

# 7 Particulars on Peasants, Food Security, Gender Relations and Labour Migration: Pillars of the Livelihood Approach

This chapter works out the interconnections between the pillars of livelihood: the determinants of peasant actions, coping with food insecurity, the repercussions of the gender relations and labour migration. Peasants' needs and interests are deduced from the livelihood analysis and policies to improve peasant livelihood security are proposed.

## CONNECTING KEY DETERMINANTS OF PEASANT LIVELIHOOD

The case study has shown that the interest of the peasant community as a whole mitigates the individual interests of the community members. Hence both the economic category of maximizing personal utility and the sociological category of altruism determine peasant actions. The cultural values associated with the social roles of each person prescribe which behaviour prevails in a specific situation. Redistribution within the community is a matter of bargaining or 'negotiating' (Berry, 1993) along these lines. Peasant economic decisions aim at long-term livelihood security for the members of their networks, which in turn facilitate access to resources. Economic decision-making is thus highly intertwined with social deliberations and cannot be examined separately.

External powers, such as the government, foreign investors or the structure of the world market, extend or diminish the availability of resources, either by political decisions or by force or by launching economic processes according to external interests. Peasant market relations are an example of how economic decision-making depends

on internal and external factors, at the same time. On the one hand, the extent of peasant commercial production depends on access to land, inputs, labour, on the climatic conditions and on the yield and prices of the staple food crops. The extent and yield of subsistence production, the availability of other sources of income and the contributions of the participants in the respective livelihood networks and their redistribution also have an impact on the decision of producing for the market. Local markets are therefore highly dynamic and, because of the uncertainty of other livelihood options, they provide very important opportunities for making a living in rural Sudan. However, the supply is quite homogenous and the demand is limited, due to the small degree of stratification in rural communities. This is devastating in times of crisis when cash as well as crop supply shrink just when food supply from the market at reasonable prices is badly wanted to secure peasant livelihood.

The bigger markets which peasants have access to both as producers and as consumers, are frequently characterized by oligopsonic and oligopolic trade structures. Hence the peasants are mostly excluded from access to markets which would provide more favourable prices. Because they are usually also barred from the formal credit market, they cannot invest in transport or other means to avoid the middlemen and sell their products directly at bigger markets. Moreover, frequently some of the peasants' products are subject to governmental price controls which usually disadvantage the producers and favour the consumers. As consumers of grain, peasants might benefit from fixed prices. However, as has been shown for the case of Kutum, access to subsidized grain is easy at times when the peasants are self-sufficient in grain anyway, but difficult when they are in need.

These structures reinforce the need of maintaining subsistence production and reciprocal exchange relations, even though these relations also imply subjecting peasants to informal structures of dependence, such as usury credits (*shayl*) and loans combined with acceptance of leadership and prescribed voting. Still, these relations guarantee peasants a certain degree of livelihood security and are therefore continued.

This multi-dimensional behaviour is extended to the utmost during crises. Extensive reliance on livelihood networks has proved to be a determining factor in overcoming the period of starvation in Darfur. The precondition for recovery after the famine was the maintenance of the agricultural resource base, which was pursued as the primary

option of livelihood security, temporarily even at the expense of food security. The assumption that food security is always the basis of peasant livelihood therefore cannot be verified. However, peasants also face constraints. As the case study of Sheikan district showed, lack of facilities to shift to new livelihood options can force peasants to undermine their primary resource base in order to survive in the short term. They thus lose long-term livelihood security. In Darfur after the famine, longer-term disruptions, caused by unsettled economic key problems and concomitant political power struggles, were fuelled by the famine. Livelihood networks broke down, because livelihood options were diminished to an extent which no longer guaranteed reciprocal relations. A number of people dropped out of the networks. They either were forced to subsist as individuals, which mostly means becoming outcasts or they created new livelihood networks outside the peasant social framework. These kept themselves going in a criminal way and thus tended to be a further threat to the already destabilized livelihood networks in the area.

These examples make clear that food security has a high-ranking position within livelihood systems. The argument suggests that other case studies on peasant livelihood should also focus on food security.

Food security is, on the other hand, closely connected with gender relations. Being a basic task of women within peasant livelihood networks, providing food is threatened because women's entitlements to resources differ from men's in a way which tends to undermine their part in securing livelihood. Limited access to education leaves women with low income opportunities. The market relations tend to push women into the segments which are utilized most by middlemen and merchants. The use of women's unpaid labour in peasant societies has a considerable structural impact on local as well as national labour markets. Whereas the predominance of family labour does not rule out the employment or sale of hired labour on an ad hoc basis, it keeps the demand for wage labour in rural areas down. Hence peasants' economic performance is subject to constraints set by gender relations. A separate gender analysis is thus indispensable for any study of peasant livelihood.

Gender relations and labour migration are closely intertwined. Unpaid family labour, which secures part of the requirements for the subsistence of peasant families, subsidizes the wages of migrants at national labour markets. Whereas initially migration is a common decision of a peasant group in order to extend the livelihood network to the wage-creating sector, the women who remain in the rural home

area tend to be burdened with the risks of male labour migration. The impact of external conditions, especially falling wages, rising unemployment and inflation, are transmitted to the migrants' families who accordingly have to adapt to unreliable or dwindling remittances or even to their cessation. This situation forces the rural women to increase their share in providing the livelihood for their family to an extent which threatens their health and, because they lack the labour force to manage their resource base well, also threatens the environment.

In the rural areas, the labour market is characterized by extreme fluctuations in demand according to season, climate, ecological and economic crises and according to destabilizing social and political factors. Therefore, peasants are not free to decide on taking up wage work. Peasants' actions might rather vary between the two poles set up by Chayanov and Low: under pressure, such as in case of food shortage, both self-exploitation as well as labour migration might occur. Peasants rarely have information on wage rates in other regions. But because training and job opportunities are concentrated in urban areas, they expect a broader variety of income-providing options to be available for them there. Moreover, wage labour has a low social status and is thus preferably done in distant areas. Except for the oil-exporting countries, no clearcut reaction of peasants to higher wage rates can be confirmed.

Differences have to be made between migrant heads of household and migrant household members and, among the latter, between better-educated and unskilled people. The migrant heads of household mostly provide semi-skilled or skilled labour. They largely contribute to the livelihood security of their families at home. Whereas the livelihood network at home is used to secure the existence of the migrants' wives and children in the first months of absence, the assistance tends to fade out after some time. In cases where the migrants are successful, a considerable share of the families' livelihood is secured by the remittances. In the poorer classes, migrants' wives have to invest much effort in maintaining their own and their children's living under conditions of unreliability or lack of remittances. Although they have access to communal redistribution, they have to cope with dwindling reciprocal relations and decreasing social respect. Frequently this ends up in a partial retreat from the community and a huge effort to eke out an existence outside of any livelihood network.

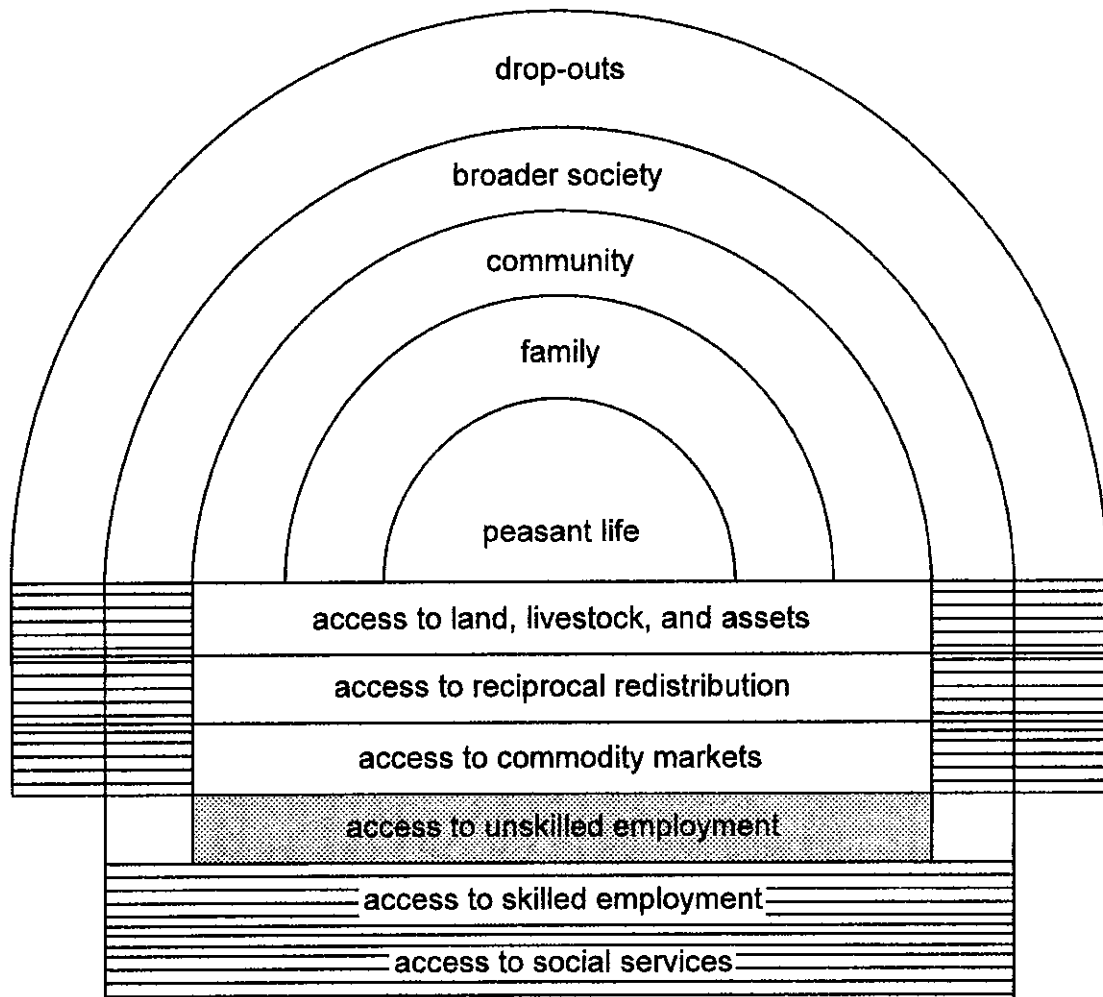
Young migrant household members who have received some training or education are generally able to found an existence later on. This might become a relevant source of livelihood for the peasant

groups they belong to. The families of unskilled migrants, however, frequently cannot count on the remittances of their sons. In sum, male labour migration secures the livelihood of those peasant families that can afford to invest in education and are able to advance the cash needed for the migrants' transport to areas where well-paid employment opportunities exist.

**MODELLING PEASANT LIVELIHOOD CONDITIONS**

The research has revealed that the availability of as many options as possible is most decisive for peasant livelihood security, regardless of how frequently an option is used at one specific moment. Figure 7.1 shows the livelihood options prevailing in Kutum in 1988.

The core of the model shown in Figure 7.1 is the peasant, who is not presented as an individual but as an integral part of social



*Figure 7.1* Main livelihood options of peasants in Kutum

networks. The closest connection exists with the family. Further social connections comprise the community, which includes the kin group, the village, the tribal sub-group, the common camp of a nomadic group or other units. Less close are the connections with the 'broader society'. Relatives and members of the community who have left the area and have become part of other communities, employers outside the home community, religious leaders, politicians and similarly distant relations are attached to this outer arch. A last arch has been added to mark the 'drop-outs'. These are those who are not regarded as belonging to the community due to their origin, caste, behaviour, certain compromising events and other reasons. The status of a 'drop-out' could be both temporary or permanent. It has been disclosed above that this group of people nevertheless has to be regarded as part of the peasant society and performs indispensable economic functions.

The arches in this graph generally denote social relations irrespective of the locations of individuals. Migrants who left for the Gulf for example might be part of the 'family' arch, if their social bonds with their relatives are still close. Migrants who loosened their social bonds with home might be assigned to the 'broader society'. 'Drop-outs' usually live in the peasants' neighbourhood but might be located at an even greater distance in social terms than members of the 'broader society'.

The segments in the lower part of the figure contain the economic options. The interrelations between peasant social life in peasants' close and broader social environments and the main economic options open to the various circles are shown schematically by the intersectional planes between the arches and the segments.

The white segments indicate that the respective options are used frequently and that they are socially accepted. They are 'common' and form a basic economic pattern. The shaded areas signify that the respective options are available in principle, but that they are either used to a limited extent or by few people or that their availability is limited. The lightly shaded areas refer to options of the 'drop-outs' and those areas which are heavily shaded indicate a limited access or availability of the respective option.

The figure represents access to land, livestock and assets as being the primary economic options of peasant families and communities. Assets might include a house, a farm, tools, equipment, a market stall or a shop, an enterprise, a workshop, a vehicle, jewelry or credit. The shaded area in the sectional plane between this segment and the 'broader society' arch points to the less frequent cases in which access

to land, livestock or assets is obtained in the frame of the 'broader society', for instance through marriage, migration or trade. The heavily shaded area in the sphere of the 'drop-outs' denotes that members of this group also, but rarely have access to land or livestock, either within the community or in the 'broader society', for instance if they temporarily have 'dropped out' as refugees or drought migrants.

The same pattern occurs for access to reciprocal redistribution and access to commodity markets. Both options are crucial for peasant livelihood. They mainly reach the community level, but might also transcend it. 'Drop-outs' have access to social redistribution either amongst each other or through alms and donations. They participate in commodity markets occupying low status niches and as customers.

Kutum peasants prefer to make use of the option of unskilled employment in the sphere of the 'broader society'. The sectional plane between the segment of 'access to unskilled employment' and the arch of the 'broader society' is white, indicating that peasant unskilled employment is socially accepted only in this area. 'Drop-outs', on the other hand, occupy most of the unskilled jobs within the community. This is represented by lightly shading the respective area.

Both access to skilled employment and to social services are shaded, because only a relatively wealthy minority can use them. As migrants, these persons fluctuate between all arches of the society. Poor peasants might occasionally make use of public social services, but mainly stick to services provided within their reciprocal relations or relations of dependence. 'Drop-outs' are largely excluded from both options.

Kutum women pursue gender-specific livelihood options and face constraints with regard to entitlements. Therefore a separate graph modelling women's livelihood conditions is set up.

Figure 7.2 at first sight shows fewer arches of social integration and a more limited access to economic options than Figure 7.1. The white arches of peasant life and the family indicate the strong integration of women on these two social levels. In contrast to men, at the community and 'broader society' levels Sudanese women hardly appear, due to the restrictions of moving independently in the public realm. Poor women who have been thrown into the spheres of the 'broader society' are mostly considered as 'drop-outs'. This is indicated by the lightly shaded area.

The only economic sphere where women are fully integrated is that of access to redistribution at the family level. This partly extends to the community level where women participate in some redistributive networks like work parties, joint saving or consumers' cooperatives.

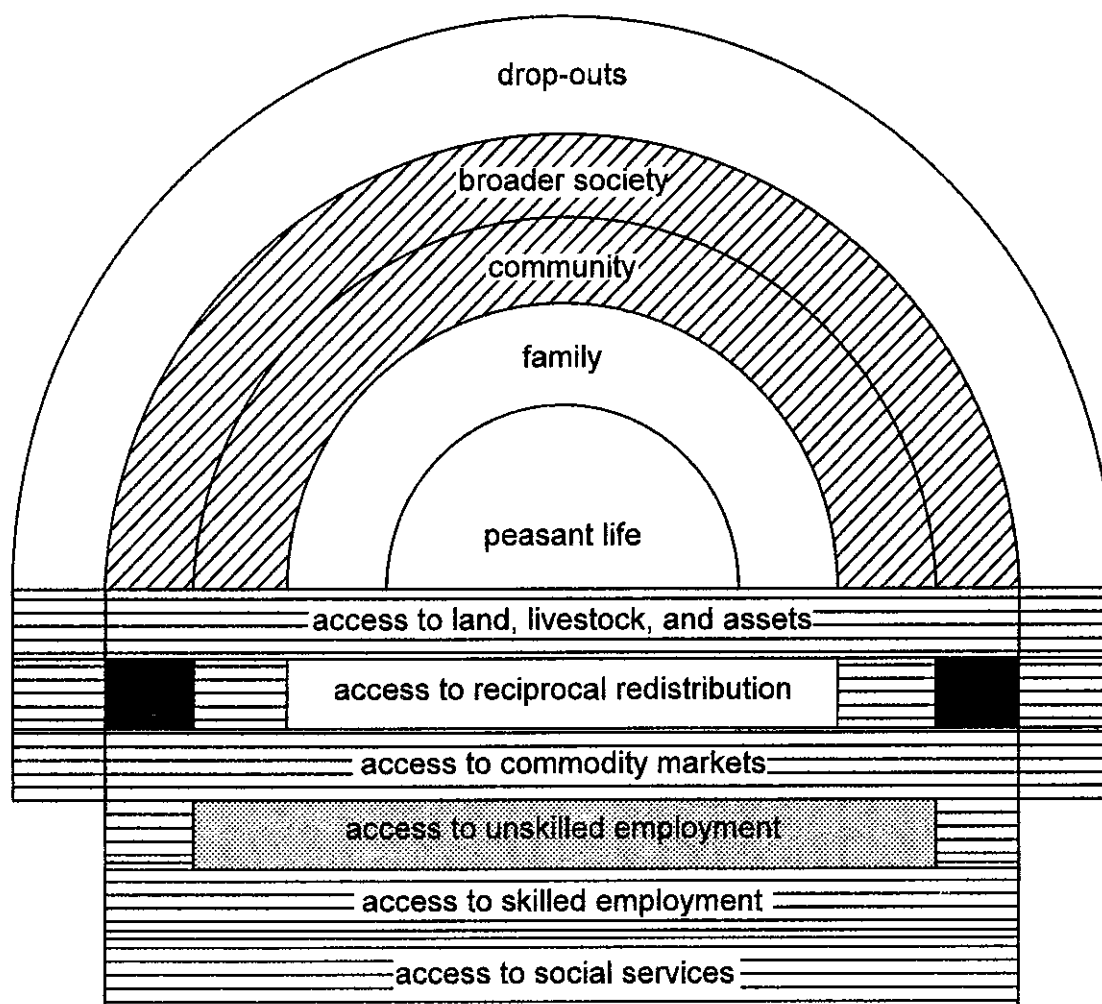


Figure 7.2 Women's options

This option has been sharply reduced recently, due to increased poverty and political coercion. Therefore the respective sectional plane is shaded. Women's integration in redistributive relations generally does not extend to the 'broader society'. The respective sectional plane is coloured black.

In Sudan, women have less access to land and livestock than men. Ownership of assets is regulated by the *shari'a* law aimed at guaranteeing women some security in case of widowhood or divorce. Because using this option is dependent on men's decisions or legally not secured or limited, the respective area is shaded.

Although women have access to commodity markets in Kutum, as vendors they are mostly confined to low-profit trade. Because women are thus prevented from freely pursuing this option, this area is shaded.

Access to employment is limited for women on both the unskilled and skilled levels due to social disreputability and lack of qualifica-



tion. In general for women 'drop-outs' who are active as unskilled workers, the same is true as for men, thus the respective area is lightly shaded. Women's access to social services is restricted due to rare availability, specific obligations which prevent girls more than boys from visiting schools and due to the costs involved. These spheres are thus presented as shaded areas.

Up to this stage, the model reflects a snapshot of Kutum society. It still lacks the dynamic component of the livelihood approach. In the course of time, priorities might shift to other options and, in terms of the model, areas which are shaded now, being only slightly relevant, might become more important. For example, if social services are extended and provided for a majority, this area should be drawn white in a future model.

If this model is applied to other peasant societies, there might be changes in the options available, the levels of social integration and the distribution of white and shaded areas. The model could also be used to surveying the livelihood of other social groups, if further options are added and others left aside. The white and shaded areas have to be changed accordingly. If the livelihood approach is used as a guide to development, the model can provide quick evidence on existing options. A comparison with models describing the livelihood situation of different social groups or areas might provide a survey on various possibilities of securing livelihood. Some of these could eventually be adopted elsewhere and improve the livelihood conditions there.

The livelihood conditions in Kutum are threatened by three main interrelated forces. These are the economic crisis, the ecological crisis and social or political disruptions. In Figures 7.3 to 7.5 the dynamics of livelihood are included in the model with the example of these crises. It has been attempted to represent the effects of each crisis separately.

Crises tend to reduce existing livelihood options and force people to seek new opportunities. The droughts in west Sudan primarily affected peasants' basis of production, the fertility of the land. 'Access to land' in the model becomes shaded or even black. The drought also limited access to markets for peasants as crop producers. Peasants tried to open up short-term alternatives by selling livestock and assets, by collecting famine foods for subsistence and even for sale. They thus continued to pursue the market option, but they gained less livelihood security from it than before. The market segment is therefore represented as a shaded area, gathering famine food is added as a new segment.

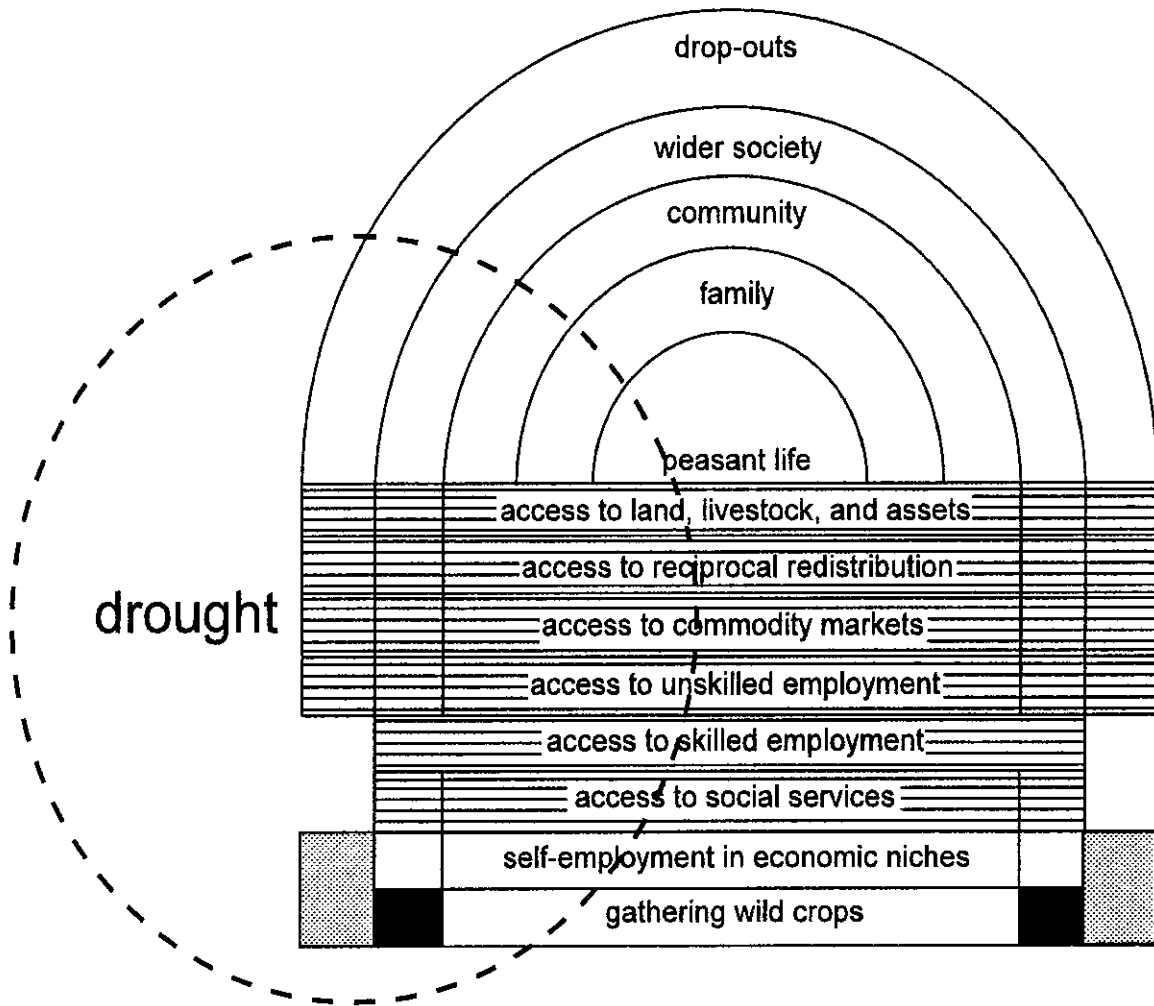


Figure 7.3 Drought

A persistent ecological crisis might have an adverse impact on peasant social integration by scattering them into the 'broader society' and uprooting social redistribution. The segment of 'access to reciprocal distribution' is therefore shaded. The crisis forced more peasants into unskilled wage labour and self-employment in economic niches. The latter has been added as a new area. However, less employment and less wages were available than before. The segment of 'access to unskilled employment' is therefore shaded. Lower producer prices and fewer social services were additional problems for the peasants. The segments of 'access to commodity markets' and of 'access to social services' could be drawn black or at least shaded, indicating that due to reasons rooted in the national economy these livelihood options have been greatly reduced.

Figure 7.4 shows the impact of the economic crisis on Kutum peasants.

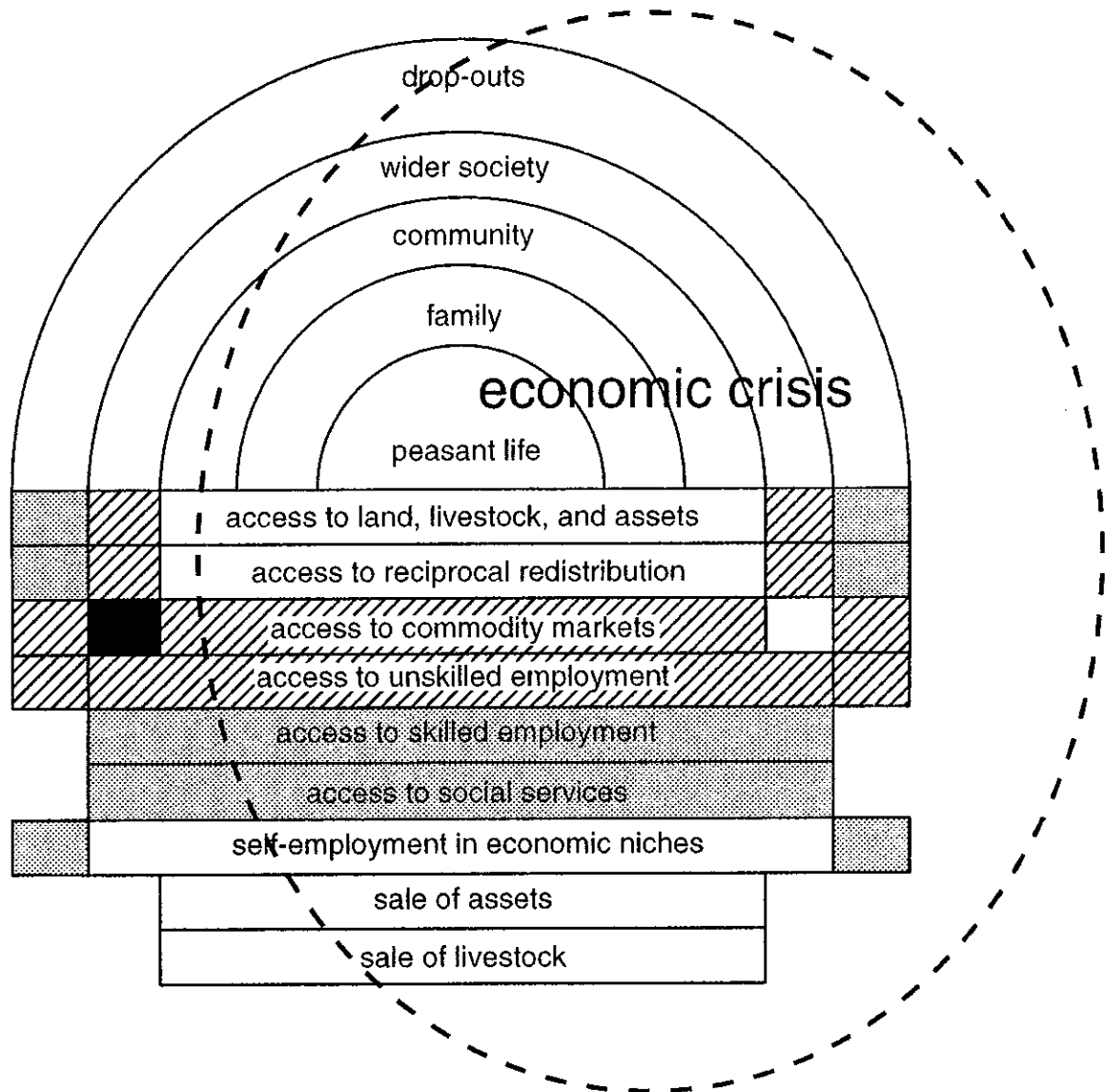


Figure 7.4 Economic crisis

The white segments comprise access to land, access to reciprocal redistribution, self-employment in economic niches and sale of assets and livestock. These segments indicate the main options used in coping with the economic crisis, mostly at the community level. Only self-employment in economic niches is extended to the 'broader society'.

Access to commodity markets has been reduced on the demand side due to decreased purchasing power. The respective segment is therefore shaded. Unskilled employment is more frequently taken up in the home area despite its bad reputation. It continues in the 'broader society'. However, because many job-seekers do not find employment, this segment is shaded.

Even demand for skilled employment has been reduced. Social services have been curtailed and the quality has deteriorated. These segments are heavily shaded accordingly.

'Drop-outs' depend on land if they have some, and reciprocal redistribution and self-employment in economic niches. Access to commodity markets has been reduced due to high prices. Access to unskilled employment has become difficult due to lack of demand and increased competition. These conditions are indicated by lightly shading the sectional planes, if options are available and shading them, if they are available to a limited extent.

Finally, the effects of political disruptions on Kutum peasants are represented in Figure 7.5.

As a reaction to the increase in camel robberies as a consequence of the social and political disruptions, Kutum peasants sold their camels and shifted to donkeys for transport. Trade as well as consignments of

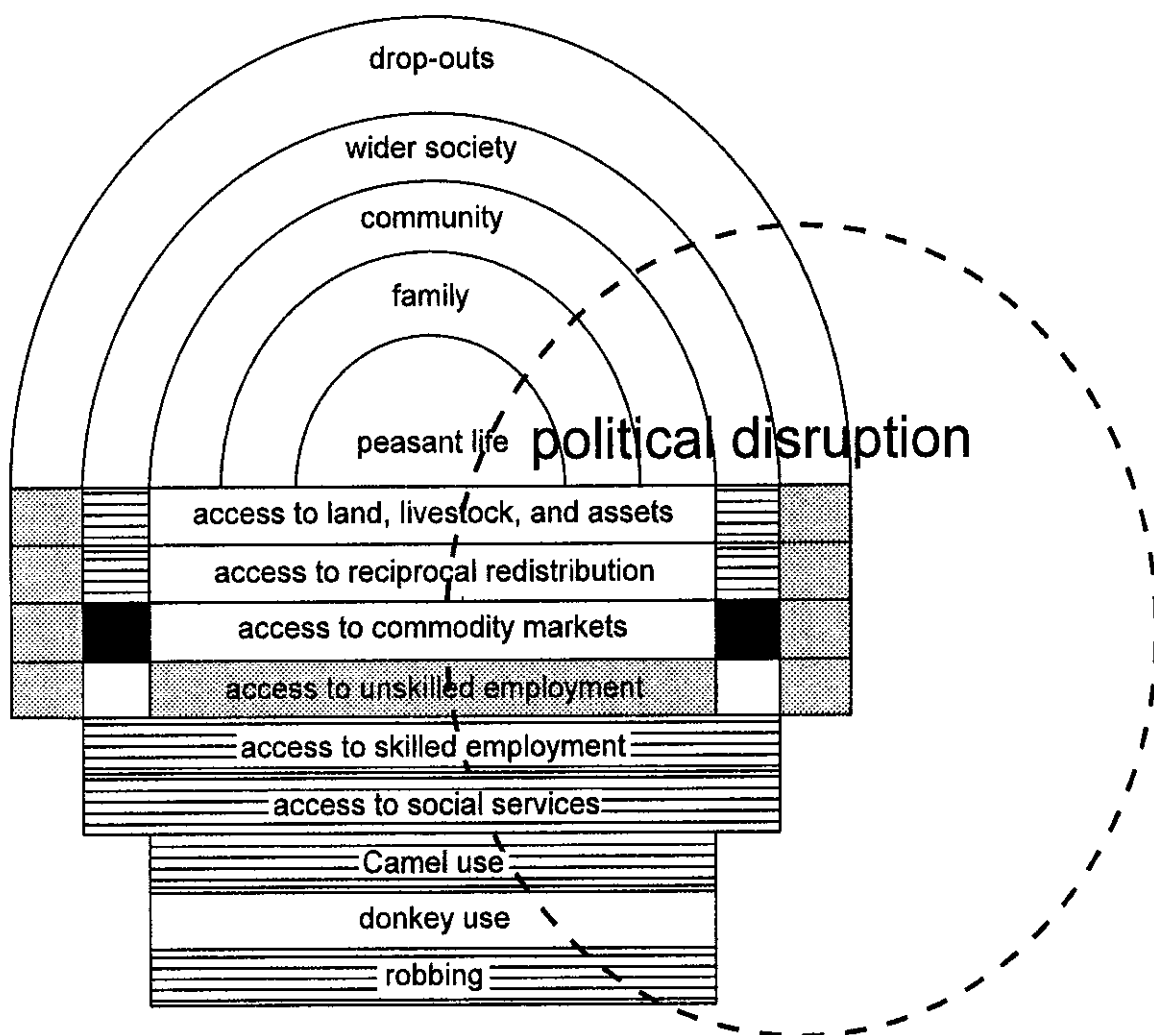


Figure 7.5 Political disruption

migrants were disturbed. This is indicated by shading the segment of 'access to livestock' and painting black the area of 'access to commodity markets' in the 'broader society'. The segments of 'donkey use' and 'robbing' are added.

Crises are extreme forms of social, economic, ecological and political change. Their impact, directions and side-effects are easier to be represented in the model than those produced by gradual change. Nevertheless, slow transformation of livelihood conditions is the rule. The respective change-inducing forces could be added to the model in a similar way.

Securing peasant livelihood is a matter of combining and balancing a multitude of options which comprise the social and the economic sphere. Policy-making for peasants' needs thus requires thinking in combinations and supporting a diversification of livelihood options. The livelihood model of Kutum society signifies the direction which appropriate policy-making should take for this particular case. In terms of the model, policies should extend the white segments and avoid generating conditions which would be represented by shaded or black areas. Policies set up to correspond to the complex livelihood systems peasants are involved in, need to be equally complex.

## POLICIES FOR PEASANTS' NEEDS

The policies proposed here directly correspond to peasants' needs as they have been identified in the course of the analysis. At this stage they are neither related to the present political and economic situation in Sudan nor to the interests of the policy-makers or other classes. The confrontation with political reality will be saved for Chapter 8.

As has been shown especially with the example of labour migration, the analysis of peasant livelihood cannot be limited to Kutum. Livelihood networks connect Kutum inhabitants and the 'broader society'. Therefore, some policies proposed in the following paragraphs are far-reaching while others are limited to the local situation. The proposed policies need affirmation by local discussions before any of them can be implemented.

## **Securing Basic Conditions**

### *Ownership of a House*

In the rural areas of Sudan settlements emerge, grow and shrink according to the livelihood opportunities in the area. Building materials are light and cheap and accessible even to poor people. Middle-class families are able to pay for locally-made bricks and wooden or metal doors and windows. In contrast to Sudanese towns, housing has not become a problem in rural areas up to now.

Peasants need houses and generally the skills and materials required are available in rural areas. If policy-makers leave the situation as it is, this basic livelihood condition might be guaranteed. One consideration could be to raise a due on houses made of bricks or concrete and use it for the construction of school and clinic buildings.

### *Agricultural Production*

Kutum peasants produce crops for family consumption and seed generation. They sell certain rainfed crops and grain surpluses. Fields near the home have become rare, and around towns they have become private possessions. However, due to the local custom, there is a sharp public control of land utilization. A field left fallow for more than three years is claimed by new applicants.

Peasants need access to fields, equipment and input for agricultural production. This is not guaranteed to them nowadays. Environmental degradation and droughts cause crop failures. Poverty renders access to input and equipment difficult. Peasants are forced to crowd in more fertile areas and around urban centres. Conflicts about land tenure rights are frequent and worsen the peasants' plight.

Policy-making should be guided by the aim of conserving the soil and protecting natural vegetation in order to provide long-term livelihood security. Wild crops are important for medical and complementary nutritional purposes and as famine foods. It is in the national interest not to lose fertile soils. Therefore, peasants who apply protective measures should be given advice and incentives like free tree seedlings, relief from tree taxes, free seeds for green fallowing, a load of stones for dam construction, a free donkey for transport of mulching materials or other things necessary to realize protective agriculture, according to the demands of the innovative peasants. Advice should be provided by trained government employees, preferably originating in the area where they are working, in cooperation

with experienced local peasants or farmers (women included). The cost of incentives might be carried by communal funds. It must be discussed locally how the funds could be raised. In general, subsistence production and private measures to improve the conditions of the environment should not be taxed.

These measures would intensify the relationship between the peasant and the land. Thus the present practices of land tenure should not be disturbed by new measures, except where a movement of the peasants or nomads concerned demands a change. The increased population density forces people to seek land farther away and field work requires temporary settlement near the field. The peasants crowded out this way will either found new villages or move away and seek other livelihood opportunities without official intervention. In remote rural areas the *sheikhs* should remain responsible for land allocation in order to keep some order and control on land use. The passages for livestock, the areas used for pastures and the water places for herds should be left to annual negotiations between the respective *sheikhs*. As soon as this established structure changes, policy-makers have to react and integrate new counterparts in their planning process.

Consequently, the government should fulfil certain conditions, if it intends to start new agricultural schemes. The primary condition should be that those who customarily use the respective land have to be involved as partners in the establishment of the scheme. If they do not agree with the new type of production, either a compromise has to be found or the government has to look for another place. In short, all partners concerned should participate in negotiations on an equal basis, regardless of wealth or ownership or gender. The same rules should be applied to merchants or other investors.

### *Animal Husbandry*

Livestock is a means of subsistence, a means to ease labour and a quasi-capital-saving means for peasants and nomads. Animal products are consumed and sold and animals are exchanged for food and basic commodities. They are slaughtered during festivities and exchanged at social events like birth or marriage. They thus also have functions in maintaining social relations. Livestock husbandry requires access to water and fodder, veterinary services, labour for herding, milking and caring and perhaps stables.

Peasants need certain amounts of livestock for these various purposes. The numbers and types of animals required vary according to

the other livelihood-securing options pursued in a family and between nomads, pastoralists and peasants. Livestock-raising is threatened by drought and environmental degradation and by scarcity of water, fodder and pastures.

From a national perspective, livestock production has to be supported, because it provides meat for those mainly urban inhabitants who have a higher purchasing power and animals as well as hides and skins are an important export product. By establishing ranches, the multiple functions of animals are reduced to the commercial one to the benefit of merchants and wealthy townspeople, but not of peasants. Policy-makers therefore should encourage locally appropriate ways of animal husbandry. Soils which are too sensitive for cultivation might be sufficient for camel and goat pastures, whereas cattle- and sheep-keeping pastoralists need clear agreements on land use with cultivating peasants and farmers. These might be reached between the respective *sheikhs* or *omdas* during regular annual or seasonal meetings. Domestic animals should not be allowed to graze around settlements in order to save the environment. Instead, storing crop residues and planting fodder for animals kept in sheds or fodder for sale might be required on a larger scale. Such a new practice needs thorough preparation and local discussion in order to avoid adverse consequences.

Clearcut rules of access, times of use and amounts of water to be taken should be agreed upon between the users of each water source. This could be controlled by the respective *sheikhs*. In times of water scarcity, these rules have to be adapted to the situation and the users have to decide together who should shift to alternative sources or reduce water consumption. The role of the government should be to guarantee a just and peaceful procedure, if this is not provided among the users themselves. Levying a due on water use, directed at improving wells and water quality for human use, might be discussed with all parties using the respective water source.

With regard to livestock marketing, merchants' oligopsonies and oligopolies should be disbanded by improving access for livestock raisers to more competitive traders. Livestock should only be taxed if used for commercial purposes.

### *Access to Markets*

Peasants need access to markets as consumers and as producers and they need fair prices for their products, which cover the costs of input,



time and labour and guarantee a profit high enough for reinvestment and for meeting basic daily consumption needs throughout a year. Presently, prices are far below this level.

Policy-makers should aim at raising peasant purchasing power by guaranteeing fair producer prices. Measures directed towards this aim could be improved infrastructure, access to transport by providing access to credits for petty traders, targeted taxation of intermediaries and wholesalers and control of merchants' oligopolies and oligopsonies in order to increase competition among merchants. Imported products should not be subsidized in order to stimulate the development of a market for locally produced commodities. Basic food should be subsidized only during emergencies and the subsidies should be limited to locally consumed staple food. In northern Darfur this would be millet, sorghum and sesame or groundnut oil, but not wheat and sugar. This should be thoroughly discussed with male and female petty traders.

### *Social Relations and Gender Relations*

Power relations within peasant society are not rigid but sensitive to change. This can be seen in the spreading disobedience towards traditional leaders and the emergence of passive and active resistance against inappropriate governmental policies (like taxing livestock without providing public services in return, playing off certain tribes against each other, officially denying the existence of famine). What looks like chaos from outside, in reality reflects the social process of securing livelihood under highly insecure conditions. Peasants create, extend, leave or change networks according to their capacity to improve livelihood security in the long run and in a broad sense.

Gender relations, although part of social relations, are apparently more rigid in this particular rural part of the country. There is a wide gap between women's increasing ability to subsist economically independently of men and their continuous social dependence on fixed relations with men. Cultural values are eagerly maintained and have a highly integrative function in this society. A fear of disintegration and subsequent reduced livelihood security might explain to some extent why neither men nor women are as flexible with regard to renegotiating gender relations as they are in other social affairs.

Peasants need extensive social networks and scope for negotiating relations and entitlements. Economic recession and unsettled conflicts threaten the stabilizing and integrative role of these networks. In

order to preserve the livelihood securing functions of peasant social relations, policy-makers should cooperate with peasant networks in development planning. Within their networks peasants formulate and pursue their aims and interests. They of course differ, because the members might be connected by reciprocal as well as dependent relations. By means of careful and targeted policies, networks could be stabilized by improving the conditions of the weaker members. Appropriate measures to reach this aim can be identified by repeated discussions, not only with leaders and influential members of peasant networks, but mainly with male and female peasants in different localities.

A further policy issue is appropriate education, which should be directed to encouraging abilities which are useful for securing livelihood in rural areas. This could be appropriate agricultural and horticultural techniques, methods of saving ecological cycles, of protecting and improving the environment, ecologically sound animal husbandry, resource-saving energy use, improving the quality of local handicraft and arts, upgrading building and irrigation techniques, knowledge of types and nutritional and medical utilization of wild plants and basic knowledge of medical treatment. The teachers need not necessarily be college graduates, but for most of these fields, elder people with special knowledge could be employed, either on the basis of salaries or of locally agreed reciprocal arrangements. Literacy, arithmetics, Sudanese and local history, biology, physics, economics and geography should be taught with a clear practical relation to rural life.

The integrative factor of culture could be emphasized by providing space and facilities for concerts, theatre and other artistic presentations as well as for cultural or religious assemblies. As long as such events are allowed to be initiated by local people according to the local demand and are not imposed by powerful central institutions, they are likely to enhance social bonds, to raise awareness of peasants' common interests and to increase motivation for common action.<sup>1</sup>

On the background of the livelihood-securing function of peasant social relations, patronage (which is frequently equated with corruption and in the Sudan of today could even be rightly equated with warlordism) cannot be eliminated by force. Policies which are liberal towards peasant networks on all levels implicitly contribute to the formation of interest groups at the basis of society. These groups have their own means of exerting control on members who tend to abuse power. They are likely to limit patronage to a degree which is consistent with the interest of many. Propagation of national redemption

launched by central institutions or military leaders or conditionalities against corruption set by foreign agencies are only able to tackle the problem on the surface, if at all.

The same type of liberal policies is largely required with regard to gender relations. Targeted cooperation of policy-makers with women's networks and selective measures to improve livelihood conditions for weaker members of these networks according to the results of discussions with women and men of all strata of the peasant society are required for planning policies for women peasant needs. This task could be eased if the policy-makers were women and even more, if they were educated women of rural origin. Appropriate education of rural women and men could very much improve the chances especially of women's networks asserting themselves within society. Promoting appropriate education of girls and women and keeping women's options open should thus be the main policies with regard to gender relations.

### **Securing a Range of Extended Options**

#### *Horticultural Production*

Although women do most of the horticultural work, gardens are registered as private land mostly in the name of men. Due to the Islamic rules of inheritance, they tend to be split up into ever smaller plots, those inherited by women being half the size of men's. Diesel-pump irrigation limits access to gardens for leaseholders.

Peasants, among them particularly women, need access to garden land. Horticultural production requires equipment, inputs and skills.

Again, the primary aim of policy-makers should be conservation of alluvial soils and water. In Kutum an assessment of the existing volume of groundwater and the rate at which it is replenished annually is necessary in order to fix the annual amount of water which can be used for irrigation. According to the result, diesel-pump irrigation can be permitted, encouraged or has to be forbidden in order to guarantee long-term water supply for all. Levying dues on water could be discussed with the users. This might be an incentive for introducing water-saving irrigation techniques, rain water harvesting and the construction of reservoirs. The dues should be invested in improving water quality for human use. Special attention should be paid to the situation of the leaseholders. The cost of water should be within their reach.

A second aim should be to guarantee access to garden plots for those who need it. If diesel-pump irrigation is increased, new options of sharing the resources provided on the alluvial soils should be supported. Proposals of the would-be leaseholders should be heard and compromises found with the garden owners, either through the channels of a women's branch to be founded within or outside the Farmers' Union or through the government.

Thirdly, women extensionists should be employed by the government or by the Farmers' Union. Their task would be to extend information and equipment to raise horticultural efficiency in a sustainable manner, including the distribution of environmentally and biologically sound pesticides and insecticides. Women, irrespective of their status as garden owners, wives of owners or leaseholders, should be addressed by these campaigns. If they want, they should be allowed to establish their own branch of the Farmers' Union, without suffering public scorn.

### *Labour Migration*

Whereas labour migration of young men enables them to gain in experience, knowledge and flexibility, migration of heads of household tends to have ambivalent consequences. Economically, it is mostly beneficial for the migrants' families, but socially it has some negative implications. The increased burdens and dissatisfaction of migrants' wives question the appropriateness of this option.

Policy-makers should weigh the economic importance of labour migration for livelihood security of rural families with the social consequences of scattered families, migrants' children roaming the streets or forced to break off school, chain migration, new desires and commoditization of social relations. More employment opportunities for skilled or semi-skilled labour and regular payment would keep many in the rural areas, raise the purchasing power immediately, increase the demand at the rural markets and would, thus, provide an incentive for better supply. This could in turn increase local productivity and diversify production. Even from a macro-economic perspective, it might be cheaper in the long run to reduce urban crowding by supporting economic diversification in the rural areas.

To implement migration-reducing policies requires a set of measures, ranging from improving rural infrastructure and transport (which is a labour-intensive measure, thus fitting well inside the concept), easing access to loans, and providing incentives for investors in

rural areas to upgrading educational and training services and actively protecting and restoring the environment. These policies would increase rural employment opportunities on the skilled (engineers, managers, supervisors, planners) as well as on the semi- and unskilled levels and might thus make many men refrain from migrating far away. As a side-effect, such policies might even strengthen local social bonds, if they are applied equally to a whole region. If, however, one area is privileged with regard to this type of anti-migration policy, envy and new sources of conflict might arise. In order to avoid this sort of trouble, measures should be planned with low external inputs and be based mainly on local planning, labour, resources and equipment.

Further livelihood options such as handicrafts, local manufacturing, services, employment in the formal or informal sector, self-employment, joint saving and numerous others might be found, but all of them cannot be discussed here. Policy-makers should be aware of the existing options, their permanent or sporadic use and their limitations and potential. Generally, policies for peasants' needs should be guided by the principles of keeping livelihood options open and providing an environment which enables people to open up new options. This will also protect people from destitution during crises. In case of an impending famine, measures should be planned after intensive discussions with all parties concerned and in cooperation with these.<sup>2</sup>

A large-scale application of the livelihood approach as a basis for development policies could be imagined. For this purpose, a net of local livelihood studies would be necessary, which could serve as a basis for regional assessments of livelihood conditions. These could if so wanted be compiled to a national setting. However, the latter might become too general, at least in a country as large and heterogenous as Sudan. The survey could provide first clues for working out a schedule of peasant needs. The proposals of a diversified sample of peasants concerning improvements of their key options for livelihood security should be heard and fed into the planning process. Rural development aimed at peasant livelihood security thus requires an alternative development approach which starts at grass-roots level and includes peasant networks.

The policy-makers required for implementing a livelihood approach to development cannot be located in the central government. They have to be present among the peasants, at least at community level. A system of elected councils, diverse committees consisting of particular

interest groups and congresses to mediate between interests could be a solution to building up an administration and to entrusting bodies with decision-making powers on different, clearly defined levels. The government should respond to demands coming from these decentral units. Budgets should be decentralized in order to guarantee balanced tax raising and distribution of services. Possibly, reciprocal redistribution could be extended to decentral levels of the state. For example, if communities provide labour for constructing roads, clinics or schools, this could be counted as taxes paid.

If certain measures have been agreed upon, implementing rural development policies could largely be left to the rural population. Funds could at least partially be raised among the local middle class and the wealthier families. Funds from donor agencies might be made use of as well, if a diversified group of the peasants has been entrusted with the responsibility for their use and if neighbouring communities are invited to participate in the programme. Personnel and equipment should be provided locally. Because issues like grain trade and encouraging investment have to be nationally consistent, central policies are also required. Encouragement, perhaps incentives, promotion of trade and investment in peripheral regions, advice, information and public support would be measures which should be delivered by the government. Women's grassroots schemes, agricultural education and extension programmes directed to women, implementation of agricultural projects which address women peasants, market agencies for women and women cooperatives are likely to improve the livelihood security of peasant families. Small-scale projects which do not involve the whole community are required to secure the food supply for the poorest women. Whether the women's projects should be based only on agriculture or whether small-scale industries and female wage labour should be encouraged as an alternative, needs further discussion with the women concerned.

This decentralised type of policy could provide a first step towards including the rural potential in national development, integrating the development of the public and private sectors, as well as interlinking the development of the agricultural and industrial sectors.<sup>3</sup>