the Eastern Cushitic languages and has similarities with other highland Eastern Cushitic languages like Sidama, Hadiyya, Kembata and Alaba (Fleming and Bender 1976: 45). The history of the Gedeo people, mainly transmitted orally for generations, is not well studied. According to oral tradition, Derasso, Boru (the founding father of the Borana Oromo) and Urago or Gujo (the founding father of the Guji Oromo) were brothers who were descended from the same unknown father. The tradition further explains that Derasso was the eldest son, followed by Boru and then by Urago. During my own research, elderly informants explained that the respect Derasso attained from his two brothers, stemmed from his seniority (Getachew 2014: 62).

In different parts of his field notes Jensen discusses the Gedeo's relationship with the Sidama, with whom they were on friendly terms. He also mentions that the Gedeo and Guji were friendly and shared strong economic and cultural links.¹² Indeed, in my own research, I found that those Gedeo who live in the areas close to the Guji Oromo speak Oromiffa and share more similar words with Oromiffa than with Sidamigna (Getachew 2014: 62). However, in 1991, when the ethnic-based federal state structure was put in place, the Gedeo and Sidama were placed under the Southern National Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State, while the Guji became part of the Oromia Regional State. Moreover, the 1995 conflicts between the Gedeo and the Guji, caused by border and resource issues, had negative implications for the historically friendly relations between the two peoples, described by Jensen. The conflicts checked southward expansion and movement of the Gedeo and, according to some informants, suspicions developed between the two neighbouring societies.

Religion

Considering them to be of anthropological importance, Jensen described the religion and spiritual life of the Gedeo. During his fieldwork, both in 1934/5 and 1955, followers of the traditional belief system were in the majority. In the Gedeo traditional belief system, Mageno (lit. 'Sky God') is the Supreme Being (Getachew 2014: 70). According to Jensen, Mageno is male and resides in heaven.¹³ Jensen mentions that there were no Muslim Gedeo during his fieldwork in 1955, but there were followers of Sheik Hussein.¹⁴ According to Jensen, they came together on Fridays for a weekly ritual and

11 The national average at the same time was 78 persons/km² (CSA 2014).

12 EH-70-001:2.

13 EH-70-001.

14 Sheik Hussein was an Islamic religious leader in the Bale Oromo area, who had non-Muslim followers who believed in his spirits. EH-70-001: 68.

claimed that they had inherited healing spirits from their parents.¹⁵

The first attempt to introduce the Gedeo to world religion came in 1896, when Orthodox Christianity was introduced following Menelik II's expansion and the incorporation of the Gedeo by the central Christian government. However, the spread of Christianity was limited, despite the fact that Emperor Haile Selassie I advocated the conversion of the Gedeo to Orthodox Christianity. One of the major reasons for the slow expansion of Orthodox Christianity was that the preaching was done in *Ge'ez* (the language used by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church) and/or in *Amharic*, which were difficult for the Gedeo to understand.

In 1948 there was another attempt to convert the Gedeo when Protestant Christianity was introduced to the Gedeo by the Sudanese Interior Mission. Protestant Christianity expanded rapidly due to preaching being done in Gedu'ffa, and the opening of schools in different parts of Gedeo, which promoted Bible reading. Above all, the Protestant missionaries sided with the Gedeo in their 1960 protest against the central government. However, the expansion of Protestant Christianity faced difficulties in the *Derg* period (1975–1991) because the socialist regime associated Protestant Christianity with Western imperialism. As a result, some churches were closed. Since the EPRDF government came to power in 1991, Protestant Christianity has again expanded rapidly.

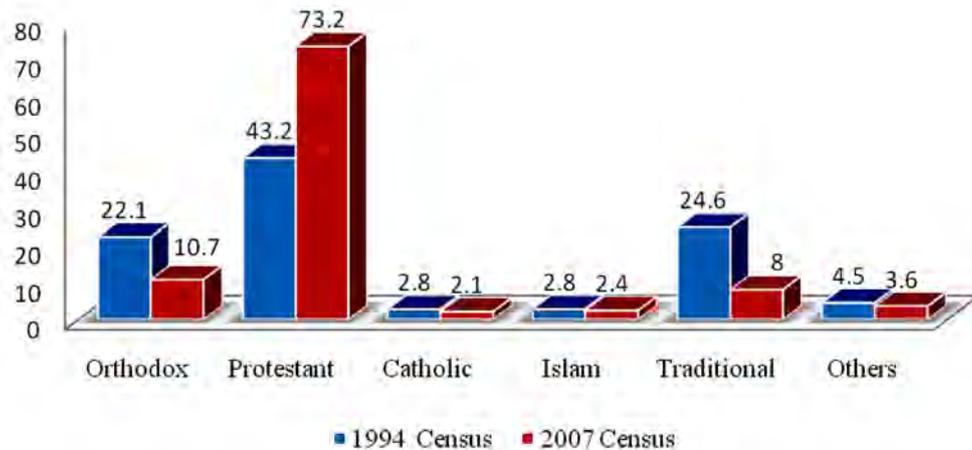


Fig. 1: Percentage of Gedeo zone population by religion in the 1994 and 2007 census¹⁶ (compiled from CSA 1996: 226, CSA 2010: 393).

Figure 1 shows that Protestant Christianity grew by 69.3 per cent from 1994 to 2007. On the other hand, Orthodox Christianity declined by more than half (51.7 per cent). Moreover, the number of traditional religion followers was reduced by 67.6 per cent – a dramatic decline. The data implies that the followers of traditional religions, who formed the majority in the 1950s, had become a minority by 2007 census.

In addition to the basic belief system of the Gedeo, Jensen gave a detailed description of the Gedeo's burial ceremonies, partly comparing them to those of the neighbouring Sidama and Guji Oromo.¹⁷ Death is conceptualized by the Gedeo as the time when the soul (*lubbo*)

¹⁵ EH-70-001: 68–69.

¹⁶ The 1984 Census analytical report is based on the Sidama region (OPHCC 1989), which covers a wider area and does not show the reality in Gedeo.

leaves the body and ascends to God. Jensen continued to explain that most people were buried inside their compounds. If a dead person, however, was at the *yuba*¹⁸ stage of the Gedeo *baalle* system, he was buried outside the compound. This tradition has changed because of the expansion of Protestant Christianity. I observed during fieldwork that most people were buried in a church graveyard, as they had converted to Protestantism. Only a few elders still preferred to be buried in their compounds or fields. Traditionally, Gedeo people planted a tree on the grave of a dead person to identify the burial place, but now they have started to leave cement grave markers like those seen in Orthodox Christian burial places.

According to Jensen, the Gedeo *wodesha* (mourning ceremony) was similar to the Sidama's *wul'la*, although the Sidama ceremony was bigger.¹⁹ The ceremony took between one and four days depending on the age, sex and status of the deceased person. There is a specific place – like the one in Mekonese shown in Figure 2 – in each *kebele* where heroes and traditional leader's special morning ceremonies are conducted. Still, the *wodesha* ceremonies are conducted and continue to vary according to the age, sex and social status of the diseased person. However, the accompanying feasts are now much smaller due to the general decline of production in the area and are predominantly provided through the contributions of self-help associations.



Fig 2: A place where mourning ceremonies for heroes and traditional leaders are conducted in Mekonesa Kebele, 2013

18 The Gedeo *baalle* grading system has nine stages from the lowest to the highest: *gedado*, *seda*, *lu-massa*, *raba*, *luba*, *yuba*, *guduro*, *qulullo* and *chewajja* (Getachew 2014: 77).

19 Jensen even provides us with a film on mourning ceremonies among the Gedeo and Sidama, both of which are no longer practised today due to the influence of Protestant Christianity (see archives no Å 22).

The Gedeo religion also relates to livelihoods. There were, Jensen noted, special gods for specific issues in the Gedeo belief system,²⁰ and different prayers and rituals related to the production system from cultivation to harvest. One of the important ceremonies described by Jensen is the *dalla* ceremony, undertaken at the gate of a house or compound.²¹ Once a year, the Gedeo kill a sheep on the gate as a sacrifice for a good harvest, animal health or to avoid disease. However, this ritual is no longer practised due to the expansion of Protestant Christianity and a decline in the number of livestock, caused by a shortage of land. Jensen also mentioned *qeexala*, a ritual and dance conducted for a number of ecological problems, like a shortage of rain or outbreak of locusts.²² Again, the ritual is practised less often today because of the expansion of Christianity. Most people conduct church prayers for such ecological problems, so the number of people who attend the traditional *qeexala* ritual has reduced dramatically.

Theft was common in Gedeo during my fieldwork, especially during the coffee harvest season. Most people have established a small hut on their coffee farmland so that they can look after their crop. However some individuals put magical objects called *tarre* in their fields to protect them from theft. The Gedeo believe that if somebody steals from these fields, they may be infected by disease or struck by lightning. Jensen noted that theft of different crops from the fields was a problem in Gedeo even in the 1950s and he also described different types of *tarre* used by the farmers to protect their farms.²³

One ceremony not mentioned by Jensen²⁴ is the *deraro* ritual, which is conducted at village level to thank Mageno for a new harvest. For a long time, the ritual did not take place because of the expansion of Protestant Christianity and subsequently because of the socialist *Derg* government. However, over the last ten years, the ceremony has been celebrated again as part of a revitalization movement instigated by the zone's Tourism and Culture Office (Getachew 2014: 182).

In general, most of the rituals that were described by Jensen have declined due to the expansion of Protestant Christianity. According to informants, Protestant Christianity associates most rituals with 'evil' spirit. The decline of rituals has negatively affected some of the Gedeo's cultural values. For instance, traditionally rituals were conducted with the leadership of elders. Today, youths who can read the Bible become religious teachers and leaders. In this way formal education and knowledge have become substitutes for seniority, experience and cultural knowledge. This change has negative implications for the leadership role of elders and the transfer of indigenous knowledge to the next generation.

***Baalle* System**

In the social life section of his manuscript, Jensen discusses three interrelated issues: clans and moieties, the *baalle* system, and grading in the *baalle* system. Like most researchers in Gedeo, he identified seven clans and two moieties.²⁵ This classification system is

20 EH-70-001: 50.

21 EH-70-001: 55–56.

22 EH-70-001: 58–59.

23 EH-70-001:59–60.

24 Maybe because of his absence during the harvest season.

25 The two moieties in Gedeo are referred to as *baxxe*, which literally means 'house'.

still used by the Gedeo, who explain that they have two *baxxe* (houses) of exogamous moieties and seven clans. However, the importance of the two houses when making marriage arrangements had already started to decline in Jensen's day and, nowadays, it is very common for marriages to be arranged between two people from the same *baxxe*, but from different clans.

Jensen argued that the Gedeo adopted the *baalle* system from the neighbouring Guji Oromo. There is an ongoing debate about how the Gedeo adopted the *baalle* system. Solomon (2009) and Tadesse et al. (2008) argue that the Gedeo *baalle* system is indigenous to the Gedeo. According to them, the Gedeo people developed it after the *gossalo*²⁶ clan-based rule. On the other hand, Asebe (2007) and McClellan (1988) argue, like Jensen, that the Gedeo adopted the *baalle* system from the neighbouring Guji Oromo, though they present different stories on the process of adoption.

Both sides in the debate over whether the *baalle* system is indigenous or adopted cite evidence that supports their point of view and devalue facts that are against it. It seems possible, and indeed plausible, that the Gedeo adopted the *baalle* system from the neighbouring Guji Oromo since the fact that the Guji have a higher number of former *abba gadas* (leader of the *gada* age grade system) than the Gedeo suggests that the *gada* system of the Oromo was in place for longer than the Gedeo *baalle* system. However, the Gedeo might have adopted the system based on their situational needs and modified it for centuries. As a result, they indigenized the *baalle* system and it became a marker of their identity.

Jensen's explanation of the *baalle* grading system, especially the transfer process and generation succession, was clearer than that offered by any other researcher who has since worked on it.²⁷ In addition, he was the only researcher to observe and document the last *baalle* grade transfer ceremony, performed in 1955. He also observed a special *baalle* grade transition hunting expedition undertaken by the *rabas* (members of the *raba* age grade) of Belibeba *baalle* and led by those from each district who held the positions of *murite* and *bobbassa*.²⁸ The hunters sang and chanted about their heroic deeds, they established a camp and unmarried girls were responsible for supplying them with food; any *rabas* who stayed at home were considered women.²⁹

Jensen identified only seven grades in the Gedeo *baalle* system: *lumassa*, *raba*, *luba*, *yuba*, *guduro*, *qulullo*, and *chewajja*.³⁰ However, nine *baalle* grades have been identified by Getachew (2014) and Tadesse et al. (2008). These are, from the lowest to the highest: *qedado*, *seda*, *lumassa*, *raba*, *luba*, *yuba*, *guduro*, *qulullo* and *chewajja*. In the Gedeo *baalle* system, a son is always two grades behind his father, meaning that they are in the same class. All sons of a single father are in the same grade; hence the grading system is not purely an age-grade system. That is why Jensen commented that it was strange to

26 According to oral tradition, the *gossalo* rule, which succeeded the *akkomalo* matriarchal administration, was the clan-based administration before the introduction of the *baalle* system in Gedeo (Getachew 2014: 74).

27 EH-70-001:24.

28 A *baalle* that came to power in the 1955 transition.

29 EH-70-001:28–29.

30 EH-70-001:24.

see a younger person at the *luba* stage and an older person in the *raba* (junior) stage.³¹ A younger man in the *luba* stage takes priority over an older man in the *raba* stage when crossing a river or taking food and drink in any ceremony.

The above-mentioned grading system was weakened during the imperial period, and most of my elderly informants argued that the campaign Jensen described and photographed was the last real *baalle* grade transition. It has not been practised since then due to political pressure from the central government, which considers the *baalle* system as a competitor to governmental power, and the expansion of Protestant Christianity, which rejects any rituals and sacrifices related to the traditional belief system.

During the *Derg* period (1975–1991) the government discouraged the practise of any religious rituals or traditional administration system that contradicted socialist ideology and administration. After the downfall of the *Derg* and the coming to power of the EPRDF government, the freedom to partake in cultural ceremonies became a constitutional right, and a considerable number of ethnic groups tried to revive some of their traditional practices in a modified way that harmonized with the current situation and government development policy in the area. The Gedeo tried to revive some of their traditional practices, but not the grading system, and most Gedeo do not like to participate in the rituals and sacrifices that relate to grade transfer.

Jensen reported that the Gedeo political organization also emanated from the *gadal/baalle* system. He mentioned that the *abba gada*, *ja'laba* (deputy for the *abba gada*), *murite* (justice), *fetich* (administrator), *bobbassa* (speaker) and *hayichas* (elders) took office when they reached the *raba* stage and that the land of Gedeo was divided into three *roga* (zones): Suuboo *roga* (highland located in the east), Dhibata *roga* (west-midland), and Riiqata *roga* (lowland in the south). Each *roga* was ruled by a leader, also called a *roga* (leader), and his deputy, the *jalqaba*. The lowest local administrative unit under the *roga* was the *songo* – a ritual and public place at the village level, where court cases were decided and other decisions made. Jensen explained that in twenty minutes walking he came across three *songos*, and that each was served by three *hayichas* and between one and three *muras*, who acted as messengers for the *hayicha* and transmit information between the people and the *hayicha*.³²

Jensen argued that this political organization was intact up to the coming of the Amhara in the late nineteenth century.³³ When the central Christian government took control of the Gedeo area, they established their own administration system and it was gradually strengthened over the next years. During the imperial period the administration system had not yet reached the grassroots level, unlike the *baalle* system in which *songos* are found at the village level. For instance, one *balabat* (governor) might have controlled three or four *kebeles* in the imperial period, whereas between four and six *songos* might be found in a *kebele*. Therefore, the *songos* were more accessible to the local community, and most minor cases were resolved through the *baalle* system.

According to informants, a real change came during the *Derg* period, when the current *kebeles*, which have an administrative role, were established under the name of Peasant Associations. In addition, there were elected judges (*fird shengo*) to resolve minor

31 EH-70-001:27.

32 EH-70-001:43–46.

33 EH-70-001:46.

cases. Still, the *songos* remained more accessible and less formal. However, the *Derg* government obliged local people to resolve their cases through the formal Peasant Association's *fird shengo*. Moreover, the successions of the *abba gada* and other positions in the *baalle* system were interrupted during the *Derg* period.

After the collapse of the *Derg* government in 1991 and the establishment of Gedeo as an administrative unit in the area, the Gedeo tried to revitalize succession. The *abba gada* election was reinstated during the EPRDF period in 1993 and *abba gada* Qnaqe, *abba gada* Gelibo, *abba gada* Shiferaw Miidhe and *abba gada* Shallo Bosha have since been elected consecutively from specific clans, according to the traditional succession rules. Similarly, *roga* successions have been established again. In addition, 525 *songos* have been reinstated and the use of the *songos* in resolving minor disputes is acknowledged. However, the real power of the *baalle* has not yet been reinstated. Despite these efforts the former Peasant Associations become *kebeles* and the *fird shengo* become *mahiberaw fird bet* (social court), tasked with resolving minor cases in a more formal ways. Furthermore, under the *kebele* there are sub-*kebeles*, which suggest that the governmental administrative structure has reached the grassroots or family level in Gedeo more than ever before. This has negative implications for the role of traditional administration in the day-to-day lives of the Gedeo. The Gedeo *baalle* system has become more of a symbol. Today, the *baalle* administration and political system has weakened to such an extent that it does not play a significant role in the lives of the Gedeo in spite of the efforts made by the Gedeo Zone Culture Office to revitalize some of its elements.³⁴

Conclusion

Jensen gave us the earliest comparative ethnographic account of the Gedeo people. Overall, the valuable material in Jensen's ethnographic work provides a useful basis for further insights and understanding of the dynamics of the two important and interrelated institutions, religion and the *baalle* system, in the life of the Gedeo. His documentation – in written, pictorial, and audio-visual form – provides important data for the attempt to understand changes and continuities among the Gedeo. We have seen that the Gedeo lands have gained new internal dynamics with the cultivation of coffee, but the tradition of maintaining agroforestry has been continued. Most of the people's religious practices have changed over the last six decades due to the introduction and expansion of Protestant Christianity and the interruptions by the imperial and socialist regimes. Although some traditional practices have continued, albeit on a lower scale and with some modification, the decline of traditional rituals has considerably weakened the Gedeo *baalle* system, since grade transfer is based on rituals and traditional religion was used as a reinforcement mechanism for the *baalle* system. Moreover, the establishment of the central government administration system in the area devalued the administrative roles of the *baalle* system. Thus, the Gedeo *baalle* system functions today largely only as a symbol of Gedeo identity.

³⁴ The EPRDF government policy selectively promotes cultural expressions that do not contradict with the government development policy. Epple and Thubauville (2012) highlight the contradiction between the promotion of cultural diversity and national development, or tradition and modernity, since the coming to power of the EPRDF government in 1991 in which pressure and induced cultural changes observed in Southern Nations, Nationalities and People Region.

References

ASEBE Regasa

- 2007 *Ethnicity and inter-ethnic relations: The 'Ethiopian experiment' and the case of the Guji and Gedeo*. MPhil Thesis, University of Tromsø, Norway.

CENTRAL STATISTICS AGENCY (CSA)

- 1996 *The 1994 population and housing census of Ethiopia results from Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region*. Vol. I, Part I. Addis Ababa: Central Statistics Agency.
- 2010 *The 2007 population and housing census of Ethiopia result for Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region*. Addis Ababa: Central Statistics Agency.
- 2014 *Population statistical abstract*. Addis Ababa: Central Statistics Agency.

EPPLE, Susanne and Sophia THUBAUVILLE

- 2012 'Cultural diversity in Ethiopia between appreciation and suppression', *Paideuma* 58: 153–166.

FLEMING, Harold C. and Marvin L. BENDER

- 1976 'Cushitic and Omotic', in: M.L. BENDER, J.D. BOWEN, R.L. COOPER, and C.A. FERGUSON (eds.): *Language in Ethiopia*, 34–53. London: Oxford University Press.

GETACHEW Senishaw

- 2014 *The nexus of indigenous ecological knowledge, livelihood strategies and social institutions in Midland Gedeo human-environment relations*. PhD Dissertation, Addis Ababa University.
- 2017 'The Gedeo, Adolf Ellegard Jensen's ethnographic perspective', in: Sabine Dinslage and Sophia Thubauville (eds.): *Seeking out wise old men. Six decades of Ethiopian Studies at the Frobenius Institute revisited*, 265–282. Berlin: Reimer.

JENSEN, Adolf Ellegard

- 1936 *Im Lande des Gada. Wanderungen zwischen Volkstrümmern Südabessiniens*. Stuttgart: Strecker & Schröder.

MCCLELLAN, Charles

- 1988 *State transformation and national integration; Gedeo and the Ethiopian Empire, 1895–1935*. East Lansing: Michigan State University.

SOLOMON Hailu

- 2009 *History of the Gedeo, 1941–2000*. MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University.

TADESSE Kippie, Tilahun EBIDO, Tsegay TADESSE, Hayilu BEYENE and Shinitu LLOE

- 2008 *Ye GedeoBiber Tarek*. Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing Press.

WOHLENBERG, Hellmut

- 1988 *Im südlichen Abessinien. Reiseberichte von Oktober 1934 bis Mai 1935*. Hildesheim: Olms.